

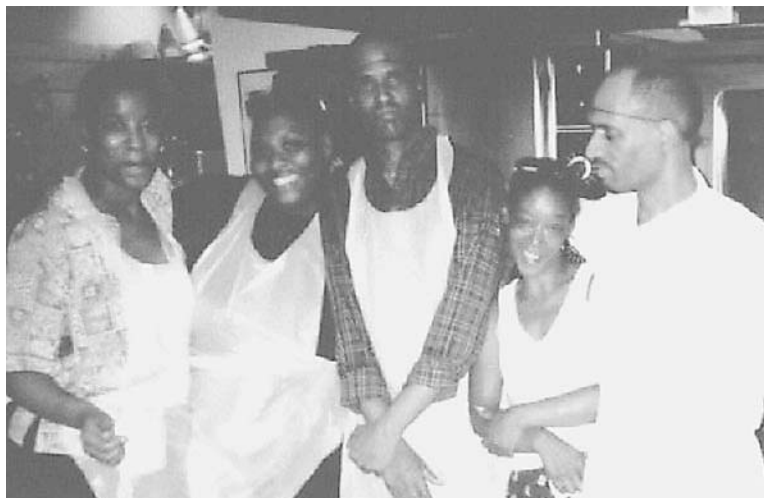


Shelter Stories

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. LUKE'S SHELTER

Offering transitional shelter, life-reclaiming support, and food service job training to people experiencing homelessness

SEPTEMBER
2005



Left to right: Next Step Kitchen students Maria Walker, Sue Chaka Rucker, Willie James Baker, Jr., Angela Allen, and LeVelle Crawford pose for a photo after learning baking temperatures and techniques.

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A Recipe for Hope

By Marianne Ali
Photograph by Jerald Thomas

"My last name is Baker, and that's what I want to be," says Willie James Baker, Jr., one of five students enrolled in St. Luke's 12-week life and work skills class. "I am learning so much more than I expected."

The fourth session of the Next Step Kitchen culinary job training program, which concluded at the end of September, was hosted by D.C. Central Kitchen (DCKK) in its downtown facility, while renovations continued to the ground floor of St. Luke's Church.

The Next Step Kitchen program teaches new or forgotten ways of thinking. Says student Maria Walker, recruited through the Open Door Women's Shelter near Judiciary Square, "In the life skills classes I learned who I want to be. I learned how to live now for my future."

Through exercises and group discussions, Walker examined how poverty reinforces itself: how it lowers expectations and

crushes initiative. She also learned tactics for combating that pressure. With renewed hope and confidence, Walker now dreams of owning a bed-and-breakfast. Her next step on the way to that goal is to study to become a sous-chef.

Naturally, the Next Step Kitchen program teaches kitchen skills, as well. Student Angela Allen, who enrolled after completing the Harbor Light Drug Treatment Program, says she "felt very blessed" to be able to pursue her passion for cooking. In class, she learned knife skills, food safety, and presentation, among other things. "Chef Jerald [Thomas, the instructor] was very welcoming and made me feel comfortable," she says. Though her brusque attitude ruffled some feathers at first, "my attitude has changed, and I have learned how to communicate and be more open-minded about things," she says.

"We're very lucky to have had Jerald Thomas as the training chef for this summer's course," says Kate McCann, executive director of St. Luke's Shelter. "As director of kitchen operations for DCKK, Jerald was able to model and communicate all things to do with working in an industrial kitchen while also successfully guiding students in

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Letter from the Pastor

By Dave Myers



During my first two months as pastor of St. Luke's United Methodist Church, I have been overwhelmed with the commitment that the people of the church have toward this community. Since I arrived, renovation has begun at the church. While there is much-needed repair work to be done—including the installation of a new roof—work is already underway to totally renovate and refurbish

the shelter spaces on the ground floor of the church building.

Of the \$1.3+ million we are spending to renovate the church, at least 70% is going towards spaces used by our community ministries. In addition to the renovation, and the discounts on rent, utility, insurance and other building use costs we offer to the shelter annually, the church granted \$28,300 to St. Luke's Shelter this year to support day-to-day operations.

