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GOOD NEWS

St. Ben's Community Meal

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A MINISTRY OF THE CAPUCHIN PROVINCE OF ST. JOSEPH

St. Ben's Guests Join Volunteers in Service

September 2010

Disabled Guest Helps Others

Injured in a fall from a window, Everett Martin walks with a significant limp. He relies on disability and St. Ben's Community Meal to make ends meet.

"I could sit at home but I get lonely, so I wanted to find a way to be around nice people," said Everett.

Everett had been coming to St. Ben's to eat almost every evening and the staff saw that he could do more. "They saw my potential," Everett said, "so they invited me to help out. I have been coming to St. Ben's since I was 11 years old and I wanted to give back."

Each morning Everett leaves home and walks or takes the bus the 5½ miles to St. Ben's Community

Meal. When he gets to St. Ben's he handles shower duty and hands out hygiene bags and bus passes. "I get my clipboard and sign up people so they can take a shower. Each Wednesday I also hand out hygiene bags and the bus tickets for anyone with a medical appointment," Everett commented.

Prentice Young, Community Outreach Worker said, "Everett doesn't have to do this but he really helps us out by keeping everything in order. We only

and he makes it much easier."

Art, another guest who also serves as a volunteer said, "This summer

we are distributing 60 men's hygiene bags and 20-30 women's hygiene bags weekly. Each bag is supposed to last one month." Art added, "We are on track to distribute 320 hygiene bags each month or almost 4,000 bags this year! This hot summer the number one thing people ask for is deodorant. However we ran out about a month ago so our bags don't include deodorant for now."

Capuchin Br. Dave said, "Everett and Art are just two guests who really want to help out – not just receive help. We have other guests who want to help as well. It really underscores the

word Community in our name. St. Ben's Community Meal is a group of committed staff, volunteers and guests working together to end homelessness."



Prentice Young, Community Outreach Worker at St. Ben's Community Meal reviews the shower schedule with guest and volunteer Everett Martin.

have the one shower, so Everett has to see that as many people as possible get through the showers each afternoon."

"Sometimes there is tension," Prentice commented. "However, Everett relates well to the guests as he is one. We have lots of different people to take care of

Walk - Run—Swim For The Hungry???

The debate was on, should we hold the Walk Run for the Hungry or not? It was 5:30 PM on Thursday, July 22, 2010 – a date that would mark the start of the 200-year storm. But it hadn't hit Lakeshore Festival Park and German Fest yet.

Bill Michaels, Sportscaster at WTMJ Radio, opened an app on his smartphone and immediately called to Capuchin Br. Dave Schwab, Executive Director at the Meal. Br. Dave said, "I saw the lines of storms traveling down I-94 from the west and knew right then we were going to have to cancel."

Events quickly unfolded that would convince everyone the right decision had been made. As volunteers rushed to pack t-shirts and other supplies into the trucks, the storm, that would drop 5-7 inches of rain in a few hours, hit. Manhole covers weighing hundreds of pounds began to pop up and dance in the overflow. Trees fell down and lightning struck as many streets flooded.

Br. Dave said, "The Walk Run for the Hungry

was still a success. Last year just over 1,600 people participated. This year over 1,775 people registered in advance. If the weather had cooperated we would have broken 2,000 this year!" He continued, "And we had a number of successes, such as the new teams program. We

they would stand by their commitment to donate 2 pounds of product per registrant—so over 2 tons will be available throughout the year.

The event couldn't be rescheduled as the permits filed with the City, County and insurance company all specified



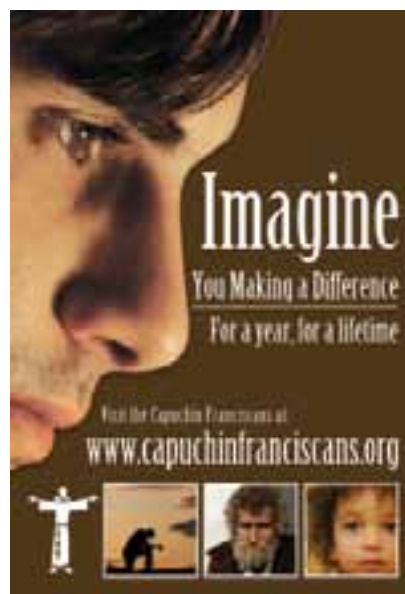
Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, Barbara Faris, Ancille Horgan, and Regine Ehm find cover in German Fest and celebrate while waiting for the storm to pass.

offered a special price and shirt to teams over 10 individuals and had a number of large groups register."

The three largest teams were the Cheesecake Factory, the Order of St. Francis and the German Immersion Foundation. In addition, 30 corporate sponsors signed up to support St. Ben's efforts to feed the hungry. As a result, the registrant's fees all went directly to St. Ben's Community Meal to help feed the hungry. Usinger's said

that evening. Other dates during German Fest were already taken or the race management group was already booked.

Br. Dave said, "I'd like to thank all of those who registered. Even though you didn't get to participate, you have helped us serve thousands of meals to the less fortunate. Thank you also to our volunteers, corporate sponsors, Bill Michaels and German Fest!"



Social Networking



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St. Ben's Community Meal



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Donations of cash, food, blankets, hygiene products, new socks and underwear always appreciated and accepted Monday-Friday during business hours.

