

LOAVES AND FISHES

DULUTH, MN

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FREE

The Bystander Effect

by Donna Howard

The sort of person who becomes a catholic worker makes do with less money and security, lives in a hospitality house with persons who are homeless or perhaps mentally ill, cooks dinner for a lot of those people and then cleans it all up, is not a bystander. That person is a doer. That person has been compelled by the thought; 'There is poverty. There is violence. There is injustice. And I must try to do something about it.' 'No one has a right to sit down and feel hopeless. There is too much work to do,' says Dorothy Day, mother of the movement.

In fact there is a syndrome defined in psychology as the Bystander Effect, discovered by psychologists Bibb Latané and John Darley following the 1964 Kitty Genovese murder in New York City. The violent crime took place on a public street in New York City where many were able to observe it happening. Yet no one stepped forward to protect her. The theory drawn from decades of observations is that even in an emergency, a person is less likely to step forward in an attempt to intervene if there are numerous observers present and more likely if alone or with fewer people.

Now I would argue that a catholic worker (and I'll include you, since you are a person of conscience and are reading a catholic worker paper) is responsible for intervention and must not be a bystander. You chose to recognize poverty, injustice, and violence; therefore, you are no longer allowed to sit down and feel hopeless. No matter how many around you are acting like there is no problem, you must act.

But Kitty Genovese ended up dead.

And our planet is heading the same direction. It is no longer Al Gore or a few voices who are trying to convince others about climate change. More than 97% of scientists globally agree that climate change is real and is caused by human activity. But too many of us are bystanders. We say, 'Well if that many scientists believe it, they must be doing something about it.' We say, 'Well if that many people know about it and are NOT doing anything about it, there must not be anything we can do.' We say 'It's too late.' We say 'I'm doing all I can do.' We say all kinds of things while we stand by, but we do stand by, and the world is dying.

So let me posit that we are also watching as homelessness spirals out of control in the towns where we live and try to comfort the afflicted, while Dorothy Day said we should also be afflicting the comfortable. Catholic workers are not by nature or by ethic allowed to be bystanders Because of the personalism we practice, we have a closer relationship with the victims of that homelessness and are moved to use any leverage we have to alleviate it. Are there too many of us seeing the need but without focusing our eyes? Are we assuming others will do something? Are we assuming nothing can be done? Are we afflicted with bystander syndrome and would feel our personal responsibility profoundly if we stood alone to face it?

In the past decades of Loaves & Fishes community, we have applied more of our...

The Bystander Effect continues on pg. 2

Stepping Out

by Tone Lanzillo

Upon graduating from college back in 1976 with a degree in political science, I decided to return to my hometown of Louisville, Kentucky to supposedly change the world. Within the next seven years, I volunteered with the re-election campaign of US Congressman Ron Mazzoli, served as campaign director with the Democrats For Progress, worked as a legislative aide to the Board of Alderman, and was a community organizer for Common Cause. After seven years, I was tired. Maybe even burnt out. Thought it was about time to leave government and politics for the private sector and find personal success.

So, for about the next 36 years, I didn't work on any political campaigns, volunteer with any activist groups, lobby or even make a financial contribution to any cause. I simply focused on raising my two sons, going to church, playing piano and working various jobs in the mental health field. It was working as a counselor, social

Donna married Jason and Michael this summer on the shores of Lake Superior. It was a beautiful wedding and we were all so happy to celebrate with them! The newlyweds have since moved out of the community to focus on this exciting new chapter in their lives.



worker or case manager over the years that I found some sense of meaning; especially in my work within the men's community.

In December, 2016, I was laid off from my position as a case manager with a partial care program. And just as I was getting ready to take another job in mental health, I stopped myself. At the age of 62, I realized that I had to leave traditional mental health and find the road less traveled.

After some soul searching, I began exploring various intentional communities around the country; including the Bruderhof community in New York and a lay monastic community in the Southwest. But after doing some research and talking to friends, I thought the Catholic Worker community would be the best fit for me. I then identified 18 Catholic Worker communities that I wanted to reach out to.

When I arrived in Duluth, MN to visit the Loaves and Fishes community on November 7th, 2017, I became interested in being a live-in volunteer at the Dorothy Day House - the men's house of hospitality. Given my years counseling men and working with various men's groups, I thought I could make a small contribution to helping the men who came through our doors to visit or stay. After officially joining the community in December, I simply focused on the men at that house.

But by the fall of 2018, I found myself reading everything I could find on the environment and climate change. Hearing about climate change, the rise in the global temperature, water droughts, the melting of the Arctic ice cap, disappearance of coral reefs, and the loss of more wildlife had deeply saddened me.

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Hearing about all of this everyday had left me feeling depressed, angry and generally overwhelmed. I had tried to wrap my head around this but simply couldn't do it. Like many people, I tried to distance and distract myself, and not think about what was happening all around us. But it wasn't working. It had become increasingly difficult to listen to the daily reports of various environmental crises in our country and around the world.

In October of last year, I began writing. At first, my writing simply served as a therapeutic outlet to identify and explore my feelings. But within weeks, I started writing pieces that I wanted to share with others. And by mid-November, I had finished my first piece entitled "Putting My Foot Down." I talked about my decision to no longer own or drive a car, and to use my own two feet to get around town.

It was during the last week of November when I realized that I was about to step out of my comfort zone. It had finally dawned on me that I could no longer watch what was happening. And I was about to enter the public discourse about the environment and climate change after spending the last 36 years not talking about or being an activist for any social or political cause.

