Homeless Guest gets first look at new apartments, learns about services

“I am homeless again,” Connie Hardwick said. “Right now I’m couch surfing, staying at my son’s house. I was in an apartment building but I had to leave because there was too much stuff going on.”

Connie didn’t elaborate on what ‘stuff’ caused her to leave her apartment. “I lost everything again, I don’t have any furniture or housewares.” She had stopped by to see Br. Rob Roemer to tour the new St. Anthony’s Apartments.

“I just learned that my rental application was accepted,” Connie said. She continued, “I cooked in a school for 14 years but had a nervous breakdown, lost my job and became homeless.” “At one point I was suicidal. I lived in a women’s shelter, had an apartment and became homeless again.”

Br. Rob said, “Welcome to St. Anthony’s.” Inside the building Br. Rob began to explain the services that would be available. “We’ll have showers, a laundromat, chapel, reading areas for adults and children plus critical social services for residents and our homeless guests.”

“I had no idea that all of these services would be available here for homeless people,” Connie said. When she learned that breakfast is served by The Gathering on weekdays and that St. Ben’s served dinner 6 nights per week she became excited. “This is a wonderful opportunity, I can see my family and friends visiting me here so I won’t be alone.”

Br. Rob said, “We also run the House of Peace. You can get clothes, food, hygiene supplies, blankets and more there.” Connie smiled, “Then you must know my brother, Eric.” Br. Rob smiled and said, “Of course, he’s been a devoted volunteer for many years. He often handles the front desk for us.”

Finally Br. Rob and Connie reached the top floors to tour an actual apartment. While not completely finished on the day of the tour, Connie was still impressed. “This is going to be beautiful. I’m very happy to see how nice this will be when it’s finished.” Br. Rob showed Connie the new appliances that had already been installed. “We’ll also be able to provide you with furniture, linens, bathroom and kitchen supplies,” he said.

“I’ll need all the help I can get to get my life back on track. Now that I’ve seen the apartment, learned about the services and don’t have to worry about furnishing it, I know I can wait patiently,” Connie said. “Thank you so much!” Br. Rob replied, “You’re welcome, Connie. We’re excited too. This will be a wonderful new home for 60 residents, our Front Door Ministry, the Ascension St. Ben’s Clinic and so much more.”
SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

House of Peace
Sort & Serve: November-December, Mon-Fri, 9:00am - 3:30pm
- Volunteers needed to sort & organize food into holiday boxes. Volunteers must be able to lift at least 20 lbs. Also volunteers needed to help carry food boxes for seniors/disabled to vehicles. Those volunteers must be able to carry at least 50 lbs.

Santa’s Workshop Prep & Assist: December, Mon-Fri, 9am-Noon & 1-3pm
- Volunteers needed to help serve families at Christmas. Sort toys, prepare "Santa's Workshop," and guide parents as they select gifts for their children.

St. Ben’s Community Meal
Meal Service: Sun-Fri, 4:45 - 6:45pm
- Volunteers needed to serve pouring beverages, serving condiments, retrieving trays and resetting tables. Scheduling into 2019 now.

St. Anthony's Apartments
Front Office Help: Mon-Fri, 9:00am - 5:00pm
- Volunteers needed to help in the Front Office greeting visitors & guests plus minor office duties. Volunteers also needed to help clean our space during the day. Must be able to lift, walk and be mobile.

Next Steps
To volunteer or ask questions, please contact: Shirelle Jenkins, Volunteer Coordinator at 414-933-1300, x1123 or sjenkins@thecapuchins.org.

Roaming Ministry
by Br. Rob Roemer, OFM, Capuchin Director

We are all blessed

The guests coming to our doors at both the House of Peace and St. Ben’s Community Meal have taught me a lot about being thankful and expressing gratitude even when they have so little. I hear often from our guests, “I’m blessed.” At Capuchin Community Services we are “blessed”.

Capuchin Community Services is excited to be opening up 60 new apartments this month for homeless and low income individuals, providing 60 people with permanent housing. St. Anthony’s will provide 21 people with low incomes an apartment each. An additional 39 apartments have been allocated for people who are homeless.

Donors have responded very generously to our capital campaign and online gift registry drives. We have reached the goal for the buildout of the new St. Anthony’s in a little over a year. We have been blessed.

Donors have sent us almost everything residents need to live in a new home, right down to the shower curtains and cleaning utensils, we/they are blessed. These apartments will be managed by Heartland Alliance of Chicago. They also manage Capuchin Apartments. Justice Point will be the organization providing the case management services for the new tenants.

The basement will be home to our expanded Front Door ministry. We will have three showers instead of just the current one. We will have a barber shop (we need volunteer barbers), a laundromat, play area for kids and a gathering space for the guests waiting for the meal. Our guests will no longer have to line up and wait outside in the elements!

Dry and warm, they are blessed.

There will be a little reading area and a couple of computers for guests to use. Our offices will be in the new building as well. We are thankful to each of you for believing in us and supporting this new venture. We are thankful to you for your generous support of our furnishings drive. We are grateful to you for helping support our holiday food drive, warm winter drive and toy drive for Christmas. Yes, we too are blessed. Thank you for believing in us and helping us to be a blessing for others at Capuchin Community Services.