St. Ben's Community Meal is a ministry of the Capuchin Province of St. Joseph and a 501(c)(3) ministry. All donations are tax deductible as allowable by law.

Students of the Homeless & Hungry Go Back to School with St. Ben's Help

Despite the heat, 125 children attended the St. Ben's Community Meal's annual school supply party on the last Saturday in August. Children from families dealing with homelessness or hunger enjoyed decorating sun visors, made beaded bracelets, received (fake) tattoo's and picked out books to take home. Mother and daughter volunteers, Kris and Alissa Blehinger, handed out bags of supplies to the children as they left the party.

Alissa said, "We've been coming for years to help Br. Dave out. It is nice to meet so many of the guests and get to know them. I especially like to help the little ones at the Arts & Crafts tables." She smiled as she continued, "So many of the kids don't get to experience Arts & Crafts so it is so cool to see how excited they get."

Alissa is a senior at Waukesha South High School and came with her friend Elise Gasper. "I am a junior at Oconomowoc High School," said Elise. "I really enjoyed helping out. Talking to the children is great, and I find this is an opportunity to connect with others," she said.



Above ▲ Bianca Golden and her son, Mykell, browse the book section. Each child received several books as a gift.



Above ▲ Volunteers give the children goody bags with snacks as they leave.



Above ▲ A young guest smiles in anticipation of receiving school supplies and books.

Union Workers Prepare Food and Serve the Homeless and Hungry



Top: Members of Union Local 1473 prepare to serve dinner at St. Ben's.



Bottom: Due to the cancelled Walk Run, St. Ben's had t-shirts for union members to give out to guests.

With many members involved in the preparation and serving of food, it should be no surprise that United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Union Local 1473, wanted to help feed the hungry and homeless.

"We started at St. Ben's by helping the Milwaukee Labor Council and saw the need so we wanted to provide more meals," said Mark Culotta, Field Director. He added, "Now we cook and serve meals at St. Ben's Community Meal several times each year."

John Eiden, President of Local 1473 explained, "Our members work in supermarkets, packing plants and nursing homes, plus other locations. Most are involved in preparing food and all appreciate the need to feed the hungry." John continued, "This is our effort to give back to the community on behalf of Labor."

Compassion at the Car Wash

Cardinal Stritch University Freshmen Raise Funds To Feed The Hungry

Soap suds, cars and hoses led to wet students and a helping hand for the homeless. Last month, over 100 freshmen from Cardinal Stritch University, held 11 separate car washes from Germantown to Shorewood to Milwaukee to benefit St. Ben's Community Meal.

"We have 11 groups of freshmen scheduled to help," said Dr. Barbara Spies, Director of the University's First Year Experience program. She added, "Each year we focus on a different Franciscan value during our program and this year it is Compassion."

Jerry Krajewski was one of several students in the group washing cars at Lutheran Church of the Living Christ, in Germantown, who already had volunteered at St. Ben's. "I have helped the friars feed the homeless at St. Ben's twice now," he said. Jerry added, "I was there once in eighth grade with St. Matthias Grade School and again in the parish's high school confirmation class."

Jerry shared that St. Ben's was one of many experiences that had led him to apply to Cardinal Stritch University,

where he will major in Biology and Religious Studies. "I am not sure yet, but I am thinking about the priesthood or lay ministry in the church," he said.

Lisa Kornacki is another student with experience at St. Ben's Community Meal. Lisa is a senior majoring in Psychology and a student leader for the incoming freshmen. "I first served at St. Ben's with my youth group from St. Mary's Parish in Elm Grove. I remember we served homeless people and seeing their appreciation made it all feel worthwhile," she said.

Smiling and waving at the oncoming traffic, Sarah Slicker chimed in, "I've helped at St. Ben's" Continuing to wave her sign at drivers Sarah added, "In the eighth grade at Port Catholic Middle School in Port Washington we came down to St. Ben's to serve a meal. I remember handing out cups and pouring drinks." She smiled again and added, "Everyone is so friendly there and everyone you serve is so grateful. I found when I took a moment to talk with the guests that they all had



Dr. Barbara Spies, Director of Cardinal Stritch University's First Year Experience program and students wash cars for St. Ben's Community Meal

stories to tell me. It was a very positive experience for me!" Sarah is another student planning in majoring in the helping professions at Cardinal Stritch.

"It is amazing how simple acts like washing cars or pouring milk can lead someone to a lifetime of service," said Capuchin Br. Dave Schwab. He continued, "Here at St. Ben's we try to create a short term service opportunity for students that include a time of guided reflection after the meal." Br. David explained, "Cap Corps Volunteers or others help us to share the connection between our Franciscan values, our faith and the actions the students take while serving. With the help of our partners at Cardinal Stritch University, we are helping the next generation hear the Holy Spirit's call to serve with faith."

Sponsor Site Visit

Over 75 groups sponsor one or more meals per year. Most sponsor meals each month. Br. Dave Schwab spoke to the members of Dr. Martin Luther Church in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin to celebrate their committed service to feeding the homeless and hungry.

After the service Br. Dave posed with (L to R) Lesley Boettcher, member, DML Church & St Ben's Volunteer, Andy King, DML President and Rev. Erik Gronberg, Pastor.