As these new facilities become reality, the church, the shelter board, and the community will work together to define the future. With this growth will come growing pains, no doubt. But we must expand our community outreach and involvement as we seek to serve the needs of the disadvantaged in our community.

This is an amazing model for a church—doing a renovation project that focuses on the community first, even ahead of its own needs.

ST. LUKE'S SHELTER

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Training Chef: Jerald Thomas

Senior Counselor: Saeed Woodall

Associate Counselor: Assad Hill

Volunteer Coordinator

Bobbie Carr, Shelter Dinners

Homeless Service Partners

Community Council for the Homeless at Friendship Place

Georgetown Ministry Center

Miriam's Kitchen

Shelter Stories is published quarterly.

Editor: Margaret Guroff

Designer: Kate McCann

Toys in the 'Hood

In June, St. Luke's Shelter staff and volunteers promoted the shelter and kitchen programs at Glover Park Day, the neighborhood craft and community fair.

Sullivan's Toy Store donated two puppets—a Pinocchio and a panda bear—to a raffle organized by Susan Lepper, chair of the development committee. The raffle made two children very happy and brought in \$130 for the shelter.

Through the enthusiasm of board members Margaret Guroff (left), Sharon Armstrong (right), Jen Runyon, and Shalom Mulkey, St. Luke's attracted close to two dozen new volunteers and received \$100 in donations.

Longtime supporter and board member John Snedden, founder and president of Rocklands Barbeque and Grilling Company, donated \$450 in food sales to the shelter.



Letter from the Executive Director

By Kate McCann

We have many achievements to celebrate and many people to thank. First, I would like to thank the many friends and neighbors who gave so generously during the summer months. Your generosity lifted our programs as well as our spirits!

I am pleased to announce that St. Luke's Shelter now welcomes men referred by the homeless service agencies Georgetown Ministry Center and Miriam's Kitchen, in addition to those referred through our longstanding, fruitful partnership with the Community Council for the Homeless at Friendship Place. Adding new partnerships has broadened the reach of our service to homeless men and has increased our visibility within the Georgetown community.

I'm also happy to share with you some of the kindnesses that came our way this summer: Marta Beresin, an attorney with the Washington Legal Clinic for the

Homeless, funded our July 4th feast for shelter residents; Shelli Vasser of Gaylord Hotels donated a large supply of much-needed paper plates, cups, and plastic cutlery to the shelter. Neighbors Paul and Diane Cunningham donated bookshelves and chairs. Charlotte and Ed Edelsack donated sheets. Other notable gestures are covered in this issue of the newsletter.

Finally, I would like to thank the 40 friends, family members and neighbors who made our Labor Day BBQ so festive. Special thanks go to Dennis Soiberman for his masterful grilling and to board members Susan Lepper, Shalom Mulkey, June Kress, and Jen Runyon for ensuring that we had all the necessary supplies.

Below, case managers and shelter residents enjoy the Labor Day BBQ: (from left to right) St. Luke's senior counselor Saeed Woodall; case worker Melissa Johnson-Bey from Georgetown Ministry Center; Tom Buszynski, senior case manager for Miriam's Kitchen; a resident of St. Paul's Shelter; and Miriam's Kitchen case worker Rachel Jacobs and director of social services Catherine Crum.



Pocket Change, Changing Lives

By Derek Willis

Sometimes small contributions can add up to a lot. For one longtime supporter of St. Luke's Shelter, the daily routine of emptying the change from his pockets has become a way to support the shelter residents and programs to help people lift themselves out of poverty.

The longtime supporter, who did not want to be identified but agreed to tell his story in the hopes that it might spur others to donate to the shelter, was looking for ways to help the homeless in his area. After researching the subject, he decided that rather than giving money directly to men and women on the streets, he would shift his efforts to supporting organizations like St. Luke's that provide shelter and services year-round.

But unlike many other donors, this supporter turned an ordinary weekday habit into an extraordinary

gift. During the week, he said, "I don't walk many blocks without having people ask for change. I just decided that every evening when I got home, whatever change I have in my pockets would go to St. Luke's."

An old cast-iron kettle that years ago prepared meals now holds the change from days at the office. Periodically, the kettle is emptied and the results brought to St. Luke's. The most recent donation shows how this daily act can really make a difference—the total exceeded \$1,500.

