



Wish List

You can help us make a real difference at Depaul USA. We currently need:

10 - 12 Seat "Church" Van

to be used for our New Orleans Transportation Project

To see what other items we need, [see our wish list.](#)

Our Mission...

is to offer homeless and disadvantaged people the opportunity to fulfill their potential and move towards an independent and positive future.

Make a Difference...

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Depaul USA
5725 Sprague Street
Philadelphia, PA 19138
215-438-1955



E-Newsletter

February - March 2011

News from the Executive Director



Excited. That's how I feel as we enter the month of February at Depaul USA. Our Philadelphia new project working group has concluded its consultations and deliberations with the recommendation that Depaul's next Philadelphia project should focus on the medically fragile homeless. Over the next few months, we will be working with a housing development consultant and our city partners to flesh out the details and identify potential funding. At present, we are envisioning a 10-20 bed facility that will provide permanent housing as well as hospice beds.

Depaul USA is also looking to expand in other cities across the country. Our transportation project has been approved by our partners at The Rebuild Center in New Orleans. In Macon, Georgia we are participating in an exciting ecumenical and community-based initiative to create a new homeless program in that city. You can read more about these projects in this newsletter. We are also discussing possible projects with potential partners in Niagara Falls, Chicago, and Detroit.

It will be very challenging to bring all these projects to fruition. We will need to expand our internal capacity, develop relationships with committed and capable local partners, and secure the necessary funding in a difficult economic environment. The possibilities inherent in the expansion of our work are very exciting. While working very hard, we will strive to remain level-headed and prudent and remember the words of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, "If it succeeds, I bless God, if ... it does not succeed, I bless God, because then it will be right that it should not succeed."

I will keep you posted on our progress while on this exciting journey.

Chuck

"Volunteering at Depaul Gives Meaning to My Life."

Depaul USA was very fortunate when Sister Mary Francis Martin moved to Philadelphia. Sr. Mary Fran, a Daughter of Charity and former Provincial, wanted to become more involved in her community, and she saw volunteering at Depaul USA as a perfect opportunity.



Sr. Mary Fran was first introduced to Depaul USA by Brother Peter Campbell, who served as Board Chair of Depaul USA when it began in 2008. The Daughters of Charity are part of the Vincentian Family, and Depaul USA's connection to the Vincentians and its international work really appealed to Sr. Mary Fran. Like the Daughters of Charity, Depaul USA is committed to working with the poor in a practical and non-judgmental way, and responding to need through action and innovation.

In early 2010, Sr. Mary Fran was invited to do a workshop on the Vincentian

mission, vision and values for the staff at Depaul USA. She remarked, “I really enjoyed the workshop. I realized that the staff was already imbued with the mission, vision and values and I was able to help them articulate their thoughts.”

Sr. Mary Fran began volunteering at Depaul House in November 2010 four days a week, usually from 3:00 - 7:00 p.m. “It was important for me to become a member of the community so I can do what I need to be doing. I wanted to stay in touch with the population that Depaul House serves. Depaul House is in many ways a residence, a place where people have their own space. And the staff make the men feel they are at home at Depaul House.”

When asked how Sr. Mary Fran spends her time at Depaul House, she explained, “I do anything that is needed. I greet the men, I talk to them, sometimes I make supper for them. I am in a privileged position because I get to know a side of life I wouldn’t know otherwise. Part of the constitution of the Daughters of Charity is to have mutual sharing and learn from the people that we serve, and have them learn from us. The men are the most gratifying part of my time at Depaul. I have learned from them what it is like to be homeless, how they view being homeless, and the reasons why some of them have become homeless.

“I see the struggle that many of the men go through in order to become independent. In my experience, it seems that in difficult economic times it is always the poor that suffer. No matter what happens, these guys are loved by God. God sees their potential and doesn’t define anyone by the mistakes they may have made.

“I am impressed with the way Depaul USA responds to the needs of the homeless. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with the guys at Depaul House.”

Depaul USA Looks to Expand

[New Orleans Transportation Project Gets Green Light](#)

The Rebuild Center in New Orleans has signed off on a Depaul USA-sponsored transportation project for the homeless. The project envisions van service connecting the Center and its clients with overnight shelters, medical clinics, the St. Vincent de Paul pharmacy, shops, and other services.

The Rebuild Center is located on the grounds of the parish of St. Joseph's Church, a Vincentian parish in the shadow of the Superdome. Created in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the Center serves hundreds of women and men weekly, offering meals, hygiene services (private showers, wash basins, laundry rooms), legal assistance, mail delivery, and outreach to the community's growing Hispanic population.

Earlier this year, Depaul USA met with representatives of the Center to determine how it could support the Center's work or fill gaps in existing services. The parties agreed that the Center's clients could benefit from better access to services across the city. Under the proposed project, Depaul USA will raise funds to purchase a church van and hire a part time driver. Center staff will administer a questionnaire to clients in the coming days to test the hypothesis that better transportation will allow clients to access more services, and improve the quality of their lives. The questionnaire will also assist Depaul USA and the Center in planning transportation routes. Depaul USA Executive Director Chuck Levesque said, "This exciting project will allow Depaul USA to support the great work of the Center and also position us for future projects in New Orleans."

[New Ideas Bubbling in Macon, Georgia](#)

On January 5, 2011, 20 community leaders of diverse faiths and professions gathered at the Family Advancement Ministry in Macon, Georgia to discuss homeless projects in that city. The meeting was called by Sr. Elizabeth Greim, DC, who met representatives of Depaul USA while attending a Vincentian seminar on systemic change. Sr. Greim invited Depaul USA Executive Director Chuck Levesque to Macon to brainstorm with local volunteers about possible new programs.

After introductions, meeting participants spoke about the work they are doing with the homeless and their perceptions of the nature and scale of the issue.

Chuck outlined the different types of additional programming that could be created in Macon, including day centers, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, and emergency shelters. Participants then mapped community assets; developing a robust list of economic, educational, and financial resources and potential allies that could be tapped to support a new program in Macon. At the end of the meeting, all the attendees indicated that they wanted to work on developing a new homeless project in Macon. They further agreed that they would identify the population to be served and the program they want to create by March 1, 2011. Sr. Greim will reconvene the group in February to begin these deliberations. Chuck will return to Macon in March to take the next steps in project planning.

Depaul USA Selects Next Philly Project

After months of careful deliberation and needs assessment, the Depaul USA New Project Working Group has determined that Depaul USA's next project in Philadelphia should provide permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals with complex medical issues. The proposed project would serve 10-20 individuals and offer on site medical care. Hospice and palliative care would also be available.

Depaul USA has now entered the project planning and design phase. The goal is to submit a complete project proposal to the City of Philadelphia's Office of Supportive Housing this summer for possible federal funding. Depaul USA has applied for a foundation grant to enable it to engage housing developers and other professionals to assist in developing the proposal. The Working Group was comprised of Depaul USA staff and community members.

Residents Begin Art Project

One out of three single adults experiencing homelessness works or wants to work, but their stories are too often overshadowed by stereotypes. Depaul House is working with [Jay Winston](#) and [Jon Olshefski](#) to help the residents express their unique points of view. Through photography and creative writing, Depaul House residents will tell their stories. The exhibit of work will be on display at The Painted Bride (230 Vine Street, Philadelphia, PA) from August 5 - 20. [Check out the blog](#) for updates on the residents' work and progress.

Depaul USA is part of Depaul International, a group of charities working to support homeless and marginalized people around the world.