► Br. Rob Roemer (right) helps Bernadette Williams as she selects school supplies for her children at the House of Peace.

► People line up to wait outside on a warm September afternoon for St. Ben's Community Meal. Imagine how much more difficult it is to wait outside in the winter! The new Welcoming Room inside St. Anthony's, just to the left of St. Benedict the Moor Catholic Church, will provide people with a warm, safe space to gather before the meal begins.

► People line up to wait outside a warm September afternoon for St. Ben’s Community Meal.

► Literally hundreds of new housewarming gifts have been donated to St. Anthony’s. The linens were collected by St. Francis of Assisi Parish and the books donated by Half Price Books. Kitchen, bathroom and other supplies have also been donated.

► Please call Shirelle Jenkins, Volunteer Coordinator, to volunteer during the holidays.
St. Anthony Campaign
by Dan McKinley, Consultant for Community Engagement

A Personal Perspective

We have been eagerly anticipating the Housewarming for new residents at St. Anthony Apartments for months, and the fact that we will be celebrating their arrival before Thanksgiving gives us so much to be truly thankful for. This is a perfect time to reflect on what makes Capuchin ministries able to help our homeless brothers and sisters in such a deep and meaningful way. St. Anthony was made possible because of you! The contributions of so many compassionate people deserve to be recognized, and we are finding the most appropriate ways to do so.

Yes, each gift was acknowledged with a personal letter from Br. Rob, but we want to do more so that anyone who enters the new Welcoming Room at St. Anthony will see the names of the people who acted out of compassion, literally making a contribution because they were “feeling with” the people who were homeless who now have a home this community. What a blessing, and an inspiration! Please let Br. Rob or me know if you would like to visit and see and feel what you have made possible at St. Anthony.

As Br. Rob continues to thank God and the people he meets every day for all these blessings, I remember the words of another Capuchin Friar who reflected on the blessings we also receive as a pure gift. He told me that “perhaps the most important “difference” effected by Capuchin Ministries is in the lives of the providers—staff, volunteers, donors and friars. In my estimation it is impossible to be involved in this work at any level and not have one’s heart changed!” Amen!

Transforming the World through Reverence
Capuchins’ ministry in Milwaukee attends to basic human needs

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 Darnieder
- Anthony Myers
- Chuck Cmeyla
- Felice Green
- Sara Zirbel
- Wendy Hermann
- Pam Meyer
- Duncan Shroul
- Br Robert Woptyka, Pastoral Director
- Br Rob Roemer, Ministry Director
- Jeff Parrish, Director of Provincial Ministries

HOW TO DONATE

To make an online gift to our Capuchin ministry go to:

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.

Support our ministry: www.CapuchinCommunityServices.org/Donate or by mail to P.O. Box 5830, Milwaukee, WI 53205-0830
“See my hat?” Four year old Damaya said as she followed her mother into the Br. Booker Ashe Room. The knit cap had stars on it. “You are a star,” said one of the greeters at the door. Damaya had come with her mother, Nazarene and her grandmother Belinda, to the House of Peace. Mother and grandmother had each come to apply for a Holiday Food Box for their households.

Linda Barnes, Administrator at the House of Peace welcomed everyone warmly and began to give directions. “These volunteers are going to help you register for our holiday program. If you are a household of 1 or 2, you can apply for a Thanksgiving box and if you are a family with children then you can apply for the Christmas box which comes with gifts.”

Nazarene shared how many ways the House of Peace had helped her and her family. “I am a personal care worker. I take care of the disabled and elderly. In my spare time I like to volunteer as a kindergarten aide for Damaya’s school.” She continued, “I give and receive both. I donate clothing to the House of Peace and new prayer books for the children. Then I receive food and clothing from the House of Peace to help me care for my own family.”

“Damaya is my youngest, I also have two 15 year olds,” Nazarene said. She smiled and explained, “They are ‘Irish Twins,’ just barely 12 months apart.” When asked, Damaya began to share her list. “I’d like an Anna from Frozen doll, books with animal stories and a Barbie Dream House with a new Barbie,” Damaya said. “Oh,” she quickly added, “I’d really like some Play-doh as well,” and grinned happily.

Sandra walked up to the registration table using a cane in obvious pain. “I had a hip replacement and now I’m on disability. I rode the bus in the cold to get here this morning.” Molly is a committed volunteer who had also gotten up early to help with the registration. She explained to Sandra that each household had to have one person attend an empowerment class during the holidays.

“I am more of a morning person, what classes do you offer then,” Sandra asked. Molly reviewed the class offerings and Sandra selected one. Linda Barnes explained, “From Br. Booker Ashe on, we’ve always tried to offer people the opportunity to become empowered through education. We have classes on finances, employment, health, childcare and much more.”

Sandra said, “The House of Peace is always there for me. I don’t always need them but when I do need clothing or some food to get through the month, I am glad they are there.” Nazarene echoed Sandra’s comment saying she too was glad that the House of Peace was there to support her family if and when needed.

If you’d like to donate food or toys this holiday season, visit: capuchincommunityservices.org/ways-to-help/special-drives