



Common Place

FM Dorothy Day House of Hospitality

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Judy **Food Pantry Coordinator--West Fargo**

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THE FACE OF HOMELESSNESS

Former guest Frank Morrow Jr. shares his story of facing homelessness and the myths surrounding it.

What do you think of when you think of HOMELESSNESS??? Is it that dirty old man you see walking down the street??? Or maybe it is that Wine-O sitting on the park bench with a booze bottle in hand??? If that's how you see homelessness, I have to tell you, YOU ARE SADLY MISTAKEN.

The majority of homeless people are working men and women that have had something occur in their lives to put

them in this situation. I am an example of that. 3 months ago I stayed in a shelter called the DOROTHY DAY HOUSE. Most of the guys I met during my stay there were working men or veterans that served our country well

The greatest challenge of the day is: how to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution that has to start with each one of us? ~ Dorothy Day

and are disabled and waiting for their VA benefits to kick in. The Dorothy Day House is more of a transitional living facility than a shelter. They have eve-



ryone set goals and work on those goals, journaling our progress weekly. The staff there

led by Sonja, the Director, does an excellent job in maintaining a positive atmosphere here.

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MAKING IT POSSIBLE...YOU!

A special thank you to all of you for your gifts of time, money, food, clothing, and furniture! We could not operate without the tremendous generosity of this community.

Happy Holidays from our home to yours!

THE FACE OF HOMELESSNESS CONTINUED...

My journey to the Dorothy Day House began just over a year ago when I moved up here to be closer to my 2 younger children. I had a place lined up with a roommate, a job, and was set for 6 months. Then my roommate asked me if I would be willing to move so she could have her niece move in, which with my belief in family and God, of course I was okay with that. A friend of mine that I worked with had a room and offered to let me stay there, which I did for 3 months. While there, some things happened that I didn't approve of and felt that it was not a good thing to subject my kids to. I subsequently moved out in May and stayed in a hotel for 2 weeks but couldn't afford to keep doing that. That's where the Dorothy Day House comes in.

While there, I learned some startling statistics...Did you know that 75% of all Americans are living within 1 **paycheck** of being homeless? While, yes, the majority is men, there is an increasing number of women and children who are becoming homeless everyday (that's scary).

According to a recent news story on a local TV station, there are in the neighborhood of 1,000 homeless people in the Fargo-Moorhead area on any given night. Those numbers are sobering, to say the least. The myth about people CHOOSING to be homeless isn't totally inaccurate; most didn't choose it, it was thrust upon them, by several factors, the biggest being the economy.

It's sad to see the way people, for the most part, don't want to admit that homelessness exists in America, but it does, and it is getting worse every single day. Yes, there are organizations out there **trying** to fight it, but there are sooooo many men, women, and children, that they are overwhelmed. There isn't enough money to go around. The fight of the homeless in America is one of survival, hoping to catch that break that will lead them back to being a productive citizen once again.

I often times wondered why God put me here, but I think now I have figured it out. He put me here to make me a better person; he has given me the ability to write and the ability to help others which is something I have done all my life. I feel he called me to this place to experience it and to write about it in hopes that maybe, just **maybe**, I can help shed a bit more light on a growing problem in American Society.

THE FACE OF HOMELESSNESS ISN'T WHAT YOU THINK...The face of homelessness is all around you; take a look, it's the everyday working man and woman. `My days of being homeless have come to an end, but the faces I have met and stories I have heard are something I will never forget. If you forget everything I wrote here, please remember this one saying of mine...

I have been to the top of the mountain and back down again. On the way, I have met many people and seen many hardships; yet, the faces are all the same, it's the attitudes towards each other that are different.

DOROTHY DAY HOUSE OF HOSPITALITY MAKING AN IMPACT

Shelter Statistics

So far in 2010, we have housed 257 guests. 847 others were turned down (93% because we were full). 405 visitors used our shower and laundry facilities.

- Average length of stay = 12 days.

57% have mental illness, chemical dependency, or both.

16% are veterans.

- Barriers to housing include:

Mental illness

Chemical dependency

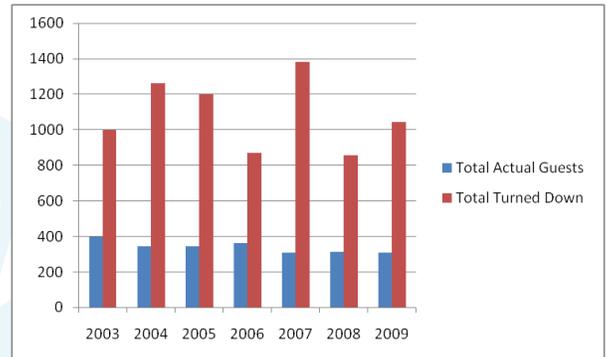
Criminal background

Poor credit history

Lack of rental history

Lack of affordable housing

- So far in 2010, 28 guests found their own housing. This is 11% of those that stayed here. The trend for those finding housing in the past 7 years (2003 – 2009) has been about 13%.
- We have provided our neighbors with basic necessities like food, clothing, and shelter and have given people dignity and hope.
- We have provided children with the nourishment necessary to grow and develop.
- We have educated guests on resources like housing, employment, and treatment.
- Accessibility to these resources improves their daily living skills and ability to find and sustain long-term stability.
- We have improved upon our programs.
 - At the shelter, guests have access to housing applications on-site, since transportation is a huge barrier. We work in collaboration with a lot of other agencies to provide comprehensive services; for example, many providers come to us to provide their service or meet with guys.
 - At the pantry, we remodeled in order to transition to the Choice Model of food distribution that reduces waste and accommodates ethnic tastes and dietary/medical restrictions.
 - We added a new program to provide additional food assistance.
- We educate community members about the issues of homelessness and hunger and encourage them to invest in our agency and help those in need.
- We advocate for our guests and give them a voice.



Racing to house and feed our neighbors

Please join our GoFarCharity team as a walker, runner, or volunteer! As a member of our team, you would run/walk/volunteer in the Fargo Marathon, collect donations for our organization, and receive VIP benefits on race days. You can find more information at: www.active.com/donate/fmddh. If you are interested in being on our team, you must register for a marathon event by clicking on "Register for this Event," and you can raise money for our team at the link above by clicking on "Become a Fundraiser." For more information, call Sonja at 218-233-5763.

MEET RUTH ~ FOOD PANTRY COORDINATOR (MOORHEAD)

Hi, my name is Ruth Smith and I am the new Food Pantry Coordinator at Dorothy Day House as of August 23rd. I can't believe I have been here 3 months already. The day goes so fast when you are busy and enjoy what you are doing.

I came from a smaller pantry and have been pleasantly surprised at the volunteer turnout! It is amazing to have people call and ask me to volunteer because they love coming

here. I in turn enjoy working with the volunteers and clients alike.

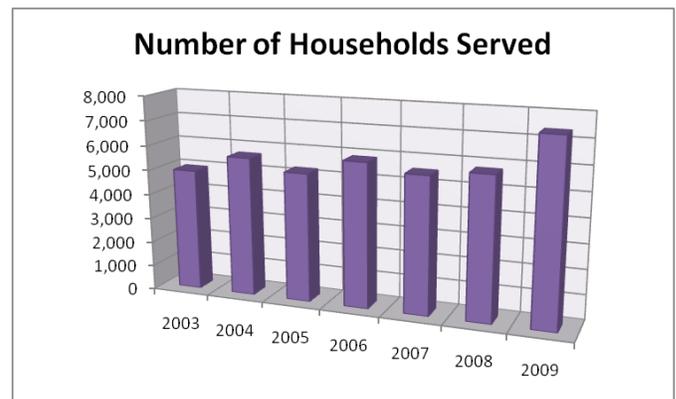
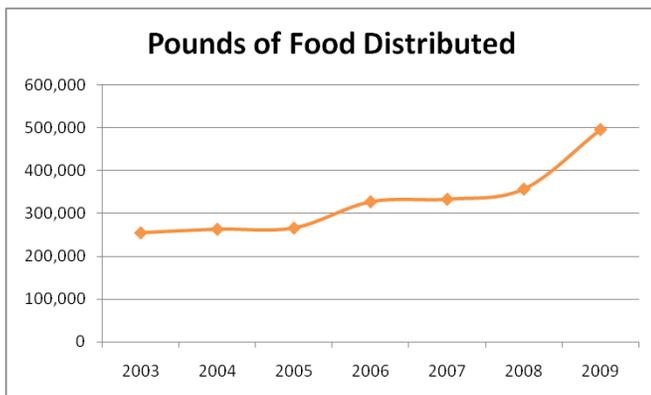
The number of new people coming in for food assistance keeps going up. In September, we distributed 48,589 pounds of food and October had a record night of 64 families coming in for food and it couldn't be done without the support of the many volunteers and donations from businesses, churches, groups and individuals alike.



I would like to thank Phoenix International employees for the money they raised and food they purchased, MSUM and Concordia College students for collecting food on Halloween (Trick or Canning), students who participated in the Homeless and Hungry project, St. Joe's Catholic youth, JAQ's Garage and the Moorhead Tech automotive students for collecting food for "Lights on for Safety," Wal-Mart for bread and pastries, William Oswald and Ann Schellack and the countless others who have donated fresh produce this season.

The pantry couldn't operate without you!!