Jen Runyon, a shelter board member, used a local bank's coin-sorting machine to count and convert the donation. The process took two hours and the bank had to empty the machine twice, but it was well worth it! So if you've been thinking about donating to St. Luke's Shelter, we'll gladly accept the coins in your pockets. Just consider it change for change.

Volunteer Spotlight

Getting Dinner on the Table

By Judie Guy

Like clockwork every evening, a nourishing dinner appears on the table at St. Luke's Shelter. The prepared meals provide a much-needed convenience for residents as they return to the shelter after a long day working or looking for work. But more importantly, the meals help ensure that residents have the stamina they need to rebuild their lives.

More than 50 volunteers and nine local restaurants take turns bringing meals to the shelter. On the long list of volunteers are singles, couples, families with children, and small groups of friends. They are members of St. Luke's and other nearby churches and synagogues, and neighbors from surrounding Glover Park and Massachusetts Avenue Heights, as well as from far-flung suburbs. Recently we talked to three long-time friends of the shelter who have played an important part in "getting dinner on the table" over the years.

Precisely because the shelter is blessed with such a large corps of eager meal volunteers, it takes a special person to orchestrate their efforts. For the last several years, that special someone has been **Bobbie Carr**. Bobbie's involvement with St. Luke's Shelter began when it opened in 1991, initially growing out of her association with the Community of Christ Church, a Massachusetts Avenue neighbor of St. Luke's and part of the cluster of local churches that came together to address homelessness in Ward 3. At first Bobbie helped with shelter mailings, but soon she began bringing dinners to the shelter—all the way from her home in Rockville.

"I was a little intimidated about taking dinner at first—especially by myself—I didn't know what to expect," Bobbie admitted, "But the men were always so welcoming—I came to really look forward to taking dinner and eating with them. Often I sent them thank you notes because I enjoyed the time with them so much." So when the shelter needed someone to take on the larger task of scheduling all the dinner volunteers, Bobbie gladly stepped in. "It gives me the sense of doing something for the community, and I also enjoy talking to all the volunteers." Now as Bobbie makes calls and schedules new volunteers to bring dinner, she shares her own experience and encourages new recruits to stay for dinner and get to know the residents.

Once on Bobbie's schedule, volunteers get a reminder call close to their selected dinner date. Massachusetts Heights neighbor **Iza Warner** is among those who have generously taken time to make these important calls. Like Bobbie, Iza has been a friend of the shelter since it opened its doors. In fact, Iza's late husband Bob took dinner to the shelter the first night it opened in 1991. And until his death of a brain tumor a few years ago, Bob was famous around the shelter as the "Meatloaf King," having prepared and shared the same dinner—meatloaf, baked potato, and beans—once a month for almost a decade. "In the beginning, I offered him some suggestions and help," Iza laughed, "but he always turned me down. That meal was strictly his thing—he just enjoyed it so much. He continued to do it even after he became ill, and it was only then that he allowed me to help at all."

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A Community Remembers Ken Gillis

April 8, 1947 – August 18, 2005

On Wednesday, August 31, 2005, close to thirty people journeyed to St. Luke's United Methodist Church for the memorial service for former shelter resident Ken Gillis. Gillis resided at the shelter in 1993 but remained part of the St. Luke's family for many years.

The service was officiated by St. Luke's pastor Dave Myers. Gillis was a longtime client of the Community Council for the Homeless at Friendship Place, and his caseworker Jane Kennedy Sawina moved the gathering of friends with vivid memories of her relationship with him.

In the fall of 2003, Gillis was given a great gift by Anne Frank House—an apartment of his own. David Cohen, president of the organization, also gave a moving tribute to Gillis and to the meaning of having a place to call home after many years on the streets.

WISH LIST

During the remaining three months of renovation, we will not be accepting donations of clothing.

We are in dire need of the following items: paper plates, plastic cutlery, paper cups, napkins, and paper towels. We also need instant coffee, non-dairy creamer, juices, and Hot Pockets.

Donations can be dropped off daily between 6:30 and 7:30 pm. Contact Kate McCann at kate@stlukesshelter.org or by phone at 202.337.4275.

