



# St. Ben's Community Meal

*War begins in the minds of human beings. Since this is so, the minds of human beings must also be capable of ending war.— UNESCO*

*Transforming the world through reverence*

*If you want peace, work for justice*

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St. Ben's Community Meal is a ministry of the Capuchin Province of St. Joseph and a 501(c)(3) ministry. All donations are tax deductible as allowable by law.

Donations of cash, food, blankets, hygiene products, new socks and underwear always appreciated and accepted Monday-Friday during business hours.

## Vet Gains Peace Through Fellowship & Art

### *Once Homeless Vet Finds Healing Through St. Ben's Meal*

**W**hen the VA diagnosed Leroy Skalstad with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder the Vietnam Vet's life began to turn around. He moved to Milwaukee, received a small military disability pension and found a rooming house. "My pension was so small it just covered the rent on the room," Leroy remembered.

"I had grown up in a rural suburb and was so amazed to see how stressful

poverty is," Leroy said. He continued, "I saw people being

angry. But when we met at St. Ben's for the Meal I was humbled to see how peaceful it was. I couldn't afford food, clothing or much else so I came to St. Ben's to eat every night," he said.

Over 20 years have passed and Leroy has continued to heal but he still comes to St. Ben's most nights to eat. Leroy added, "I can afford to eat out occasionally. But the fellowship at St. Ben's is very important to me. It's not just food, its food and fellowship that the Capuchins provide."

As Leroy's life had gotten on track he has returned to one of his first loves, photography. "When you are homeless you see a lot of people with the 1,000 mile stare. When you can make a visual connection then you'd be surprised at how

much communication suddenly happens," Leroy said. He continued, "I decided to ask people to allow me to photograph them. I'd buy them a cup of coffee, no strings attached and see if they were willing to share their picture for my portraiture project."



**Above:** Leroy shows Br. Dave his latest camera and explains how he'll use it to take pictures for St. Ben's Community Meal.

Many of the portraits of the homeless that Leroy has taken have been used in St. Ben's Calendar. "I find that when the homeless agree to have their portrait made they allow their soul, hidden deep inside, to peer out at the world," Leroy said. Br. Dave Schwab reflected that, "Leroy helps to put a human face on homelessness. And he does it in such a respectful way that people's dignity is affirmed in the process."

## We are blessed

**O**ften when I meet a guest at the Meal or in the office, the spontaneous question is "How are you?" Frequently, the answer comes back, "I'm blessed!"

St Ben's Community Meal has been blessed abundantly over the last couple of months. The Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's holidays spurred a very generous response on the part of our supporters. Through a special mailing we also gained over a 1,000 new supporters and donors.

This DOUBLE blessing means that in the months ahead, St Ben's will be able to respond generously in turn to the requests and needs of the homeless and poor population we serve. A very special THANK YOU to each of you who have supported our ministry in this way. May you be blessed too!

Peace and all good,

*Br. Dave Schuch, OFM Cap*



**Left:**  
Sr. Eileen  
Brynda, OP,  
Pastoral  
Associate at St.  
Killian's Parish,  
Hartford holds  
bags of peanut  
butter and jelly  
sandwiches  
donated by the  
parish to Ben's.



**Above:** Wilbur, a guest at St. Ben's Community Meal receives hygiene supplies from Prentice Young, Outreach Worker.



**Above:** Karen Niessing, Lynn Heimbruch and Joanna Amos of Northwestern Mutual present a check for \$2,000 to Br. Dave from the Northwestern Mutual Foundation. Karen knew of St. Ben's through her parish's work there. She is a member of St. Mary's, Hales Corners.



**Above:** Connie Jones, Roundy's Foundation Administrator and Vivian King, Roundy's Director of Public Affairs present Br. Dave with gift cards for \$4,500 to purchase supplies.

