



July/August, 2015

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A Note from Joe's Pen

Thank you for another year of serving those most in need in our community. Here's what you did, by the numbers:

YOU sheltered 1,097 individuals for 17,570 bed nights;
YOU served 54,246 meals;
YOU distributed 37,672 articles of clothing;
YOU provided 4,199 showers.

On behalf of our guests, who appreciate all that you do for them, a warm and heartfelt THANK YOU!

We are about to start another shelter season and the most difficult day in my working calendar, knowing, as I do, that many of our guests consider the shelter their home, is the first Saturday in May. That's the day we close for the winter season and our guests have no alternative but to scatter to the four corners of the City.

Of course, the really hard part, are the women. Last year, we served 254 women, most between the ages of 45 and 65, many with mental health or behavioral health issues, who, in one way or another, have managed to burn their bridges to the other sheltering programs in Santa Fe.

Usually, these women have one of two choices: to go it alone or to hook-up with a man for protection, who more than likely will have issues of his own and how well he treats her is usually dependent upon how drunk or sober he is.

At the end of last season I sat down with a 65 year-old woman who was panicked and frightened. She had nowhere to go and was trying to persuade me to keep the shelter open. In the middle of her meltdown, she said, "Joe, you know, the most powerless men in America are homeless men, and the only people they have power over are homeless women."

I get it. And I think we all get it.

She has spent most of the summer camped out behind one building or another on Cerrillos Road. She was arrested once for the illegal possession of a shopping cart and spent a few nights in the Santa Fe County Detention Center. Who knew, but a shopping cart is valued at \$500.00. Even the police officer, who reluctantly arrested her, was surprised. She turned to me and apologetically said, "I can't believe that."

At one point, the building she was camped behind was sold and torn down. That's when she was arrested. When she got out of jail, she sought the security of the shelter and stayed for a few days on the side of our building and even though I received a complaint I didn't have the heart to make her move. Eventually, she found another location behind a different building on Cerrillos, which is where she is currently staying until we open on October 18th.

So the way I see it, we have a goal for this coming year, and that is to find the additional \$70,000-\$80,000 we need to keep the shelter open during the summer months for the women and children we serve. It won't be easy, on multiple fronts, but like all of us, these women deserve a safe place to be, and when I look around, it's kind of obvious: We're it! So God willing, and with the help of the entire community, maybe we'll manage to do just

that! After all, when you look back, look how far we've come.

Peace,
Joseph Jordan-Berenis

Meet Our New Case Manager



ICS welcomes **Paige Kitson** to our care team! She has worked with a number of Santa Fe service agencies including St. Elizabeth and Healthcare for the Homeless. She was also a night supervisor during the 2009-2010 season. She brings both a warm, friendly presence and vast knowledge of how to get things done for our guests. We are very excited to have her here!

Congratulations to the Happy Couple David and Maryanne, married In July



ICS Volunteer Feature - Joan Alessi

Joan Alessi has been a lifelong social activist. She was educated as a geologist/geophysicist at the State University of New York at Fredonia and Buffalo, NY. She has worked as a geologist, financial systems designer, and teacher of science and theology. Her interest in art led her to open the Desert Thistle Studio in 1998, featuring her photography, jewelry and sculpture. In 2007, she headlined a one woman exhibit at the Albuquerque Museum of Fine Art called "Descansos: The Sacred Landscape of New Mexico", which is the title of her book published the same year.



Joan has been active in many organizations and shelters through the years, and served on the New Mexico Citizen Review Board for abused and neglected children for nine years. After retiring from an education career at St Michaels High School in 2012, she has spent her time teaching adult

education at the Cathedral Basilica of St Francis of Assisi, and serving as a volunteer at Creativity for Peace, Pax Christi, the immigration clinic at St Bedes Episcopal Church, Casa Familia Shelter, the Interfaith Social Justice Network, the Interfaith Leadership Alliance, and the Interfaith Community Shelter at Pete's Place where she has worked as a registrar for the past four years.