It was the evening of November 27th that I found myself standing before a group of UMD college students and saying how I was concerned about their futures with regards to climate change. The next day, the Duluth News Tribune published my first column entitled "Making It Personal Now". At this point, I knew that I wanted to talk about climate change with others through writing and speaking. I was feeling nervous and anxious stepping out of my comfort zone. But I couldn't be a bystander anymore; I couldn't just watch what was happening to our environment, the underprivileged, and our children's futures.

Over this past year, I have tried to put myself out there, and find opportunities to engage and educate others about climate change. After helping those same UMD college students sponsor an environmental summit in late March, I took a bus to Philadelphia and walked to Washington DC - meeting people along the way to listen to what they were thinking and feeling about climate change. After returning to Duluth, I just kept reading and writing. In September, a group of us put on a forum to address the need for more news and information about climate change in Duluth. And within four weeks, we were coordinating Duluth/365 - a community conversation on

people's concerns about climate change and how to respond. PACT-TV, a local public television station, approached us about producing a new show, entitled Climate>Duluth, where we interview community leaders who are addressing climate change.

When I look back over the last twelve months, I am somewhat surprised by everything that has taken place. I can't tell you how many mornings I've woken up with knots in my stomach - thinking about writing another article, talking at a city council meeting, organizing a vigil at city hall or speaking before an environmental group. Even though there are days when I'm walking around like a ball of nerves, I just remind myself to keep focused and moving.

One of the biggest influences in my decision to not be a bystander with regards to climate change was the book "The Courage To Create" by Rollo May. He talks about how essential it is for all of us in this "age of limbo" to possess courage. May wrote that we have a choice. We can choose to withdraw from the world and become paralyzed or apathetic. He warns us that if we choose this response, we will have given up our change opportunity to help in the "forming of the future". Or, we can live into the future by "leaping into the unknown." May wondered if we have the courage necessary to "preserve our sensitivity, awareness and responsibility in the face of radical change." He asked if we were able to participate and contribute to the forming of the new society. May believed that it takes courage to do something new, and to "push into a forest where there are no well-worn paths and from which no one has returned to guide us." I've decided to leap into the unknown and push into that forest. I can't tell you what will come from my writing, speaking, and organizing efforts to address climate change. But I know that it's the path I must take for the remaining days of this life. ☞

activist energy and sacrifice to speaking against war even from jail cells. We have traveled to the Pentagon to testify that the world will end up in dust and ashes if they continue with their plans to use the weapons of mass destruction in an ill-advised attempt to solve problems. We have asked that the US shut down the School of the Americas, where Central America Officers are trained to perpetrate violence against their own people and their own military officers. And we have offered hospitality to migrants from Central America while they tried to get their legal immigration papers to continue on into Canada.

Have you looked in a toy store lately to see the war toys being marketed (successfully) to children? Tanks, combat planes, grenades, rockets, guns, helicopters, action figure soldiers... They sell onesies and baby blankets in camouflage color. These also have inspired an activity of ours - placing stickers on them with information about being unhealthy and by protesting in the toy store wearing elf costumes.

In recent years, we have lobbied candidates for public office on many issues that affect people who are experiencing homelessness or poverty. We've pressured city and county governments to provide warming shelters and hygiene facilities, and to protect the rights of people experiencing homelessness; human rights that restore and maintain one's dignity and keep them safe. We continue to hold up spaces to lift up the voices of the afflicted, promoting the visibility of those who are often unseen and unheard.

We have a huge responsibility to keep pushing forward. There are too many areas that need us to act. So you (person of conscious) are asked to do something to afflict the comfortable, stand up for our planet, or advocate for a future where humans have what they need to live full lives. Our future must anticipate discomfort whenever we see people living in comfort, with more than their share, among those living in discomfort with far too little. ☞

The Duluth chapter of The Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless advocating for an increase in MFIP cash assistance and affordable housing



The Future is Looking Bright

by Andrew Moshier

I can honestly say that the Dorothy Day House has changed my life. My experience there made it possible for me to get back on my own two feet and get into my own place while keeping the same job. During my stay I met and made friends with the residents, guests and volunteers of the entire Loaves & Fishes Community.

I fell in love with the community and the compassion each person has and shares. Never have I seen such a large, tight knit and well organized community helping for the greater good. It has inspired me to do what I've always wanted to do: volunteer and give back to the community. The Dorothy Day House is now an outlet for that heartfelt desire of mine to donate food and time. I cooked on the grill at the Jefferson Street block party and hope to do it again next year.

Volunteering time at the Dorothy Day House is in my line of sight. I just started a new job which will make it possible. I am very excited.

The Bike Cave, just below the Dorothy Day House, is how I was first introduced to the community. Upon arriving in Duluth, my bike was in need of repair and because of the Bike Cave I was able to maintain it during the winter and began to learn how to work on it myself. It

would be nice to give back to the Bike Cave next summer.

My future is looking pretty bright. Since I moved my life to Duluth everything has been falling into place. It's a bit surreal now how synchronized life has been unfolding for me. People entering my life, which led to jobs, those jobs led to better housing opportunities. I am now working hard to get back into school. I'm hoping that in a years time give or take I will have started that path. First, at Lake Superior College to take a few prerequisite classes and help boost my GPA. Then I hope to enroll in UMD Engineering Program. I'm thinking civil major with an environmental minor, since they unfortunately don't offer environmental engineering as a major.