DOROTHY DAY FOOD PANTRY MAKING AN IMPACT



Food Pantry Statistics

- So far in 2010, DDFP (Moorhead) served 23,393 people (34% who are children), distributing 457,943 pounds of food.
- So far in 2010, DDW (West Fargo) served 15,772 people (38% who are children), distributing 261,478 pounds of food.
- Together, this equals a total of 39,165 people served, distributing 719,421 pounds of food.
- In 2009, the two food pantry programs served 51,782 people (39% who are children), distributing 910,755 pounds of food.

MEET JUDY ~ DOROTHY DAY WEST FOOD PANTRY COORDINATOR AND VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR!

Having volunteered to run West Fargo's DD Food Pantry for the last seven years, Judy exemplifies Dorothy Day's vision of having a revolution of the heart. Judy shows us how compassion is not only a way of feeling but a way of living. For this reason, Judy is our volunteer of the year!

Greetings!

I am the coordinator and volunteer for the Dorothy Day West Daily Bread program in West Fargo. It is a very needed program as there are many elderly, grownups, and children in need of the food.

It just warms my heart when I see a child look into her box and see apples, oranges, cookies, and/or something they like. It is a great big smile and a lot of excitement– they are so happy.

I love my work. I have been here so long (7+ years) that the clients are like my big family. I know a lot of them by name– it amazes them. They ask me how can you remember all of these names?

I do just hope we can keep this program going as times are a struggle right now for a lot of families, especially the ones with children.

JESSE ~ ON 2010

It is the Holiday season again and that means a lot of different things to a lot of different people. Many take time to visit with family and exchange gifts. Others take this time to donate to local causes they believe in. Some feel this season is a celebration of a birth and others feel it is the return of the man in the red suit and hat. Some are celebrating for the first time, and others are celebrating their last. No matter what you do and why you do it, my advice to you is to celebrate. Play monopoly with old friends, cook a meal with your family for another family (the Ronald McDonald House or Dorothy Day House love people willing to do this), and help shovel your neighbor's driveway, or take your co-workers out and volunteer. It has been a long year for many of us and we need to focus on the good things we have in our lives even with all the bad in the world.

A lot happened in 2010. February brought good news to the city of New Orleans at last, with the Saints win at the Super Bowl. March brought an Oscar to James Cameron's ex-wife for the film *Hurt Locker*, beating out Cameron's *Avatar* which has raked in over 2.7 billion since it opened world-wide, sending it to the top of the all-time world-wide box office list and many more. April brought along the largest environmental disaster in the history of the United States with the uncontrollable gulf oil spill. June brought the return of Eminem with the release of his seventh album that spent seven weeks at number one and is still the number one selling album of 2010. July brought a sigh of relief in the gulf, when the spill was finally capped. August brought a start of a whole new chapter of my life, when I married my fiancé in Moorhead and we took our first flight to Walt Disney World.

I hope that everyone gets the opportunity to celebrate 2010 with the people they love. Next year will be another busy year for us at the House and Pantry. Cheryl will be graduating from MSUM in the spring and continue to get her masters soon after. I will be student-teaching in the fall and a year from now; I will finally be a dragon alumnus. The need for volunteers will stay the same and the need for us to continue our work will most likely rise. If you want to help us with this by donating a little money or donating a little time, let us know.

As always, Keepin' it real. –Jesse James White



ARTICLES FROM THE SERVICE COORDINATORS

GENE ~ ON FISHING

Since retiring last year around this time, I've re-kindled an old passion for fishing. Before retiring, I lived at the Dorothy Day House for 10 years, and those days of tumult and teeny triumphs meant the opportunities to go fishing were scant. I'd go once in a great while, usually alone but occasionally with Sue who, unbeknownst to me, was my bride-to-be at the time. We've done away with the to-be part, and now she's my bride and fishing companion, though she is clearly better at being my bride than being a fisherman. Person. Lady. Girl.

No matter. We go fishing for the same reason, a reason that really has nothing at all to do with catching fish. Fishing is the best all-purpose cleaner in the galaxy. It fills you at the same time it empties you, nearly demanding that you notice the sky and water and trees and silence as it dares you to believe that the puny problems you had an hour ago deserve more time than going fishing. Fishing will teach you that what you thought was important, isn't. It shows you that you can't bring a handful of day-to-day annoyances into a boat and expect them to be the same when there's a momma loon piggy-backing her youngsters just 12 feet from you.

Fishing is a spiritual spa. It's not possible to ignore what God has done and is doing when you're out fishing, and that has become a redemption for me. Or maybe it's a rationalization. That, too, doesn't matter much to me, because I believe very strongly that it's better to go fishing and think about God than to go to church and think about fishing. In that, I find redemption.

