

MESH Tidings

NEWSLETTER of MONTCLAIR EMERGENCY SERVICES For HOPE

Partners and Friends of MESH—Join our Board!

We invite you to apply to be on our board. We already know that you are dedicated to our mission of lovingly serving our clients and we would love to hear from you if you would like to take your love and generosity one step further.

If you are interested, I would love to speak with you. Please send me your resume and any additional information that might be helpful in helping us consider your application.

I can be reached at pattydreher@hotmail.com

Patty Dreher, Board Vice President

Learn more about MESH www.meshmontclair.org and how you can help this hopeful organization.

Welcome to Our New Board President

The board of MESH is especially pleased to welcome back Rev. Canon Wade Renn as president of our board. In 2005, Rev. Renn founded Montclair Emergency Services for the Homeless (now Montclair Emergency Services for HOPE) when, as an interim priest at St. Luke's, he noticed people sleeping in doorways around Montclair. MESH began that year by distributing sleeping bags to the homeless. Though he had stepped down as board president in 2012, Rev. Renn has kept active with our homeless neighbors by working with the shower program available to the homeless at the Montclair Citadel of the Salvation Army – an extension of MESH.



Pandemic Challenges

We look forward to working with Rev. Renn in these challenging times of the pandemic. With so many of our partner houses of worship closed or slightly open, we continue to face the challenge of feeding a constant number of 40 persons at our Café-to-go at the Salvation Army parking lot. In normal years, our partner houses of worship who serve meals from September through June take a hiatus in the summer months. This year we are very grateful to the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Montclair and to Grace Presbyterian Church who are continuing to serve on Wednesdays and Saturdays respectively this summer.

(cont. p.4)

Compassion and Generosity



All of us who have served a MESH dinner know Joseph Tyson, MESH's security guard. Not only was he present at MESH meals when we served at our partner houses of worship, but on Code Blue nights, he would help set up for, greet overnight guests and serve the first shift at respite.

Since the pandemic began he's been at the Salvation Army parking lot, rain or shine, for every MESH meal distribution. Joe knows each of our MESH guests by name. But you may not know how truly caring and dedicated Mr. Tyson is.

Many of the 40 people who show up at the Salvation Army for our take-out meals have a home and a place to store food. But not all. And Joe worried about the others. He told me that his wife, Dorothy, said "These people have nothing to eat in the morning." So they launched their own project of compassion and generosity to bring a breakfast on Monday and Friday mornings to local people who are hungry.

Joe visits Panera Bread on Sunday and Thursday evenings just before closing, to pick up the baked goods they did not sell that day. He shops at the Dollar Store for items like individual peanut butter with crackers or other prepackaged items. And he takes a trip to Costco for orange juice in bulk.

Each Monday and Friday morning Joe packs his car with a "continental breakfast" in 16 individuals bags and drives, first to Lackawanna Station parking lot, where he meets five or more people, and then on to the Salvation Army where other hungry friends await him. If someone who is usually at one of the spots is missing, Joe will circle back and look for him, or pass the place he might often see the person, to hand off the breakfast.



All our MESH partners care about those we serve who are food insecure, but Joe and Dorothy Tyson go way beyond in caring about and helping our neighbors. Along with our essential workers, they are true heroes.

Nancy Taiani

Director's Corner: The Power of We to Connect

The COVID-19 outbreak across the nation has created striking changes in our everyday lives across the nation including our Montclair community. The new language of masks, social distancing and quarantine has become familiar in our everyday communication. However, the activation of the safety and wellness practices among the homeless population in Montclair often stalls, leaving vulnerability to this group that we serve. In general, the homeless have much higher rates of serious underlying health problems and generally lack access to quality health care and to self-quarantine possibilities. MESH, Inc is committed to doing everything in its power to ensure that our neighbors without homes get referral for help and protection that they need during this crisis.



We have adopted the “grab and go” evening meal operations method like those local and neighboring restaurants in our community incorporated during the CORVID outbreak. MESH evening Café grab and go sandwich meals are generally catered by local and neighboring restaurants along with MESH Angels who anonymously donate meals offering discounted sandwiches, various fruit, vegetables, and water six days a week in the Salvation Army parking located at 15 Trinity Place. Our gracious connection with the Salvation Army and the Montclair township helped foster the provision of a portable toilet for the use of the homeless we serve. MESH provides excess drinking water along with toilet paper and cleaning products for designated volunteer homeless guests who have assumed responsibility to help maintain a sanitary environment.

While the “grab and go bag” meals satisfy nutritional needs, the emotional cry for human connections beyond the circle of the Homeless remains a void. Due to the necessary safety and wellness practices that have been instituted, the Public Library on South Fullerton and the nearby Starbucks on Park Street are no longer gathering places for the homeless to connect daily. On a rainy evening recently, we received a MESH Angel’s grab and go dinner meal. We noticed our guests opening their meal bags reading small notes and smiling. The staff smiled too because we realized we were witnessing the homeless experiencing connections from the anonymous power of “We” to offer hope. Thank you for your continuous support.

Gwen Parker Ames, Ed.D BCC
Executive Director
MESH Inc.

Welcome (continued from p.1)

Unfortunately, our usual Bloomfield summer partner houses of worship have not found it possible to provide for our café this season. Mindful of the need, MESH, Inc. must stretch its resources to provide take-out bags on the other evenings. We are blessed to have found a company, the Rainbow Food Group of Little Falls, that provides us with excellent bagged take-outs for only \$200 an evening for our 40 guests.

We hope our partners who are taking a hiatus until the fall, will continue to help us find ways to serve when we resume our September to June schedule. We recognize the added requirements of social distancing and the need to sanitize may make it impossible for us to return to our traditional café format and we are grateful that the Salvation Army is pleased to continue to welcome our guests to their parking lot to receive their to-go bags on Monday through Saturday evenings.

As we move toward the colder months, MESH is preparing to counteract the resurgence of COVID-19 by securing the supplies most needed for respite when temperatures drop to 32 degrees and below. We hope we can count on your help when we launch our annual sleeping bag drive in honor of our MESH Founder and President Wade Renn this September 15th through November 15th.

Donations Always Appreciated!

Please call 917-751-2176 if you'd like to help by sponsoring part of a meal. To learn more about MESH or to make a monetary donation visit www.meshmontclair.org



MESH CAFÉ

Until further notice, due to the Coronavirus outbreak, the MESH Café will be serving only **GRAB 'N GO** meals from the Salvation Army building at 15 Trinity Place in downtown Montclair. 5:30PM TO 6:30PM Nightly from Monday to Saturday.

PLEASE REFER ANY RESTAURANT TO US THAT YOU THINK MIGHT BE WILLING TO DONATE GRAB 'N GO MEALS FOR OUR MESH GUESTS.