My Journey

By George Siletti

I was homeless on and off for 30 years of my life. I never finished high school and never got a GED. I had a job that paid \$5.15 an hour but I could not live on that. I also had mental health issues. So I became homeless.

I slept outside, usually under a bridge. I would ask for spare change or eat out of garbage cans. Sometimes I went to soup kitchens. Someone I knew downtown recommended the Community Council for the Homeless at Friendship Place (CCH/FP). When I first went there, I was surprised. It looked like a house, not an institution. The people were so friendly. I wasn't just a number to them; they gave me individualized help. My caseworker, Wendy Guyton, inspired me and taught me how to help myself.

When I was ready to go into a transitional shelter, I went on the



Photo courtesy of CCH/FP

waiting list at St. Luke's Shelter. I had to wait six months for a bed—that was very hard—but Wendy helped me. And when I finally got into St. Luke's, they taught me patience. I stayed there six months, then I got an apartment on Idaho Avenue, where I now live.

I am part of a group of formerly homeless men and women who speak about our personal lives and being homeless. There are many

reasons why a person becomes homeless and why it is so difficult to get out of homelessness. The first time I spoke was at Ohio State University. The whole time I was nervous. It was a crowd of about 60 or 70 students. When it was my turn to speak, I jumped up on a table and wowed the crowd. By the time I was finished, the students had a lot of questions.

I have a phone and am in the phone book. I know it sounds silly—but having a phone and a mailbox makes me part of the community. I am no longer a homeless statistic—I am part of your community, or should I say our community. I am also on the board of St. Luke's Shelter. From homeless, to resident of St. Luke's Shelter, to board member—I am very proud.

(This column was adapted from a speech George Siletti gave at a CCH/FP event in May. CCH/FP is, a partner organization with St. Luke's Shelter in providing support for the homeless in Northwest DC.)

How Can You Contribute?

In addition to contributions of food, time, skills, and participation in the Help the Homeless Walkathon on November 19, St. Luke's Shelter needs just plain cash—to cover salaries, postage, and transportation assistance for shelter residents.

We want to make it as easy as possible for you to donate. Here are some options:

- **Set up automatic payments.** Several smaller dips into one's bank account can be much easier than a single gift as big as you would like to make once a year. With our new automatic monthly service you won't forget payments; see the box on the enclosed donor envelope. Our contract is with the secure and reliable service long used for pledges to St. Luke's United Methodist Church.
- **Set up payroll deductions.** Our United Way and Combined Federal Campaign number is 7940. Your employer may have payroll deduction options and, even better, a matching gift program.
- **Donate online.** You can now use our website, www.stlukesshelter.org, to pay by credit card. You can also set up recurring donations. Clicking on the "Network for Good" graphic will take you to the site of this secure online donation service designed for non-profit organizations.
- **Shop online.** Did you know that you can support St. Luke's by shopping online at **iGive.com**? There are more than 550 stores to choose from including Target, Barnes and Noble, and Ann Taylor Loft. The price is the same for you—but a percentage of your sale comes to us!
- **Send us a check.** Checks made out to "St. Luke's Shelter" can be sent to St. Luke's Shelter, 3655 Calvert Street NW, Washington, DC 20007.

Your support makes our work possible. Contact Kate McCann at 202-337-4295 for more information on these ways to give.

Youth in Action



LEMON AID

You're never too young to support St. Luke's, as 5-year-old Madison Brown (left) demonstrated this summer. The youngster raised \$25 for the shelter at a Shepherd Park yard sale. Dressed in pink and manning a lemonade stand built by her godmother, Debbie Jaffe—a longtime supporter of St. Luke's—Madison sold pink lemonade and collected donations for the shelter. She also offered her trademark "free advice" to inquiring clients. Inspired by Madison's effort, Jaffe and her sister, Roz Leiderman, donated a portion of their yard sale proceeds to the shelter, as well. The total raised for the shelter was \$90.

