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Christmas 2017

# Father Carr's Place 2B



## Thanksgiving by the Numbers

Turkeys Cooked - **105**  
People Delivering Meals - **222**  
Total Volunteers - **300+**  
Years Father Carr's has Provided Thanksgiving - **43**  
Volunteers Who have Served every year since 1974 - **2**  
Meals Served - **We lost count after 1000**  
Children Smiling and Helping - **Many**  
Lives Enriched - **Countless**



# A Day of Witness at Father Carr's

The true blessing of being president of Father Carr's is to witness the kindness and generosity of others. I wish to share a day in late October that I spent at Father Carr's that demonstrated these characteristics.

**7:45** My arrival at Father Carr's normally would have closely coincided with a school bus picking up children living with us but there is no school today. It was busy upon my arrival at the Mother Teresa Center because today is Pantry Friday. Our weekly food pantry does not open for another 45 minutes but those in need have already been waiting for some time. They arrive early to enjoy each other's company and experience a family atmosphere. All people desire relationships and our pantry also feeds loneliness. Dozens of volunteers are at work and Hussain, our food pantry coordinator has the whole operation organized. Bernie is handing out tickets, Father Dave and Rose are greeting people and many others are working hard preparing food for distribution. Ruby is explaining health care options and community resources and Mike is spending time visiting with people and making them feel welcome. Mike is a retired Police Captain and he has found a great way to continue serving his community. I hope the many volunteers serving on Pantry Friday take the time to reflect on what a difference they are making. About 200 families are in attendance today receiving food, love and conversation. Bob, our executive director welcomes everyone and prays after sharing the sad news that Matt recently died who was a regular at the food pantry. The sadness amongst the group is felt and all are welcomed to attend the funeral later in the day.

**9:00** Bob and I attend a health care meeting in the community with Brianna, a nurse from our free health clinic. Brianna works full time and is raising a family but still takes time to volunteer and serve the needs of our patients. Today is no exception as she meets to discuss the possibility of Father Carr's receiving vouchers for our patients for lab work, x-rays and other types of imaging. The possibility of vouchers is exciting so that people can receive better healthcare services without the worry of financial burden.

**10:30** Bob attends Matt's funeral to pay his respects and those of all of Father Carr's Family.

**10:45** Back at the Mother Teresa Center I was fortunate to take a phone call learning of a donation. The generosity of people amazes me and is so inspiring. We owe thanks to many for allowing Father Martin Carr's mission of service to continue.

**11:00** I enjoy visiting our St. Francis Health Clinic on the south end of our campus. Lisa and Penny are two of the volunteers I greet this morning that are taking care of patients. Dozens of doctors, nurses and other volunteers make a choice to take time away from their lives and practices to care for patients and keep the clinic open on most weekdays. Our clinic is special because it provides both healing and compassion. It is also extremely unique because similar to our food pantry, our health clinic patients do not have to show proof of need; showing up is proof enough.

**11:30** Back at the Mother Teresa Center again, Dennis, our resident volunteer is doing a background check on a potential resident to help insure the safety of our residents. 47 people are living with us while trying to stabilize their lives. I pray that people will be less lonely, continue in their drug and alcohol recovery, save money, receive mentoring, eat healthy and heal physically, spiritually and emotionally. I pray that our children will feel safe and have basic needs met as they live here and go to school. I pray that individuals will find jobs and most of all hope for the future.

**12:00** The co-chair of the Bridge Walk, Sherri and her son Austin, a junior in high school join me for lunch so we can discuss the 3rd Annual Bridge Walk for Father Carr's. The Bridge Walk is more than 7 months away but it is never too early to plan. Sherri is newly recovering from rotator cuff surgery and Austin has a day off from school but they give of their time to discuss Bridge Walk goals anyway. Austin comes in to volunteer each day for his last class period as a part of a student leadership program. He also inspires others by recruiting high school students in the area to get involved. And they do!

**1:30** Bob puts the finishing touches on the Thanksgiving Newsletter. The newsletter always hopes to capture stories of residents, volunteers and other generous people. In a week, many people will show up to help fold, collate and mail our 6000 newsletters.

