



# Capuchin Community Services

[www.CapuchinCommunityServices.org](http://www.CapuchinCommunityServices.org)

## Emergency Warming Center Opens at St. Ben's Meal Site Guests Shelter From Cold, Learn About New Supportive Housing Project



▲ Capuchin Br. Rob Roemer, Ministry Director gives Balerie and Brenda coffee when the St. Ben's Community Meal site opened as a Warming Center.

After getting coffee for his friend Brenda, Balerie accepted a cup from Capuchin Br. Rob Roemer. "I heard about Capuchin Community Services opening a warming center at St. Ben's Meal," he said. "Other nights we've slept under bridges or made the rounds of open lobbies where we can keep warm."

Br. Rob explained, "We know that on bitter cold nights like this our guests don't have many places to stay. The shelters and warming centers are filled and packed. So I checked with the City and they said that we could host people overnight when it is cold."

Balerie added, "He's right when he says the other warming centers are packed. It is hard to find a chair to sit inside and usually the only place to sleep is on the concrete floor. Here the Capuchins provide us with cots, chairs and a TV plus snacks." That particular night was the largest crowd with 57 people inside.

Brenda said, "We are planning to move to Indianapolis soon. It won't be so cold and we can connect with my family." Balerie shared that his health was one reason to move to a warmer climate. He said, "I worked for years in restaurants cooking and serving. As I began to have health problems, I began detailing cars. Now I am on Social Security and waiting to get housing."

Brenda added, "I've worked too. I worked for a Temp agency mostly in packaging and shipping. I also did some marketing for a tax prep store." Balerie continued, "Hey, I heard on the street that St. Anthony's Hospital next door is going to be converted into housing for the homeless." After learning that this was true, Balerie said, "That's great, Milwaukee needs more affordable housing."

St. Anthony's Hospital is just west of St. Ben's Church and connected to the building. After closing as a hospital, it was sold to Milwaukee County, which used it as a Huber Facility, a type of jail. Balerie knew the history of St. Anthony's and he said, "You know that St. Anthony's was once a hospital for African Americans. Hank Aaron's wife had one of their sons there!"



▲ Top left, Mary Lou Stebbins unpacks cots with the help of a guest. Center & left, Richard Meyer, Volunteer & Joel Garcia, Staff assemble cots for the largest Warming Center group yet.

Br. Rob Roemer explained, "We Capuchins built St. Anthony's in 1930 for the African American community, when segregation limited where people could get the best care and medical professionals could practice. We are excited that with the help of Heartland Housing it will be transformed into permanent housing for homeless people, as the new home of the St. Ben's Clinic and as offices for supportive services including our programs. The meal will remain in the current hall but everything else will move out of the friary and into St. Anthony's."



NEW Walker's Course  
USATF Certified  
5K Run

REGISTER NOW!

[www.CapuchinsRunWalkForTheHungry.org](http://www.CapuchinsRunWalkForTheHungry.org)



# Save The Date!

**April 1, 2017**

Lenten Morning of Reflection

9:30 AM to Noon, House of Peace Site,  
1702 W Walnut St, Milwaukee, 53205

**Servant Leadership - Fr. Keith Clark**

Fr. Keith is a Capuchin who authored a book by the same name available on Amazon.com. Join us to explore true Servant Leadership. You do not need to purchase the book in advance. Call 414.374.8841, ext. 41 for details.

**Register Online:**

[CapuchinCommunityServices.Org/RSVP](http://CapuchinCommunityServices.Org/RSVP)

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### House of Peace

Holiday Food Box & Toy Drives

- Help sort clothing, assemble hygiene bags & stock pantry shelves. To sign up call: **Brigid Anne Rush, Volunteer Coordinator at 414.933.1300, ext. 1123.**

### St. Ben's Community Meal

Assemble & Distribute Posters & Yard Signs for the Capuchins' Run Walk for the Hungry

- People are needed to assemble 1000 yard signs and put up posters in neighborhood coffee shops, gyms & houses of worship, to help call: **Brigid Anne Rush, Volunteer Coordinator at 414.933.1300, ext. 1123.**

## HOW TO DONATE

To make a gift to our Capuchin ministry to the hungry & needy go to:

[www.CapuchinCommunityServices.org](http://www.CapuchinCommunityServices.org)

**Or mail your gift to:**

Capuchin Community Services  
P.O. Box 5830  
Milwaukee, WI 53205-5830

*Capuchin Community Services is a ministry of the Capuchin Franciscan Province of St. Joseph. Unless otherwise directed, donations support the local ministry and the Province.*

*The Capuchin Franciscan Province of St. Joseph is a 501(c)(3) organization. Gifts made to our ministries, Capuchin Community Services, St. Ben's Community Meal and/or the House of Peace, are tax deductible as allowable by law.*

## Roaming Ministry

by *Br. Rob Roemer, OFM, Capuchin Director*

### Collaborations At CCS

Capuchin Community Services continues to collaborate with others around Milwaukee. We have talked for the past 6 years of opening up our meal hall as a warming center on the bitter cold nights. It never happened because we thought all the licensing and regulations would be greater than we could handle. After talking to the City in November, we found out that any place can open up on an emergency basis, without having to go through all the licensing.