I choose to live most every day in a very happy way to be present and exist moment by moment, continually and diligently being grateful and showing my gratitude daily, or as often as I can. Since I have started this habit, life has given me more and more to appreciate and be grateful for. So I am loving life and everything it has been throwing at me - all the ups and downs. Thank you, Loaves & Fishes for being there when no one else is and for changing lives. 🐞

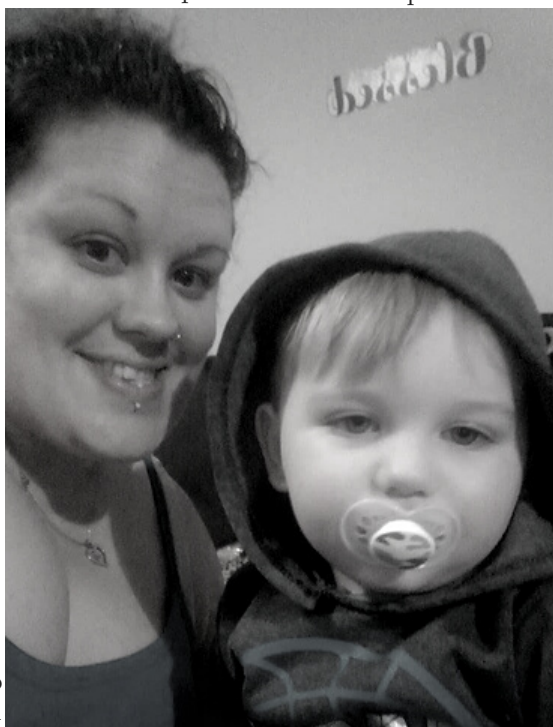
Andrew was a former guest at the Dorothy Day House and just got his own housing this year. He's working at a residential facility and planning to start college soon. He also helps staff the warming shelter in Duluth, serving others who experience homelessness.

Through My Eyes - A Look Back and Ahead

by Valerie Joeckel

Homeless, pregnant, new to recovery, and broken - that is how I would describe myself before my stay at the Olive Branch. Moving into what I now call my second home changed my life and restored my hope. I wouldn't have had anywhere to bring my baby home to if it wasn't for Loaves & Fishes. The community and other volunteers loved me un-conditionally and gave me a chance to get back on my feet. No one else was willing to do that. There was also the opportunity to give back. After experiencing the warmth and love from the community, I wanted to be part of helping others too.

While I was still at Olive Branch, I began to volunteer my time with local activist groups bringing awareness to the housing crisis in Duluth. I was working to put a face to the issue. I wanted to tell my story and allow people to see that people experiencing homelessness or poverty were humans too. I also got to experience the professional side of the work that I was doing. I was invited to share my story at the St. Louis County Public Health and Human Services Conference with the team that does SPDAT assessments. I also attended the MN Coalition for the Homeless



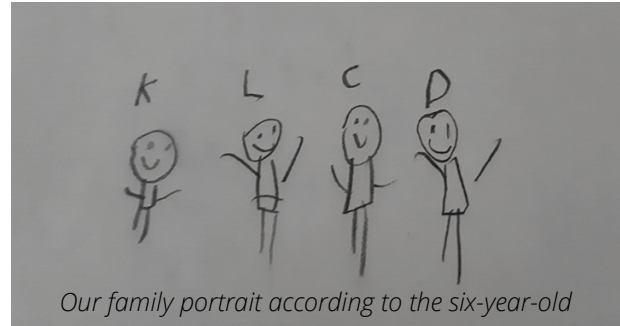
Val and her 2 year old son, Paul.

Conference and got a real feel for the issues I was passionate about. It felt good to be working side-by-side with folks I admired.

After living at Olive Branch for four months, I was lucky enough to receive a call that my name had come up for transitional housing and I would be getting a temporary place - finally, somewhere to call home for me and my baby. After moving out, I began taking house duty shifts at the Olive Branch and continued publicly speaking out about affordable housing and homelessness. I got a job at San Marco apartments (with Center City Housing), working with folks with chemical dependency and mental health issues as main housing barriers. I joined the Community Development Committee of the City of Duluth, which helps to determine where federal funding is distributed for housing programs and other community resources. I have moved into a more permanent housing situation at the Harbor Highlands. Looking forward, I'm applying for jobs in human services so I can help other people like myself.

Housing advocate, mother, in long-term recovery, and beautifully restored - that is my new description and how I see myself today. 🐞

Val is a friend of the Loaves & Fishes Community. She is a single mother and works on housing issues as she continues to advocate for others who have experienced homelessness



Hannah House Notes

by Chelsea Froemke

One year. That's how long our current foster kiddos have been living with Drew and I at Hannah House. One year filled with shared meals, bicycle rides, birth-days, play dates, barbies, paper airplanes, worm collections, library visits, kitchen dance parties, swim lessons, selfies, refrigerator art, and good night kisses! One year filled with meltdowns, apologies, tears, frustration, uncertainty, and exhaustion. One year filled with appointments, therapy, skills work, tutoring, and meetings. One year filled with learning about each other; learning how to trust each other. One year filled with love.

If you ask other foster parents, they would paint a similar image. When these two children moved in last October we had no idea how long they would be with us or what our lives together would look like. In the last year we have created a new normal for both them and us as "new" parents. Learning has been a major theme this year. It is amazing to look back and realize how much these kids have changed and matured over the last year. It is also amazing to look back and consider the ways in which Drew and I have also changed and (hopefully) grown as parents.

