NORTHSIDE COMMON MINISTRIES
An Affiliate of Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania

Northside Common Ministries
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www.ncmin.org

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NCM: Celebrating Over 30 Years of Service!

For 30 years, Northside Common Ministries has been the recipient of help from many caring people. Without the help of our volunteers and supporters we could not continue to provide the services we offer to our brothers and sisters in need. Every year our Food Pantry volunteers (seen above) put thousands of hours of service in to assure that their food insecure neighbors have food to put on their tables.

1982-2018:
30 plus years of providing for the needs of our brothers and sisters who are hungry and homeless

NCM News

February 2018 Volume 8, Number 1

A Message from the Director:

Family Ties

A few years ago, my friend Emily had a falling out with her sisters over her daughter not being invited to a larger family event. Her sisters had what they thought were good reasons, but Emily was very hurt. The situation led to a disconnect between my friend and her siblings for over two years. In the past couple of years, Emily has worked hard to rebuild those fractured relationships.

Every day at NCM, we see men and women who lack the support of family and friends. Often this is the result of burning down the bridges that connected them to their families because of repeated destructive actions and the family's "tough love" approach to the situation.

Getting the guys in our shelter a place to live, a job or a connection to social services is far easier then helping them to rebuild fractured relationships. When it does happen – when a father in shelter reconnects to a child – we know immediately that this man's chances of remaining stably housed and employed skyrockets.

Recently, Ken told me about celebrating his 57th birthday at his daughter's home. He had never been invited to her home while he was drinking and sleeping on the street, but now sober and stably housed, he had a sleep over at his daughter's new home.

Rick told me about attending a scheduled visitation to see his young child and how it motivated him to work harder on stability.

John, a shelter resident, asked if maybe we could spare a couple toys from our holiday toy drive for him to mail to his kids in Michigan.

Angela, who uses our day drop-in center, told me about talking with her son on the phone recently. He grew up in foster care and she hadn't heard from him in over a dozen years. He is now a grown adult with his own kids.

Warren's daughter sent him a birthday card this year. He was thrilled but still not feeling able to reach back to her. Warren can't imagine how he would ever be able to apologize for all the things that happened during her childhood.

Every broken relationship can't be fixed. Sometimes it's not even safe to try to mend them; but, if like Emily, a little time and distance allows for safe and healthy healing, it can be transformative.

We see that every day. ★

Bertie Matthews: 1925 – 2017

Bertie volunteered at our food pantry twice a week for nearly two decades. At age 92, she sometimes walked two miles or took two buses to get to the pantry. She always brought with her a feeling of joy.

Bertie, we dearly miss your joyful singing, your not very strong coffee, and your beguiling smile. ★

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come
'Tis Grace has brought me safe thus far
And Grace will lead me home

From *Amazing Grace*, one of Bertie's favorite songs

Kale Chips

Our food pantry produce tent has been a great success. As many as 100 people have been coming through each Thursday for fresh produce. During the fall, we had the distribution outside and during the winter we moved it inside the food pantry. People are getting potatoes, onions, cabbage, beets and greens every week of the year. In the spring we will be adding more fruits and veggies to the selection.

With the addition of the produce tent, we are able to get more fresh vegetables and fruit into the hands of our pantry customers. This increase in fresh produce to their diets will hopefully lead to a reduction in the incidence of preventable diseases, like high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity.

This fall, I learned three new recipes for cooking up greens, how to roast beets, glaze carrots and a half dozen uses for kale. If you spread out the kale on a cookie sheet, drizzle some olive oil and sea salt over it, and bake it, you have a totally delightful snack. Try it - you'll love it.

Our weekly produce stand got healthy food into people's homes while at the same time it built community. We all shared recipes, talked about families, how the neighborhood is changing and, of course, how to keep Anne, the resident dog at NCM, as healthy as possible. All this while we all got a little healthier ourselves at NCM this year. ★

Rapid Re-housing

Many of the men in shelter at NCM have recently found apartments around the city. NCM staff partner with other social service agencies that oversee rapid re-housing programs to place individuals experiencing homelessness into community-based apartments.