**2:00** Dan, our vice president and financial director leaves his own business a little early today to come to Father Carr's to arrange for our bill payments. Like everyone else, he is taking time from his busy day to volunteer in an area that is not glamorous but nonetheless important. Our bills must be paid, especially our utilities which are one of our biggest monthly expenses. Thank you Dan for managing our money and to Marion for keeping track of our donations so that we can be sure to make our expenses each and every month. We survive by the generosity of all private donors just like you who are reading this article.

**2:30** Carol arrives to volunteer at the front desk. Like most volunteers, she serves humbly and seeks no recognition. Her husband Dick also gives many hours each week taking care of our maintenance and physical facilities. Carol, Dick and others may prefer not to be recognized but their work is vital to our mission. I can hear Carol taking calls from people seeking shelter. The conversations include hardships, financial difficulties, personal safety and worry about their children.

**3:00** A local organic farmer just brought in produce. I can tell that he feels good about his donation. He is helping us



serve 1000 meals this week to our residents and others who come for both meals and conversation.

**3:15** Hussain, Neil and others are talking about turkeys. Thanksgiving is less than a month away and planning has begun. We will serve approximately 1000 meals on that day. Father Martin Carr preached that talking to people was more important than the meal itself. He said, "Loneliness is the greatest hunger." Over 300 people will help make a special Thanksgiving at Father Carr's. I love seeing families serve on Thanksgiving and it is humbling to know they do not see it as a sacrifice.

**3:30** A short stroll across the parking lot brings me to the Holy Family Villa, the residence for women and children. Some of our residents are cleaning and preparing the dining room for dinner. Sister Grace is at the kitchen counter making mashed potatoes. I marvel at the strength and courage of Sister Grace. She came to live and serve at Father Carr's last February from Ghana, Africa. Before coming to the United States, she had never left her home country nor flown on a plane. In less than a year she has had to adjust to American culture while taking care of our families. She has a huge responsibility, especially while Sister Angela is in Ghana for 3 months. I remind Sister Grace of how lucky we are to have her and thank her for all that she does. As usual, she deflects the praise and instead chooses to remind me how lucky she is.

**3:45** Upon leaving the Holy Family Villa, I pass Alex entering the building. She is a college intern living at Father Carr's. We provide room and board and she volunteers with us while gaining valuable experience. She plans to be a social worker and is studying at UW - Oshkosh. Alex is a reflection of many young people doing great things for their communities and not participating in the stereotypical college partying. On my way out I also witness one of our moms going for a walk with her children. I am reminded that this is their home. Many people work hard and give generously to make this a nice home.

**4:00** Neil, our men's shelter director asks me to join him for an intake meeting with a man named S moving in with us. Neil is a mentor to all of the men residing with us. I meet with both of them for an hour. S was with us previously and is getting another chance despite problems the first time. S has a history of alcohol abuse but has been clean for a short period of time. Before his arrival, S had been staying with friends that had not been a good influence. Neil offers support for S while also making clear the expectation of sobriety as a condition for living with us. He encourages S to get a job through Seek Employment Service and offers encouragement while also making the expectations for living with us clear. It warms my heart to hear Neil offer his support and to see S listening intently while sharing his desire to turn his life around. I hear their conversation and I know this is the reason Father Martin Carr's mission continues.

**5:00** I have the privilege of eating dinner with our resident men. We pray and thank the Lord for all of His blessings. Each man is with us for a different reason but they all have a goal of becoming independent again. They are just like you and me. They have goals, fears and obstacles. I join in the conversation about the injury to Aaron Rodgers and how the Packers will do without him. We discuss, agree and disagree about the Packers and other topics just like you do at your dinner table. Some talk about their children and their families, others are quiet and just eat and listen. I appreciate James who sits down to the dinner table last. He is a resident volunteer and cooks many of our meals as does Dennis. James takes pride in his cooking and he should. We are lucky to have James and Dennis.