If foster care has taught us anything it is to hold plans loosely. It's impossible to know how long our little family will be configured in this way. We do know that a transition is in our kid's future but the when and where are still yet to be fully known. As foster parents it is our job to hold those questions for our kids; to comfort them in the uncertainties and try to navigate questions that have no answers yet.

We are grateful to be parenting these kids in the context of the Loaves & Fishes Community. I have no idea how we would have survived this past year without the support of community. These kids essentially have 10 aunts and uncles in the neighborhood who love and care about them deeply. Some days, Hannah Houses front door never seems to fully close because of community activity. What does it mean for kids to grow up in this almost village-like setting? Drew and I have committed to offering hospitality by fostering and our community has made that commitment possible. These two kids have thrived living in a community context; I know because their faces light up whenever one of our community mates enters our house or spends time with the kids.

As I consider how much all four of our lives here at Hannah House have changed and been enriched in a span of just one year, I can't help but wonder how many others have had similar experiences within these walls during the 29 years prior. Further I wonder, who will come next? What will their story will look like here in this place? How will they change or grow because of this home and this community? It is an honor to call Hannah House home and I look forward to continuing to be a part of its remarkable, unfolding story. 🐞

Bread and Roses

by Esin Henderson

Hello, my name is Esin Henderson. I am seven years old and I live at Bread and Roses House with my mom and dad, my brother, my adopted grandma Donna, her cat Kohti and our gecko Luna. Kohti's brother Wandhu also lived with us but he passed away this summer. Because I am the youngest member in this house and in the community, they asked me to write this article.

So many things happened between last spring and now! I spent a lot of time playing with friends at Hannah House and Olive Branch. We rode our bikes, got a lot of ice cream, went to the beach and had a lot of playdates. Our block party was a lot of fun this summer, I got a teddy bear as a prize. Also my grandma from Turkey visited us and she was a little cold although it was summer here. My other grandparents from Chicago also visited us but they weren't cold.

Last month, my good friends at the Olive Branch house moved out. I miss them already but I hope to have sleepovers at their new place! We also picked apples and grapes and made cider and juice from them this fall! I love living at Bread and Roses and I love coming back home from school every day to Kohti and Donna and my parents! 🐾



Esin and Kohti snuggling at Bread and Roses.

Foundation identified a 25% increase in homelessness among Minnesotans over the age of 55. That was the fastest growth in homelessness of any age group in the state.

I've been living and working here on and off for 24 years. Over that time the needs in our Duluth community have changed dramatically. When I first arrived as an idealistic 19 year old, I was shocked at the numbers of people needing emergency help with housing. Yet, almost everyone who came to us back then found a place to stay within 30 days, and we always were able to make room for a person with no other options.

Today, we turn away anywhere between 4 and 30 men every day. As housing has grown more out of reach, the average length of stay for single men - even men working full time jobs, saving money and looking daily for apartments - has stretched to six months. For men with barriers such as a felony conviction or eviction, that stay can be as long as a year.

This is played out by the numbers: the priority wait list for Coordinated Entry in Duluth - the primary gateway to subsidized housing for people experiencing homelessness - is 1150 households. And out of all the Duluth renters who are lucky enough to have a place to call home, over half of them pay more than they can realistically afford for housing.

As needs change, we try to adapt. We didn't quite expect the flood of refugees from Central America that filled this house when it first opened, but we found interpreters, drivers and made room. We were caught off guard when youth homelessness exploded, but we kept the couch open for the children who showed up at our door, too old to be placed in foster care and too young to safely (or legally) reside in shelters (and we are enormously grateful for the new housing and shelter options our friends at LSS and Life House have secured in recent years!). When there has been need for a safe space for single dads, for people getting out of treatment or jail and afraid of falling into old habits, for trans and gay people scared of traditional shelters and other options available to them, we made room. When more people came for dinner we expanded our table.

We don't do it perfectly, our hearts are not always as open as they should be, but we hope to be a refuge that can respond in real time to emerging needs, even as sometimes the need is daunting.

Today, over coffee and the paper and chatting about the weather, the young guys are treated to teasing and and a good dose of wisdom, even as we all silently worry what is going to come of the men who by all rights should be retiring into some comfort but must

trudge the streets looking for work and sitting patiently on housing waitlists that might be six months or a year from calling their name.

What does the future hold for this house? I don't know for sure. But we are invested in keeping it's doors open for another thirty years to come, at least. We've invested in rehabbing our basement and adding a bathroom, but the plan to build a new stairs hasn't happened yet. And this year, God willing, a down-to-the-studs rehab of the kitchen is needed to allow us to continue serving meals to our live-in guests and many daily visitors. We'll learn as we go about the needs in our community, we will respond as well as we can, and we will continue to raise those needs in halls of power. As always, we are thankful to you who keep this house running with donations of household goods, by cooking meals, by volunteering your time to answer phones and advocate for our guests. There is no way to plan for the urgent needs that present themselves daily at our door, we just do it. And you make it possible. 🐾

Current Needs to Keep Us Going

Volunteer needs:

Plumbers, electricians and carpenters to help with house projects and maintenance. Call Joel at 218-340-4356 for details.

Volunteers to take 4-5 hour house shifts at Bob Tavani Respite House - help cook, clean, welcome guests and more. Please call Kate or Kelly at 218-464-1772 for details.