A HEART-Y BREAKFAST

In June, the Church of the Annunciation in Tenleytown designated St. Luke's as the beneficiary of its youth group's Father's Day breakfast fundraiser. Fifteen high school students set up and decorated the church's parish center and served the breakfast prepared by youth minister Vincent Riley. Monsignor V. James Lockman, the Church of the Annunciation's pastor, and Michael Trescott, chair of the church council, are both longtime supporters of St. Luke's. One hundred and fifty parishioners purchased a five-dollar-breakfast, raising \$250 for our transitional shelter program. Thanks also go to Annunciation members Bill and Lee Maksymiec for promoting service to St. Luke's Shelter within their parish community.

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Getting Dinner on the Table *continued from page 4*

Another neighbor and long time friend of the shelter, **Meg Markham**, appreciates how important those reminder calls are. "I'm signed up to bring dinner on the fourth Wednesday of every month, just to make the date easier to remember. But, you know, that's not perfect either, because some months have five Wednesdays, and without those reminder calls, it can get a little confusing!" Meg (and, until last year, her late husband Allan) has been bringing dinner once a month since the shelter's earliest days.

"On our first night, way back in 1992," Meg remembers, "Allan and I went over to the shelter the day before just to get the lay of the land, because we had no idea what to expect. In those days, the volunteers set everything up and cleaned up as well." (These days, the resi-



After sharing a hearty meal, Bonnie Barber (front right) and her 16-year-old daughter Nathalie Héléne Baptise (far left) from the Community of Christ pose with shelter residents Donnell (center), John (back left), and Thomas (back right). Nathalie shared dinner with residents three times in August to honor her school's community service requirement.

dents set the table for the meal and clean up after it.)

"The next day, when we took dinner for the first time, we didn't eat with the residents, but we did hang around to clean up," Markham adds. "We enjoyed our conversation with the residents and counselors so much—and learned so much—that I went right home and signed us up to go monthly. And from then on we almost always stayed for dinner on our night." Obviously no slouch in the kitchen (she mentioned cheese grits casseroles and

homemade fruit cobblers!), Meg added, "Allan always said he ate better on the nights I cooked for the shelter than he did at home."

If you and your family or friends would like to be part of our great corps of shelter dinner volunteers, call Bobbie Carr at 301-881-1195.

Calling All Feds — Be An Everyday Hero!

By Judie Guy

Are you a federal employee? If so, you'll soon be hearing about the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). It kicks off in early fall each year and continues into December. That means that in the next couple of months you have the chance to "Be An Everyday Hero" by designating dollars to the charitable organization of your choice. We hope that will be St. Luke's Shelter!

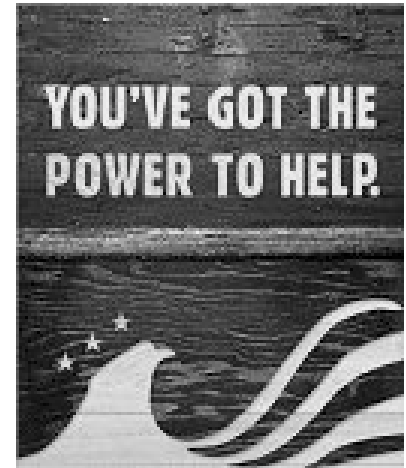
What an easy way to help—you can contribute by payroll deduction. A small amount withheld from each paycheck will, over a year's time, make a substantial contribution to the shelter. Just \$12.50 per paycheck, for example, adds up to more than \$300—enough to provide six shelter residents with six months' worth of travel assistance. And when you choose to designate your contribution to St. Luke's Shelter—#7940 in the CFC catalogue—it's so easy to

see where your dollars go. You can read about St. Luke's on the CFC website (www.CharityChoices.com). Better yet, stop by the shelter and meet the staff and residents!

Of course, this is old news to those who have been supporting the shelter through CFC for years. We continue to be grateful for this generosity.

But we also want you to consider this: if you raise your contribution this year by just \$3 a paycheck, that's an additional \$78 over the course of the year—enough to provide six shelter residents with six months of access to voice mail, computer, and office services. So think about adding just a few dollars to last year's contribution. It will really make a difference.