**5:30** The men participate in chores after dinner. They are doing dishes, sweeping, vacuuming, mopping, taking out the garbage, cleaning toilets, etc. Like a family, they know their responsibilities and go to work. S is busy doing his laundry and starting to settle in. I feel good that the men are safe and warm inside since winter is fast approaching.

**6:30** Father Dave is beginning the Friday evening Mass at the St. Martin de Porres Chapel. Eighteen are present in our small and simple chapel this evening located inside the Mother Teresa Center. The simplicity of the chapel is what makes it special and beautiful. Mass is celebrated here six days a week. Residents, volunteers and community members are present and we are all one in God's eyes. Esther plays the piano to close the Mass. She loves playing at Father Carr's for Mass and other events.

**6:45** Keith approaches me after Mass to express his desire to spend time with our men again. He was a past resident volunteer and misses spending time with the men. I hope he returns and it was good to visit with him again.

**7:00** The rosary group is meeting in the Mother Teresa Center and Bob is meeting with another group about a volunteer project. Bob has been going for twelve hours and his day continues.

**7:15** I reflect on our mission before going home. I realize we have many challenges and obstacles. We are far from perfect but it is a comfort to know we come together to serve as one. As I leave for my own home, I am fully aware that Bob, Debbie, Carol, Sister Grace, Rose, Father Dave, Dennis, Hussain, James, and others continue to serve. I leave behind 47 others who are resting, playing, talking and living. I am filled with a very special feeling about Father Carr's. Wonderful people are doing wonderful things. What a privilege to see it firsthand. Christmas really is 365 days a year when you realize the true gift is in the giving.

**Humbly Yours,**  
**Nic**



# A Most Treasured Gift: Hope

Life in general brings with it a multitude of challenges. Some of these are material, financial and spiritual. There are times we are in less than desirable situation and we **desire** a change in the situation or the outcome. We can sit back and do nothing and hope things will change. This is **not** true hope, it is **false hope**. Our lives will only change if we move forward in an active and positive way to change our situation.

Our true hope, Christian hope, is a response to the promises of Christ. True hope is **the confident expectation** that if we live according to the will of God we will be granted eternal salvation. It is through the merits of Jesus' life, death and resurrection that what he had promised will come to fulfillment. It's the gift that we don't find under the Christmas tree but in the hearts of those who trust in Jesus. The gift of true hope comes from God and not the stores.

It has always been our mission to help those in need to see beyond their situation and understand the real reason for hope that adds meaning and value to life. True hope, through the graces God gives us, provides strength and direction in the most difficult of times. Our lives are heading somewhere, and only faith in Jesus will grant us the "confident expectation" of its eternal value.

The real celebration at Christmas is the birth of Jesus and the gift of hope he bestows on the world.

***He Is the reason for our joy! Join us in celebrating the real reason for the season. "To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible."***  
—St Thomas Aquinas

Merry Christmas and blessings in the New Year.  
Fr Dave



## Volunteer Memorial Tree

We are excited about a Volunteer Memorial Tree going up on a wall inside the Mother Teresa Center. It is a wonderful way to pay special remembrance to those volunteers who have passed away. We need your help as not to miss anyone. Please contact Bob at 920-231-2378 or [blang@fathercarrs.org](mailto:blang@fathercarrs.org) if you know of anyone who should be remembered.

## Calendar of Events

### December 23

Children's Christmas Breakfast  
with Jesus and Santa Claus  
9:00 to 11:00 AM

### December 25

Meals delivered from  
10:30 AM to Noon.  
Christmas meal from  
Noon to 1:30 PM

## Needed

- New Men's and Women's Gloves
- Life Coaches and Mentors
- Gift cards for Marcus Theater, McDonalds, Culver's, Dairy Queen, Target, WalMart, Kwik Trip, Fleet Farm, Menards, Festival Foods
- Monies to support needs for the St. Martin de Porres Chapel
- Syrup
- Brown sugar
- Desserts for Christmas dinner
- Butter
- Gravy
- Experienced snow plow drivers
- Community Grant Writer
- Poinsettias, red or white