Hairstylists and barbers to help at the Community Connect event on January 23rd. Call Donna at 218-341-2464.

Day-to-day needs:

- Eggs (home raised are a-ok!)
- Sugar, Butter, and margarine
- Healthy breakfast cereal
- Laundry detergent
- NEW men's underwear (medium and large)
- Socks (cotton and thermal, all adult sizes)
- Shampoo and conditioner
- Winter hats, gloves, coats, and boots (all adult sizes)
- DTA bus passes (single-use, 7-day, and 31-day passes)
- Gift cards to area gas stations (\$15-\$25 preferred)
- Gift cards to SuperOne and the Whole Foods Co op
- **Special request:** Working vehicle (passenger car, van or small truck)

Donations are accepted Monday - Saturday, 10am-8pm at **1712 Jefferson St. Duluth**. Call 218-724-2054 with questions.

Monetary donations:

Tax-deductible donations which go to help pay for house maintenance can be made out to Loaves & Fishes Housing Inc

Non-tax deductible donations which go to help pay for day to day expenses can be made to Loaves & Fishes

Mail checks for either organization to **1705 Jefferson St, Duluth MN 55812**

Dorothy Day House

by Joel Kilgour

At 85 years old, J can be excused for sleeping in sometimes and wearing his bathrobe around the house. His jokes are clean but cringeworthy, and his stories amble in a way that you never know if he's talking about the present or a long ago past, always landing comfortably on an understated punctuation of a life lesson. He may currently be the eldest member of our household, but he's not a complete outlier. As I write this, most of our household is over the age of 59. It's a disturbing but predicted trend, as the population ages and seniors living on fixed incomes find themselves with medical conditions or debts that knock them down a peg or two, sometimes to the streets.

From 2015 to 2018, researchers at the Wilder

St. Patrick's Day Irish Ceili

The Ceili is a Northland tradition and it is open to people of all ages and abilities. Dances are taught and no partner is necessary. Proceeds benefit Loaves and Fishes.

**Tuesday, March 17
7pm - 10pm**

**St Paul's Episcopal Church
1710 Superior Street
(use Greysolon Rd entrance)**

**Suggested donation: \$10
individual, \$5 low-income,
\$25 family**

The Cavernous Past

by Drew Anderson

We often get asked, "How long has the Bike Cave been here?" My answer is always something like "hmm, about 10 years but nobody seems to know exactly." The Bike Cave's origin story is mysterious, which lends a unique appreciation for the place: There is literally a walk-in bike shop in the basement of this house! Weird! How is that possible? Good question.

From what I've gathered over the years, the Bike Cave began not in service to bicycles but to lawn mowers. Guests of Dorothy Day house often hail from the working class and know how to turn a wrench. Lending their skills to the community was (and still is) encouraged. As the basement workspace grew to accommodate small engines and associated tools, guests and volunteers started maintaining their bicycles. This attracted some attention and the community started fixing bikes for friends in need of reliable transportation.

When exactly this operation opened to the community is unclear, but tools, patch kits, bike stands, and the bicycles themselves accumulated. In fact, the start of our bicycle parts inventory is owed to opportunistic dumpster divers in the back of local bike shops. Our Bike Cave looks and operates quite differently now (come see for yourself) but we owe it all to the mysterious early days when it was less about ideals and more about the needs. It seems the necessity for a bicycle came first and the vision for a no-cost community bicycle shop later.

In my half decade with the Bike Cave some major changes have happened that I think will also ripple into the future. Maybe you read about the Bike Cave's recent renovation in the spring/summer of 2018. The extensive project was carried out by many hands. The basement/cave was literally excavated--a back breaking job until our friend, Gus, managed to pilot a backhoe inside while ducking under the radiator pipes. The same amount of dirt and concrete that took us days to haul out by hand, took him and his machine minutes* Another good friend, Mark and his apprentice installed a new steel beam making what once was a crowded laundry room into an unobstructed workspace. Our very own Joel addressed the framing and finishing of our new bathroom and utility closet with a polished eye



Open shop at the Bike Cave

for carpentry. A heap of 2x4s and shiplap saved from the initial demolition were processed into interior siding for the new rooms! From there on it has been a slow, tedious process of organizing everything the Bike Cave saves. To our relief, a systems-savvy friend, Kate, and some new acquisitions made this job easier: St. Paul's Church donated \$1000 for the purchase of new storage for the shop; our friend Pete contributed some scrap steel plate to shield our work bench; and Chelsea's Grandpa's old tool chest has been put back into service for every tool you may need to dismantle or rebuild a bicycle. With so many added amenities, it can be tempting to forget that the Bike Cave thrived without them. How to become stewards of a new shop while honoring the past is the question at hand.

What hasn't changed is the Bike Cave's need

for people. Running a no-cost community bicycle shop on volunteerism is a funny business model. You're not paid to show up. You don't even have to show up, but we really like it when you do. If it wasn't for our good friends Bob, Chelsea, Dave 1, Dave 2, James, Isaac, and Scott showing up so often, we would be missing nutritious snacks, expert bike maintenance, dump and recycling runs, and the friendly banter that makes the Bike Cave so popular. Over a 100 bikes were steered from the landfill into the happy hands of new owners this year alone. And as we enter into the depths of winter, our shop will provide no cost maintenance and warm coffee to the rugged riders who brave the cold, snow and salt. Thanks to the hard work of the Bike Cave's uncertain past, we can, with certainty, keep our shop open.