So with that, the meal hall has become a warming center on evenings that the regular temperature drops to 10 degrees or colder. We have had 9 nights in which we have stayed open all night. Each of those nights we have had 43 – 57 guests. They were so grateful and cooperative. We have also had generous volunteers step up to take shifts of hospitality in the evenings and early mornings.

In March we have another collaboration happening. The Gathering of Southeast Wisconsin will be moving their breakfast program from 8th Street & Wisconsin Avenue to Capuchin Community Services-St. Ben's Meal site. They will serve breakfast 5 mornings/week and lunch on Saturdays. They will use our space, but all their expenses and staff will be their own. They will not be a drain in any way on our expenses. In fact, they



▲ *Br. Rob Roemer (Center) shares a meal with guests of Capuchin Community Services at the "Breakfast with Baby Jesus" celebration. This is an annual event put on by members of St. Francis Borgia Catholic Church in Cedarburg.*

will help cover some of our utilities and overhead costs as well.

Finally, our most significant collaboration is with Heartland Housing, whose mission is "to facilitate the development of people through the preservation and creation of quality affordable and permanent supportive housing." In 2011, we successfully collaborated on Capuchin Apartments. For the past year we have been working together on the St. Anthony Project, which will transform the abandoned hospital building at 10th and State Streets, next to the Church, into 60 permanent apartments for homeless people. There will be critical supportive services for these new residents--and for hundreds of other homeless people who are currently served at our present Friary.

One exciting feature of this project will be a special gathering place for 120 people and a new entrance to the Community Meal so that our guests will no longer have to stand in line outdoors while waiting to be served. More exciting news will be coming soon!

## Thank You Donors, Volunteers & Staff!



▲ *Bango, Mascot for the Milwaukee Bucks (Far Left), Br. Rob Roemer (2nd from Left) and Jabari Parker (Far Right) listen as Connie Jones of the Roundy's Foundation presents a check for gift cards to support the Holiday Food Box program. Jabari Parker, Forward player for the Milwaukee Bucks then presented 150 filled Holiday Food Boxes. Gruber Law presented hats.*



▲ *Dominique McGhee, Program Assistant for the Emergency Food Pantry (Center) attended the Annual Volunteer Luncheon. This event is held each year to thank the volunteers who serve at Capuchin Community Services' two sites: the House of Peace and St. Ben's Community Meal. Staff who work with the volunteers participated as well. Over 200 people attended the luncheon which was held at St. Matthias Parish in Milwaukee.*

# The Gathering Brings Breakfast Meal Programs Make Effective Use of Space

The Gathering is a meal program feeding Milwaukee's hungry and homeless at four locations. Though now its own nonprofit, The Gathering was initially founded by the Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee 35 years ago at St. James Episcopal on 8th & Wisconsin Avenue. St. Ben's Community Meal was already serving dinner. So meal days and times (Saturday lunch and Monday through Friday breakfast) were chosen to complement the Sunday through Friday dinners served at St. Ben's just four blocks north.



▲ Guests at The Gathering's Breakfast Meal enjoy a warm welcome from volunteers with their hot meal in this file photo. Sr. Carolyn served with joy into her 90's and passed away last year. Ginny Schrag said of Sister's ministry "What a blessing!"

continue to serve Milwaukee's hungry and homeless with breakfast Monday through Friday as well as Saturday lunch.... We will continue to recruit and train our volunteers, solicit funding, offer additional programming and provide meals at all four of our locations."

Br. Rob Roemer, Ministry Director of Capuchin Community Services said, "both the Gathering and CCS's St. Ben's Meal are faith based efforts to feed the hungry. We both refer to our clients as "guests." Our meal hall is empty 20 hours per day so it makes sense for our two ministries to share the facilities."

Due to the potential sale of St. James, The Gathering has been looking for a new location for its downtown meal programs and the Capuchins agreed to help. Ginny Schrag, Executive Director describes it this way, "This is not a merger with St. Ben's and Capuchin Community Services; it is rather a change of location and of landlord. The Gathering will

Br. Rob added, "I think it's important for our donors to know that this collaboration won't be an added cost for Capuchin Community Services. Rather we will make better use of our facilities and are compensated for any extra costs."

## Blessings of Service

by Gerri Sheets-Howard, M.Div.  
Administrative Director

### A Ministry of Presence

As the story on page 4 indicates, UWM-College of Nursing's Clinic at the House of Peace is the lead collaborating partner in a pilot grant program entitled, "The Village." It is a program to provide educational and spiritual support to parents and guardians of children who are victims of emotional and financial trauma.

The need is great for a program such as this, to assist many of the guardians that we serve at both our sites. I recently had an exchange during the Meal Program with a grandmother of a child whose mother is unable to provide parental responsibilities. The grandmother shared how she was overwhelmed, and really felt inadequate.