These programs often provide funding for the first year of rent while case workers from those programs work intensely with the individuals to help address some of the issues that have led to their homelessness. Ideally, with case management support and a place to call their own, these formerly homeless individuals will be able to establish themselves in a community and maintain housing long term.

Our shelter will remain here to help men who are new to homelessness and we will help connect them to rapid re-housing programs to get them stably housed. To learn more about rapid re-housing, visit hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Rapid-Re-Housing-Brief.pdf ★

Local Musician Comes to NCM

Just before Thanksgiving last year, Gabi Barret, a Pittsburgh-based musician who is developing a deeper relationship with Goodwill, joined us at NCM to help serve lunch at our Day Drop-In Center. Our weekday lunch provides up to 70 street homeless and low income people a hot and hearty weekday meal. Gabi came back on Christmas Eve as well — this time to share a few holiday songs with the men in shelter while they had their dinner. Gabi center, and her sister, Gypsy Barrett, right, serve a meal with NCM cook, Tracy Organ. ★

Well, Happy, and Peaceful

May I be well, happy, and peaceful.
May my teachers be well, happy, and peaceful.
May my parents be well, happy, and peaceful.
May my relatives be well, happy, and peaceful.
May my friends be well, happy, and peaceful.
May the indifferent persons be well, happy, and peaceful.
May the unfriendly persons be well, happy, and peaceful.
May all meditators be well, happy, and peaceful.
May all beings be well, happy, and peaceful.

A Success Story

Greg just moved out into his own place. As soon as he moved into our shelter, Greg got a job at a Shop' n Save and started to save up for an apartment. It took a little longer than he expected because he broke his glasses and had to spend close to $300 for new ones, but he kept plugging away.

What made the move easier was a small loan we were able to give him to help cover his first month's rent and security deposit. That loan was made possible from a generous grant from the McLaughin Foundation. This grant allowed us to cover a security deposit and first month's rent as well as start- up funds to help guys who just need that first few dollars to make a move possible.

Greg will pay back the loan at no interest over an extended period of time. We set it up this way so that the men take responsibility for paying back the loan and the fund remains for other guys in need of the same help down the road. ★

Celebrating Success

Our Celebration of Caring, held in November at the Grand Hall at the Priory, recognized the superheroes among us, both individuals and groups, whose volunteerism is changing the lives of the hungry and homeless in our region. This year, we recognized Dr. Edward Kelly from Operation Safety Net; Artist Daniel See from CMU; The Congregation of Allegheny Unitarian Universalist Church; Shelter Cook Tracy Organ; and the leadership of the Northside Homeless Alliance. Congratulations to all of our Superhero volunteers who change lives every day! ★

Did You Know…

That the food budget for dinners here at the shelter is $0? That's because every night, folks from churches and businesses around the city show up at the door of the shelter with mountains of food they worked hours to prepare and drove long distance to serve. No man ever leaves our shelter weighing less than he did when he arrived.

The Church Ladies make sure that our men have a hearty and healthy dinner each night. More importantly, these groups provide a sense of community, family and a connection to spirituality that the staff at the shelter cannot provide. The dinner serving dates fill up fast each year, but there are always openings for groups to prepare and serve a hot lunch on Monday, Wednesday or Friday to the street homeless that show up at our door each week day.

If you are interested in being a part of this incredible meal ministry, drop an email to Jay.poliziani@ncmin.org ★

Walk on By

An art exhibit co-curated by Northside Common Ministries and featuring the works of local artists who also are volunteers at NCM keeps appearing all over the city. The exhibit, which features over 25 original works in a variety of mediums, first showed last year at a gallery downtown and has since been featured in over six local libraries.

The message behind the show is that we can make lasting change if we don't just walk on by. Rather, engage a person on the street asking for spare change in conversation or with a smile and a warm hello. Walk on By is on display in March at the Northside Branch of the Carnegie Library. Follow the show to other locations. Watch for details on our facebook page. facebook.com/NCMinistries1

Mark your Calendars

Visit ncmin.org or facebook .com/NCMinistries1 to keep up to date with everything happening at NCM.

Annual Spaghetti Dinner
Saturday, April 28, 4:30 to 7 p.m.
Northmont Presbyterian Church
8169 Perry Highway 15237
Free will offering