*Gus passed away this year and he will be dearly missed. 🐾

Olive Branch House Notes

by Kier Waskey

Olive Branch has undergone many changes in the last few months. Until early November, we had the same seven guests staying at Olive branch for six months which is quite unusual for our house. Those six months were a time of growth, friendship, and sharing in personal hardships and victories. Four of those guests moved out in November which changed the dynamics of the house a lot, fairly quickly. We were excited to see them get their own housing! At the same time, after living with and spending so much time with such lovely people, we're missing the guests who left, who've become our friends and family. The length of stay for our guests seems to lengthen as housing in Duluth, like much of the U.S., gets more scarce and more expensive. Ten percent more people in Minnesota experience homelessness today than in 2015, and that continued increase

concerns the community and how our hospitality houses operate. Our community is always changing and responding to need, and our network of supporters makes sure we have what we need to carry on.

I moved into the community in August, so I'm the newest member. After volunteering for the last few years it was exciting to move into Olive Branch. In addition to my love of music, I have brought lots of plants, my fish Subaru, and what has been described as "chaotic-good" energy to the house. It's been good to have three members of the community in Olive Branch again with Kate, Shelly, and me sharing that space with our guests.

Another new and exciting happening is Shelly's initiative of bringing students from the Occupational Therapy program at



Kier, holding a Velvet-top fungus they foraged

St. Scholastica into Olive Branch. Shelly is excited about the increasing opportunity for OT being a service in the lives of more and more people, and hopeful for more OT students to go into the field with a greater understanding of the experience of homelessness so they may better serve people in vulnerable situations. It's been great having the students here bringing conversation as we learn more about the benefits of having OT as a resource in people's lives.

Kate has lived at Olive Branch for over a year now, a celebratory milestone in her life, as well as in the Loaves & Fishes community. She reflects on the two years she's been in the community as a volunteer, and the many years she's known Loaves & Fishes, a

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Jen's speech to Local Solutions to End Poverty

Hello, my name is Jennifer. I really wanted to be present tonight, however, I had to work and was unable to take the time off. In any event, I want to share my story with you...

...I once read a statistic that claimed that in the U.S. there are four houses sitting empty for every one person on the street. I have to wonder how many of those houses there are in Duluth. I, myself, have been on the housing list for a Section 8 voucher for over two years now. That has been two years of shelters, two weeks on the street, alone, and TERRIFIED, months of couch surfing... All while trying to work and somehow, some way get ahead. I have been working during this time as well. It is expensive to be homeless whether people think it is or not. There are a lot of different needs when you don't have a home. There are a lot of things that prevent you from getting a job when you don't have a home. There are a lot of things that prevent you from getting proper medical care and medication when you don't have a home.

There is a misconception about what homeless looks like. There is a misconception that if homeless people "would just get a job" they would be fine. I cannot tell you how many times I have heard that statement from the people that I have talked to while I was sitting at work, being homeless...

There has GOT to be something done about this crisis. These are lives we are talking about. These are people just like you. Housing is a basic human need. If people have affordable housing, they are more likely to find a job, seek proper medical care, and spend their money in the community that they live in which would be a huge influx in our economy. The medical expansion is SO focused on the almighty dollar that I think that they have forgotten that the doctors who work there have taken oaths to help people. The city is SO focused on tourist attractions and dollars that they are forgetting to take care of the people that live there. There has to be a better solution. Human lives should take precedence over everything.

See "A Time of Transition, Healing, and Hope" to read about Jen's story with homelessness.

No one can say for certain who "threw the first brick" that June 1969 night at Stonewall in New York (since some folks at the uprising don't remember bricks being thrown at all), but what happened after six days of protests and three nights of riots against the anti-queer police raid was an explosion of energy and activism around the burgeoning gay rights movement.

Marsha "Pay It No Mind" Johnson was one of the participants of the Stonewall uprising, as well as a Black, fiercely compassionate, self-identified drag queen (although with her expressed to desire for gender-confirmation surgery and her daily self-presentation as a woman, she is usually considered transgender these days). She was also an already beloved member of the Greenwich Village community of street people, homeless LGBT+ youth, drag queens, sex workers, and people who used drugs. She earned the nickname "The Mayor of Christopher Street" because of how much love she had for her people, her willingness to give away her plastic jewelry and the day - old flowers from her hair if someone thought they were pretty, or the coat off her back to a kid new to the city, even though it wasn't uncommon for Marsha to be sleeping on someone else's floor that

edge in the gay rights movement which had already grown more reformist and assimilationist just a few years post-Stonewall. The STAR House was a hospitality house in its own right, serving those who were hungry and living on the street, paid for through hustling, stealing and sex work by Marsha and Sylvia.

• • •

The idea first started for me before I even knew the Loaves & Fishes community existed. I was a couple years out of college and discerning a calling to a life as a Catholic monk, yet struggling internally with the church's teachings about homosexuality and what that meant for my life, when I read a Rolling Stone article about LGBT+ youth homelessness. The article includes an interview with the founder of the Ali Forney Center—the largest organization dedicated to serving LGBT+ youth—who also happens to be a queer, former monk-in-training.