▲ (Center) Gerri Sheets-Howard leads a song during Breakfast with Baby Jesus. On her right are volunteers from St. Francis Borgia Parish and on her left are the guests' children dressed for the Christmas pageant.

We are very grateful for our partnership with UWM-College of Nursing, as well as, for our donors who make it possible for us to offer this service to those in need. This was "The ministry of presence" at its best, as this grandmother received a little bit of hope in her effort to provide for her grandchild.

## Who We Are

Capuchin Community Services is a ministry of **The Capuchin Franciscan Province of St. Joseph**, a religious community of friars inspired by St Francis of Assisi. Our friars live and work with those who are in need of help... the poor, the disenfranchised, and the needy.



## Our Ministry Council

Capuchin Community Services is advised by a volunteer Ministry Council consisting of leaders in our community. Current Ministry Council members include:

- Diane Knight
- Julie Darneider
- Anthony Myers
- Chuck Cmeyla
- Felice Green
- Sara Zirbel
- Wendy Hermann
- Pam Meyer
- Duncan Shrout
- Gerri Sheets-Howard (Administrative Director)
- Br Rob Roemer (Provincial Council Liaison & Ministry Director)
- Jeff Parrish (Director of Provincial Ministries)

I was able to express to her that even though she does not always have the food at home, that we are always happy to see her and her grandson. I am encouraging her to participate in "The Village" program, where I believe that she will receive support, nurturing, ideas, and opportunities to be connected with other services in the community.



# Capuchin Community Services' House of Peace Supports A Village!

## Collaborative Project with UW-Milwaukee College of Nursing

“The porch is a symbol of how we want people to be able to relate to each other,” Vanessa Baldwin said. A Nurse Clinician with the UW-Milwaukee College of Nursing, she frequently works at the UW-M House of Peace Community Nursing Center.

Vanessa and Dr. Jeana Holt, Clinical Assistant Professor had just finished a role-playing exercise for a group of guests at the House of Peace site.

Jeana had played someone coming home from a new job worried she was doing it well. Vanessa was the neighbor on the porch who was able to share some wisdom with her worried friend. Jeana said, “We received a UW-M Social Compact Grant to offer classes on positive parenting for strong families that will develop future “Village elders.”

Vanessa said, “Our communities once had lots of neighbors who sat out on the porches of their homes and were able to be a resource for each other.” Jeana added, “Living in poverty brings so much stress and we want to develop a new generation of “Village elders” to support the physical, mental, social, economic and spiritual aspects of the guests’ lives.”

One of the presenters was Linda Barnes, Social Worker for Capuchin Community Services. Linda was doing a presentation on lemons, not for a recipe but how to deal with life’s difficulties. “You might be surprised how many people come to see me not because they had a problem but rather that a member of their

extended family did,” Linda told the group. “One of the most common situations is someone dies unexpectedly and the family turns to you to help out. If you pay for the funeral out of the love in your heart but without the savings you need to get by, then you become the person-in-crisis next!”



▲ Linda Barnes, Social Worker at Capuchin Community Services' House of Peace site teaches a leadership class for the Villages program.

Linda continued, “You have to have some savings and other resources set aside because life does serve up lemons sometimes. You can’t assume you can get by without some preparation for broken cars, unexpected deaths or other tragedies.” Jeana said, “Linda’s presentation today illustrates our goals. She taught the group about how they might handle an unexpected challenge. That reflects our goal of helping people living in poverty to learn how to reduce stress in their lives and then to become Village leaders who can help their neighbors.”

Jeana paused and then said, “The reason I proposed this grant to the University is because high levels of stress have direct and very negative impacts on our health. People living in poverty suffer the double effects of a lack of resources and lots of stress.” Gerri Sheets-Howard, Administrative Director added, “We are happy to collaborate with the UW-M Nursing Clinic to such a positive effect on our guests’ lives. Jeana and her staff will have lead 24 sessions total when this year is done. I know it will have a good impact on the House of Peace’s neighborhood here on the corner of 17th and Walnut.”

## Service Statistics for 2016

Last year Capuchin Community Services’ two sites served over 189,000 people. Some individuals received services more than once. Here is a snapshot of our ministry:

### ● Feeding the Hungry St. Ben’s Meal:



Nights Served	Avg Served	Total Meals
302	338	102,026

### ● Other Services St. Ben’s Meal:



Bus Tickets	Hygiene Bags	RX Co-pays
1,546	2,108	1,657

### ● Feeding the Hungry House of Peace:



Households	Individuals
17,331	33,472

### ● Other Services House of Peace:

\* Estimated



Bread/Veggies	Clothing	Direct Services
13,908	18,485*	16,067



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### Capuchin Community Services

St. Ben’s Community Meal  
1015 N 9th St  
Milwaukee, WI 53233  
414.271.0135



House of Peace  
1702 W Walnut St  
Milwaukee, WI 53205  
414.933.1300

Support our ministry: [www.CapuchinCommunityServices.org/Donate](http://www.CapuchinCommunityServices.org/Donate) or by mail to P.O. Box 5830, Milwaukee, WI 53205-0830