## New Outreach Worker Joins Capuchin's At St. Ben's Prayer and Wife's Own Service At St. Ben's Help Him Decide On Ministry

Working in Financial Services, Prentice Young helped people set up retirement accounts to fund their old age. But he still felt something was missing. "I lost my job due to the recession but at the same time I felt that I wanted to help people in a more complete way," Prentice commented. Rather than grieve the lost career he began to pray for direction as how to find a job helping those in need.

"We have a prayer box at home where we put those concerns we each have so we can continue to pray for them," he said. Prentice is married and his wife Dionne is a nurse practitioner for the Columbia-St. Mary's Clinic at St. Ben's. Together they have 3 sons, ages 5, 4 and 1 & 1/2.

When Dionne heard that there was an opening at St. Ben's for an outreach worker, she suggested Prentice apply for it. "After 6 months I can say that this job is definitely what I needed. Each day I help people in need get clothes, food, bus tickets and co-pays for medicine," Prentice said. He added, "If you want to know what I do as an outreach worker here it's that I listen to people. Many of the people who come to St. Ben's have friends and family. But for a variety of reasons they have been "cast off". Rather than drown their feelings in alcohol or drugs I give them time to talk it out. Then I can suggest other ways to resolve their issues."

Prentice continued, "I think a common misunderstanding about our guests is that they are all mentally ill and/or homeless. Many of the guests I have met are people who have fallen on really bad

times. They lost a job, suffered an accident or went through a divorce. Because they couldn't climb out of the financial hole they were in they were hurt so bad that they lost everything."

Prentice smiled and said, "Just as I have developed a more complete picture of who the guests are, I have also learned who our supporters are. There are

so many people who want to help St. Ben's. I never knew there were so many people who want to serve. Just working here you realize that there are lots of folks with good hearts who want to help others – and it makes me feel even more that I want to be a part of St. Ben's ministry too!"

Dionne came over from the clinic to share her experience of working with her husband in ministry. She said, "It is great to work with my husband as outreach worker. Just today we had a man with a fungal infection who hadn't showered in days. We couldn't treat him until he was able to attend to his hygiene issues. Prentice arranged for our mutual guest to use the showers at St. Ben's so he could get treated at the clinic."

Br. Dave Schwab commented, "Prentice has been a

wonderful addition to our staff. He really reflects many of the Capuchin values. He shares Compassion with the poorest of the poor. Plus his non-judgmental attitude with our guests encourages them to make positive choices that addresses their needs and transforms us all. And that is a form of Joyful Service!"



**Above:** Dionne & Prentice Young pose in front of a picture of St. Benedict the Moor. Dionne is a nurse at the Columbia-St. Mary's Clinic at St. Ben's and Prentice is the new outreach worker for St. Ben's Community Meal.

The Province of St. Joseph of the Capuchin Order  
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## Announcements



### Walk Run for the Hungry News



**Save the Date:** German Fest 2010 has just announced the date for our 5K Walk Run for the Hungry. Join us for a walk or run on **Thursday, July 22, 2010 at 7:00 PM.**

### Social Networking

**Posters:** Can you help St. Ben's promote this event? Posters will soon be available from St. Ben's. Can you volunteer some time putting posters up at gyms, schools, work, church or in the neighborhood? Call Br. David at 414.271.0135, ext. 15 and arrange to pick up some posters to deliver.

You can now find us on Facebook, Twitter and Flickr. Log on to Facebook (St. Ben's Community Meal) and Twitter (StBensMeal), become a friend and invite your friends to support St. Ben's. Enjoy the pictures posted on Flickr (St. Ben's Community Meal).

**Sponsor:** If your family, faith community, work or other group can become a corporate sponsor, please let our Development Director know at: [jvanhoven@thecapuchins.org](mailto:jvanhoven@thecapuchins.org).

**Update:** Bill Michaels, "The Big Unit" and Sportscaster on 620 AM WTMJ Newsradio will return to emcee and German Fest confirmed all participants will receive free admission, free \$5 gift card and is adding fireworks that night.