That path hadn't led me past the monastery and toward Duluth yet, but the mission resonated deeply inside me. So now, with a husband, a dog, over seven years of live-in volunteer experience between us, and after a lot of community conversations, Jason's and my life is leading us toward something we want to call the Marsha P. Johnson House. The way and the shape is still being formed, but we have recognized the need for shelter specifically dedicated to queer and trans people experiencing homelessness that our community's current binary of a house for men and a house for women and families can't adequately address. And because nothing like it exists north of the Twin Cities in Minnesota, we feel equipped to address this lack in catholic worker fashion. We don't need more surveys, panels, and government inquiries to tell us what we already know, and we don't want their dollars that come with so many strings attached. We are working out the details and want to be intentional about this being a community-generated project that includes and centers the insight of those directly effected, with the help of those local organizations run by and for queer and trans people in the Twin Ports, and our allies. We trust in abundance, and trust that whatever is holding this all together and luring us towards Love will hold us as we venture into the uncertainty of breaking new ground. ☁

Michael is a former Live-in volunteer of the Loaves & Fishes Community who recently moved out with his husband Jason. The two plan to create the Marsha P. Johnson House together in the near future.

relationship that started with her as a guest at Olive Branch years ago. Kate brings so much laughter to Olive Branch, and unique and essential experiences to the Loaves & Fishes community as a former guest. Thinking about Kate's journey of becoming a live-in volunteer with the community, we get excited about other former guests and current guests who've caught a passion to work on housing initiatives.

Like Val Joeckel who moved out of Olive Branch and into her own housing about 2 years ago, and since then has stayed connected to our community and works on various housing initiatives in Duluth. Jen Bussey is another guest who has been excited to take on an advocacy role to help others who've experienced homelessness. She's spoken at City Council, and does a lot of writing from her experience about her thoughts on the housing crisis, and the struggles people experience without a home. When she moves out of Olive Branch, she plans to expand her advocacy into more areas of her life to continue to support her Duluth community. Jen and Val both have a column they wrote in this newsletter. Go read them to learn more about their story and connection with our community!

As we are now in the winter time, we've been taking out our pens and paint to join in what we call the crafting season together. We have a creative bunch at Olive Branch right now, and making art together helps prevent cabin fever in the long, cold Duluth winter time. We look forward to long conversations, cozy winter evenings together, and sharing hot tea and coffee with all those in our space now, and all those who may walk through our door tomorrow. ☁

Marsha P. Johnson

by Michael Elderbrook

It started when Marsha threw a shot glass into the mirror behind the bar...err, wait no. The rebellion began when Marsha threw a brick at one of the cops raiding the bar...hold on, maybe it was: Sylvia had to run and wake up Marsha because she was sleeping in the nearby park with other street people to tell her that an uprising was happening at the Stonewall Inn.



Marsha "Pay It No Mind" Johnson

night without a dollar to her name.

In the years following the Stonewall uprising, along with Sylvia Rivera, another trans woman of color, longtime friend and co-conspirator in the struggle for gay rights, Marsha P. Johnson helped start the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries and the STAR House. Although the movement only lasted from 1970-1973, the collective existed to fight for the rights and dignity of queer and transgender people, homeless youth and sex workers. They constantly pushed to maintain a more radical, liberationist

A Time of Transition, Healing, and Hope

by Jennifer Bussey

My name is Jennifer. I am currently staying at the Olive Branch house. I moved to Duluth about two and a half years ago because I was feeling a domestic abuse situation. I, unfortunately, fell through the cracks, so to speak.

Before I got the opportunity to stay here, I had stayed in a couple of different shelters, on the street, and couch surfed. During the time that I was doing all of those things I never really got a chance to heal from the years of trauma that I had experienced. I felt as though I was still in complete survival mode, and, though I was able to force myself to get jobs and work, felt clueless about what it was that I should be doing with my life. It all felt so very overwhelming. I had left everything behind, I felt as though I didn't really know myself anymore, and I had forgotten how to actually take care of myself, not just do the things that I thought were expected of me.



Jen sitting on the porch swing at Olive Branch

It has been since I moved into this house that I began to be able to breathe, for the first time in years. I began to understand that I was not a failure due to the circumstances that I had lived through. The people who are a part of my life here have offered me compassion, understanding, empathy, and most of all, support. I have been able to discover what I think is important to me, and for me, with the help of these supportive

people. They are continually encouraging me to do the things that I feel so passionate about. I have rekindled my love for writing, and by default speaking about things that matter to me.

The biggest thing is the housing crisis that we face here in the city of Duluth. I feel passionate about this subject. I feel passionate about trying to make a difference in the way people look at homelessness. I want to let people know that there trying to make a difference in the way people look at homelessness. I want to let people know that there are so very many different reasons that people end up without homes. I look

forward to being able to get involved in some projects around the city and perhaps be able to make a difference. I want to share my story so that some of the stigma about why people are homeless can be lifted. I have come to realize that there are so many places that improvements can be made in our system. We collectively need to make a difference.

The Olive Branch community is a place where people are given a space that is safe in so many ways. This has been a starting point for me to do something that will make me feel very happy. I am on the verge of getting housing of my own. I plan to continue to take care of myself, and I definitely plan to continue to expand the writing and speaking that I am just now beginning. I plan to keep on doing those things until there is no longer a need for the city to hold a memorial on our Courthouse stairs for any loss of life due to homelessness. I hope to be a part of a solution where we show up to save lives, not just honor them.