In her free time she enjoys, music (especially opera), Native American Art, and in general life in Santa Fe. She has enjoyed the wonderful relationships with the many volunteers and guests at Pete's Place whom she considers dear friends!

ICS Alumni – Valerie Ortiz

Valerie Ortiz is originally from Las Cruces, but was raised in Arizona. She returned to Albuquerque and lived there for twenty years working as a manager at a local Wendy's. Unfortunately, she got involved in using drugs and eventually stopped working, leading to a downward spiral into homelessness. As is true of many people who struggle with addictions, she finally, 'hit bottom'; got tired of the drug scene and wanted to start over again somewhere away from her former life.



Valerie arrived at the shelter last October. After settling in to the routine, she began offering to help out in any way she could. She said it was helpful for her to 'have something to do' and

wanted to help others. From the beginning, she was a steady, reliable, and friendly face to both the guests and staff. She could listen to others in a way that created a sense of security. By January she was working for ICS as part of the cleanup team after Resource Days. Along with Robert (Bobbo) Duran, they were largely instrumental in keeping the shelter clean and in good condition during the overnight season. They would often come in on Mondays and Thursdays to sterilize the mattresses, wash down the walls, and any other deep cleaning projects that were needed.

While she was here, she also connected with Robert Archuleta, a former counselor at the Life Link, who enrolled her into a program called Healthy Homes. This program provides both individual and group counseling to work on recovery issues and to help people re-establish themselves in permanent housing. After several months of dedicated hard work, she is now living in a studio apartment near the shelter. Valerie believes the combination of work and therapy has helped her stay drug free and given her the support she needed to grow and succeed. She is a living example of what is possible when someone is determined to believe in herself and not allow old patterns to direct the future.

ICS Partner Provider – Southwest Care Center

“Collaboration – We’re Stronger Together”

One of the most important aspects of providing services to our community is providing outreach. Outreach is done by many of the health providers in Santa Fe in order to inform people of the services available, and also to bring as many services as possible directly to those who have difficulties with transportation.

Southwest Care Center is one the providers who comes to the shelter every second and fourth Tuesday to provide information to our guests about HIV or Hepatitis C. Sadly, many of the people who come to the shelter for assistance live “high risk” lifestyles, and need to know whether they are infected. They are able to administer a simple test in a private setting and then receive their results in a matter of 20 minutes. Sometimes a guest will pass one of the staff or volunteers and say with great relief, “I’m negative!” It takes an enormous burden off of our guests to know that they are not afflicted with a major life-threatening illness.



SW Care outreach staff members Melanie Garcia-Abbott and Madi Taylor Haden

There are also times when a guest learns that they are positive. At that point, the staff members present are able to counsel them about the many services Southwest Care provides. Staff members are specially trained to coordinate services and help patients navigate the insurance system, manage their treatment courses and generally cope with their illness. This is a wonderful service to our guests and the greater Santa Fe community.

Special Event! Neighboring Faiths Fiesta

This year the annual *Neighboring Faiths Fiesta*, hosted by the Interfaith Leadership Alliance will benefit the Interfaith Community Shelter. This special event will be held ***Saturday, August 29, 12:00 – 4:00pm at St. John’s United Methodist Church.*** There will be food, entertainment, and great fun! In lieu of an admission charge, donations of men’s socks, underwear, and clothing will be accepted. ICS will be setting up an information tent, so stop by and say hello!

To Make a Donation, Please visit our Website:

www.interfaithsheltersf.org

To Volunteer, Please email Sue at
interfaithsheltersf@gmail.com



Patrick Brown, former guest, created this mural for our dining hall.



From the Open Art Studio

The open art studio is requesting donations of the following materials:

- Paints (acrylic and watercolor)
- Canvas & sketchpads
- Frames & brushes
- Pencils/markers/pens

They would also like to request a CD player to play music while they work. Any assistance you can offer will be gratefully accepted.