One last thing you can do to help—find out who's managing your agency's campaign this year. Right



now these campaign managers are hard at work arranging events to generate buzz about CFC. They are looking for organizations to feature at agency events. How do they choose them? Sometimes by asking their colleagues about local organizations they support. So tell your campaign manager that St. Luke's Shelter is eager to participate in these events and put him or her in touch with Kate McCann (202.337.4275 or kate@stlukesshelter.org).

Recipe for Hope continued from page 1



Chef Jerald Thomas oversees food production for DCCK's service contracts, which now include meal provision for victims of Hurricane Katrina currently being given shelter at the DC Armory. Photo courtesy of DCCK

their development of life skills—a very important and rare combination of talents.” Angela Allen plans to continue her culinary training with the advanced course offered by Community Family Life Services (CFLS). Willie Baker, Jr. plans to enroll in the intensive training program offered by DCCK. This outcome is a testament to the role of Next Step Kitchen

as a preparatory program for women and men who are not ready to commit to a more intensive culinary training course, or who need exposure to the basics of food preparation and safe food handling, and a recent reference, in order to be accepted by organizations such as DCCK and CFLS.

Youth in Action continued from page 6

FOOTPRINTS OF FAITH

This summer, fifteen neighborhood children, ages 5 through 13, participated in a week-long music camp at St. Luke's Church. In addition to producing a musical about the parables, campers participated in a variety of service-learning opportunities emphasizing global and local community needs. After learning about homelessness and the services provided by St. Luke's Shelter, the children put their learning and faith into action by creating a beautiful mural to brighten up the shelter. The mural represents a journey toward a better life.



Corporate Supporter Spotlight



John Snedden, founder and president of Rocklands Barbeque and Grilling Company is as generous as he is a culinary entrepreneur. For more than 10 years, St. Luke's Shelter residents have looked forward to their monthly BBQ dinner. Rocklands

has also donated the proceeds of its Glover Park Day food sales to St. Luke's for many years, this year raising \$450.

Also this year, Rocklands has again chosen the shelter as the beneficiary of a bronze-level sponsorship of the Fannie Mae Foundation's 2005 Help the Homeless Walkathon, pledging \$1,500 in support of shelter programs.

Rocklands will celebrate its 15th Anniversary on October 16th with an outdoor party in the parking lot of Pearson's Wine & Liquor on Wisconsin Avenue. Ever the good neighbor, Snedden will donate the proceeds of this event to the shelter. **You can help Rocklands raise money by joining in the fun. Visit www.rocklands.com for information. "Eat Your Barbeque!"**



Thanks to Robert Montagne, president and chief executive officer, Walnut Street Development (WSD) has chosen St. Luke's Shelter as

the beneficiary of a bronze-level sponsorship of the 2005 Help the Homeless Walkathon, pledging \$1,500 in support of shelter programs. WSD is the developer of "Georgetown Heights," the 44-unit condominium building adjacent to St. Luke's Church.



The Potomac Chapter of Meeting Planners International (PMPI) raised \$5,714 for St. Luke's Shelter's Next Step

Kitchen program through events at Mie N Yu in Georgetown and Smith & Wollensky in Dupont Circle, the annual PMPI golf tournament, and raffles held during the network's educational events. Special thanks go to longtime shelter meal donor PMPI member Nancy Riker; and Michelle Battaline and Jenny Brown, the highly creative co-chairs of the 2005 PMPI Community Outreach Committee.



Thanks to marketing specialist and community liaison Fadia Jawdat, the Whole Foods Market of Georgetown has again chosen St. Luke's Shelter as the beneficiary of a bronze-level sponsorship of the 2005

Help the Homeless Walkathon. As a bronze-sponsor, the Market has committed to giving \$1,500 in support of shelter programs.

The Georgetown store has been a very generous supporter of St. Luke's Shelter for close to 10 years. It provides a nutritious meal for shelter residents once a month and caters the shelter's Thanksgiving feast. In 2001, it raised more than \$2,000 for Next Step Kitchen through a 5% Day and cooking classes benefiting the program.

WWW.STLUKESHELTER.ORG

St. Luke's Shelter, a collaboration between a community of faith and a community of neighbors, has provided life-reclaiming support to homeless individuals since 1991.



ST. LUKE'S SHELTER
3655 Calvert Street NW
Washington, DC 20007