Memories of fishing sometimes don't have a lot to do with catching fish. I still haven't decided if setting the hook on a fish is more memorable than noticing that Sue is more intent on taking a photo of a bug crawling on her sandwich than she is on putting her line in the water. Or finally understanding that she doesn't catch many fish because she tries to put the bait on the hook in a fashion that will allow her not to come into contact with it. Honestly, do we have to use LEECHES? Eeeewww.

We put the boat away for the year not long ago, and it was eerily traumatic for me, seeing it covered with a tarp in the back yard. Everything has been put away until next spring and in the meantime there's always Orwell Dam, fishing from shore and watching the deer and the ducks and the geese. It'll be cold but I've been cold before and I probably won't bring anything home, but that's happened before too. I'll go fishing again and again and again, and it will be different each time even as it's the same as last time. And each time I go, I'll jettison another silly problem and replace it with another sliver of the truth, as I've grown to understand it.

SARAH ~ ON LEARNING

My favorite thing about working at DDH is all the new people you get to meet, whether it be guests or donors, there is always a new face to learn and talk to. This job has taught me many things that a classroom course could not have, and I am extremely grateful for that. I am looking forward to seeing all the things that get accomplished by people here, and helping them get there.

AMY ~ ON SOCIAL WORK

As a social work major, I have been thinking a lot about what population I would like to work with. Since I started working at DDH, I am more and more drawn to working with the homeless. I love working with the guests who stay at the house; it is very gratifying to see them succeed. I have liked working with the homeless so much that I think during the summer I might also work at Youth Works, which works with homeless children.

ARTICLES FROM THE SERVICE COORDINATORS

CHERYL ~ ON NEED

I have to say that although I never pictured myself working in a Homeless Shelter, it has changed my life. When I started working here, I was in my junior year of college and trying to make ends meet every month. That part of my life really hasn't changed; I still struggle every month. What did change was realizing how much I had taken for granted. I watched men walk into the shelter with only the clothes on their back. It astonished me. I had too many clothes to fit in my closet and here these men had nothing. Since working here I can't justify whining or complaining about anything in my life. I have a warm bed to go to every night and food in my fridge and really that is all I need.

KAT ~ ON BEAUTY

Well, life is sometimes surprising. I mean, I was a little startled to find myself working here again after a two-year hiatus. But if there is anything that I have learned since moving to the Moorhead area, it is beauty can emerge from the strangest of circumstances.

“It is said the Christian mystic Theresa of Avila found difficulty at first in reconciling the vastness of the life of the spirit with the mundane tasks of her Carmelite convent: the washing of pots, the sweeping of floors, the folding of laundry. At some point of grace, the mundane became for her a sort of prayer, a way she could experience her ever-present connection to the divine pattern which is the source of life. She began to see the face of God in the folded sheets.”

When I read this, I felt that I knew exactly what it meant. So often my time spent here is very ordinary, or very stressful. But there are times of supreme beauty. I remember walking up the stairs from the basement and glancing out to see a beautiful rainy night. It was coming down so hard that the individual drops would splash back into the air after landing. It felt to me like a protective blanket. Full of comfort and love, a drink of life: just like the Dorothy Day House. The beauty of coming home.

“We must lay one brick at a time, take one step at a time.”

-Dorothy Day

JESSICA ~ ON JOY

The human heart can be the most powerful tool there is. It has the power to love and hate. Betray and Care. Right and Wrong. Black and White. For this reason, the human soul should want to reach out and help their fellow man.

I have been working at the Dorothy Day House since July 2nd of this year; it has been a real joyous experience. Yes, there have been trying times when I have wanted to give up, but then I remember why I chose to work here. I know how it feels to stand in line and wait for day labor, food stamps, and the food pantry. I know the feeling of having someone tell you “NO... No... We can't help you.” It's enough to make somebody want to give up. No one should have to feel this way.

When I help out a guy in need, it makes me feel like I have accomplished something and that makes my day worthwhile. The most fulfilling part of the job is when a man gets his apartment, job, and is on the track to success. It's like seeing someone redo an entire chapter of their life. There is no greater job to me than spreading joy and a helping hand to the community.



FM Dorothy Day House of Hospitality



We have launched our new and improved website. Check it out at www.fmddh.com

And don't forget to visit us on Facebook!



Area youth raised 97 tons of food at this years Fill the Dome!

WWW.FMDDH.ORG

The Dorothy Day House family would like to thank everyone who participated in this years soup supper.

A caring, Christian community that provides services to the homeless and hungry.



F-M Dorothy Day House of Hospitality, Inc.
714 8th Street South
Moorhead, MN 56560
Ph. (218) 233-5763
Fax (218) 227-0327
fmddh@702com.net

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US POSTAGE PD
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MOORHEAD, MN