Without the safety and love I have felt in this house, I don't know if I would have ever figured this all out. One day, I hope to start volunteering here as well. I would love to encourage and support people, the way I feel encouraged and supported. ☺

Jen is currently a guest at Olive Branch who recently got her section 8 voucher. We're excited that she wants to volunteer with the Loaves & Fishes Community after she moves out, and we're looking forward to seeing how she impacts people more and more by sharing her story

U.S. Supreme Court to Decide if LGBTQ Americans Have the Same Rights to Work

by Rob Trousdale

On Oct. 8 the U.S. Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in a case that will decide whether LGBTQ workers can be fired for their sexual orientation or gender identity. Chase Strangio, a staff attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union's LGBT & HIV Project and a nationally recognized expert on transgender rights, has described it as "the most important case directly addressing LGBTQ people ever to reach the United States Supreme Court."

The oral arguments will involve three separate cases. The first, Zarda v. Altitude Express, involves a sky-diving instructor fired after disclosing he was gay. Similarly, in Bostock v. Clayton County, a beloved county social worker with favorable performance reviews was fired soon after joining a gay recreational softball league. The third case, Harris Funeral Homes v. EEOC, involves a funeral home worker who was fired after refusing to hide her transgender identity.

Central to all three is Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin. Title VII establishes that it is illegal for employers to treat employees differently based on their sex. In 1999 the Supreme Court ruled, in the case of Price Waterhouse vs. Hopkins, that Title VII applies to gender stereotyping as well.

The plaintiff in Price Waterhouse, Ann Hopkins, was denied partnership due to her bosses' perspective that she was inadequately feminine. She was told that if she wanted to make partner she would need to wear makeup, walk and

talk like a woman, and style her hair (i.e., conform to heteronormative stereotypes of femininity). Hopkins' victory at the Supreme Court made it constitutionally impermissible for employers to treat employees differently because they do not perform their gender roles in ways prescribed by the employer. Hopkins was awarded nearly \$400,000 and returned to Price Waterhouse, eventually leading one of the most diverse (as well as profitable) work teams in company history.

Dozens of federal district courts and state courts — including five federal appeals courts — have used the ruling in Price Waterhouse to

protect transgender people against discrimination under Title VII. This makes sense. As the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals clearly explains, discrimination against transgender workers is sex discrimination because "a person is defined as transgender precisely because of the perception that his or her behavior transgresses gender stereotypes."

The Trump administration disagrees. The Department of Justice (DOJ) filed its brief in the Harris Funeral Home case Aug. 16. It justifies an employer's right to fire an employee for being transgender by arguing that "proving discrimination because

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Community Connect

MONDAY, JANUARY 23
10AM - 2PM

DAMIANO CENTER
206 W 4TH ST,
DULUTH, MN 55806

**JOIN US AT DAMIANO FOR A MEAL AND GET
INFORMATION ON HEALTH SERVICES AND
HOUSING RESOURCES. YOU CAN ALSO GET A
FREE HAIRCUT AND SOME FOOT CARE!**

Call Donna with any questions 218-341-2464

of sex requires showing disadvantageous treatment of members of one sex relative to similarly situated members of the other.” This is a radical argument. Not only does the DOJ argue that transgender workers should have no protection from discrimination under Title VII, but it is asking the Supreme Court to overrule Price Waterhouse. As Josh Block, another ACLU attorney, succinctly summarized, the “DOJ just filed a brief with the Supreme Court saying it’s fine for employers to have dress codes prohibiting women from wearing pants.”

The issue is being argued at a time when federal workplace protections against sex discrimination are desperately needed. There are only 21 states with statutes that protect workers against both sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination. In addition, less than 15% of American wage and salaried workers are card-signing union members. As a result, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development recently ranked the United States last out of 71 countries when assessing worker protection from an employer’s firing — meaning

that of the 71 countries ranked, employees in the U.S. are some of the least protected in the world when it comes to an employer’s right to fire.

Make no mistake, gay and transgender workplace rights are under serious attack. Nobody should be fired for their LGBTQ identity. An adverse ruling would potentially send millions of LGBTQ Americans back into the closet, as they would be required to balance risking their jobs against showing up to work as their full, authentic selves. If that weren’t enough, the administration is using these cases as an opportunity to attack sex discrimination protections for all workers.

Unfortunately, outside of LGBTQ activist spaces, there has been little to no coverage of this Supreme Court case that could have a disastrous impact on not only LGBTQ workers but any American who shows up to work in ways that don’t fit traditional gender stereotypes. ☹

Rob is a good friend and a former live-in volunteer of the Loaves & Fishes Community. He continues to stay involved by taking house duty at Olive Branch where he used to live

"Some Days Suck, Thank God for Community"
- creation by Michael Elderbrook



Pictured here are the current live-in members of the Loaves & Fishes Community. Bottom row, left to right: Drew Anderson, Chelsea Froemke, Kier Waskey, Tone Lanzillo. Top row, left to right: Joel Kilgour, Donna Howard, Shelly Bruecken, a photo of Dorothy Day, Güneş Henderson, Kate Young, and Maweja Henderson. Not pictured are Güneş and Maweja's children Eren and Esin, and the many other people who are part of our community as volunteers, donors, meal providers, and advocates; people who's contribution make this work possible. We invite you all to join us in whatever ways you can.



Meet the Loaves & Fishes Catholic Worker Community

Contact the Loaves & Fishes Community:

Olive Branch
1614 Jefferson St.
Duluth, MN 55812
(218) 728-0629

Dorothy Day House and the Bike Cave
1712 Jefferson St.
Duluth, MN 55812
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