



# Harry Tompson Center

Summer 2014



## Letter From the Director



### Where Compassion Is Alive and Well

*Dear Friends of The Harry Tompson Center,*

The staff and volunteers who perform acts of mercy and compassion at the Harry Tompson Center are not the only ones performing these acts. Recently, I spoke with one of our guests who had no shoes. While I was talking with him, I noticed another guest carefully watching us. The next day he sought me out at the Center and said he had a pair of shoes to share with the man with none. He simply said that he just didn't need them. It was especially touching since staff said they had never heard him say anything so positive or do anything like this before.

When Fr. Harry began this day center ministry 15 years ago, he created a physical space where it was very easy and practical to show compassion to others. Pope Francis' words from an address in July 2013 rings true here today: *When we are generous in welcoming people and sharing something with them—some food, a place in our homes, our time—not only do we no longer remain poor: we are enriched.*

As the long, hot summer draws to a close, we are thankful for all the acts of compassion which have been birthed and nurtured here at the Center recently. Here are a few highlights:

- Over **1,900** different persons utilized our services over the summer with over **150** people receiving services each day at the Rebuild Center and **100** each day at the new VA CRRC.
- We launched a **new housing program**, in collaboration with Rebuild Center partner DePaul USA and funded by UNITY and the U.S. Dept. of HUD, which will provide housing and services for 15 chronically homeless individuals.
- We are participating in the **"25 Cities Initiative"** led by Mayor Landrieu and UNITY which has a goal of being the first major U.S. City to end veteran homelessness. Over 165 homeless veterans have been identified thus far.
- Over **20 guests receiving case management obtained housing** this summer thanks to Case Manager Kip Barard and his team.
- After a guest suggested we incorporate space for a **chapel**, we were able to make this dream a reality, thanks to donations from the Jesuit Provincial Office and others. Guests now have a quiet place to pray and reflect on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings.
- We purchased a **defibrillator** and needed supplies for our medical clinic, thanks to the successful GiveNOLA event held last May.
- **New volunteers** joined our team: Americorps Volunteer Dayna Kirkpatrick, Tulane MSW student Daniel Floyd, Jesuit Volunteers Bailey Warfield and Angela Owczarek, Becky and Berengher Brechtel, Sally Bourgeois, Kathleen Faherty and Sister Cora Anne Signaigo, D.C.
- **Dr. Peter DeBlieux and Cathy Espenan** joined our Board of Directors. We said good-bye to long-time Board Member **Gary Solomon** and thanked him for his many years of service on our Board and for his generous support.

*With Compassion and Love,  
Vicki Judice*

## Staff Spotlight: **Emily Bussen**



Assistant Director Emily Bussen is well-known and loved around the HTC. Anyone who has spent any time at the Center is impressed with this fast moving, kind-hearted blonde woman who bustles from guest to guest, checking on their needs and ensuring that services are operating efficiently. A native of

St. Louis, Missouri (and an avid Cardinals fan!), Emily first started volunteering with the HTC as a Jesuit Volunteer from 2004-2005. When the Center re-opened in 2007, she was once again drawn into its ministry. She describes her job as “forming relationships with people to figure out how to best assist them.” When asked what drives her to work with the homeless population she responded, “Everyone wants to be loved. I was extremely fortunate growing up because I was surrounded by love. Often homeless individuals are overlooked or looked down upon in our society.” Luckily for the guests, Emily is always there to do everything in her power to give them the love they deserve.

## Volunteer Spotlight: Sally Bourgeois



Sally Bourgeois, a native of Metairie and a parishioner of Immaculate Conception Church, is our “Tuesday Phone Room Volunteer.” She maintains the phone list for those needing to make free local or long-distance phone calls and helps with other guest needs such as charging cell phones and lending tools for bike repairs. In the past, Sally worked in education and now operates a pet-sitting business. She enjoys gardening and animal rescue efforts. Sally has been married to Bobby Bourgeois for 41 years and they have two adult children, Bobby and Brooke.

Sally’s involvement with the HTC extends beyond her regular Tuesday volunteering. She serves on the Gala committee which hosts our primary fundraiser event each Spring, she previously served as a receptionist volunteer in our medical clinic for over a year, and she regularly replenishes our Library Cart with donated books and magazines. She is an essential part of our team. Sally believes that her time with the HTC has taught her about humility. In conversing with the guests she says, “I always gain beauty and knowledge. It is an honor to provide whatever assistance and personal comfort I can to each individual.”



## Guest Spotlight: Marc Given



Marc Given is one of our special guests here at the HTC. After living by the river for 4 long years, he recently moved into his own apartment after becoming a participant in our new housing program operated in collaboration with DePaul USA. One volunteer described him as, "a gentle man, kind and unpretentious with much to teach us about life." Originally from California, Marc spent much of his youth growing up in Amite, Louisiana and has worked in many environments from a health spa, to an aquatic park to a bottling plant. His passions are many- beadwork, leather craft, writing, camping, gardening, art, and technology. Marc is also an accomplished poet and has written pieces for various HTC events. He wishes people knew that "those experiencing homelessness may be facing many problems, but there is a humanity and awareness that come from being on the streets." Marc describes himself as "a curious, cautious and caring person who is very appreciative and honest." When asked how he stays so peaceful in an uncertain lifestyle Marc says, "Don't hold grudges, be satisfied. Have tolerance, be tolerant. Return to the old ways, good ways of simplicity, organized effort. Encourage all."

**I am a wall  
Lean on me  
Attach your ideas  
Build on me  
I have a foundation  
Truth build me  
And I encourage you  
To rebuild me  
-Marc Given**

## Program Highlight: **New Classes to Begin at HTC!**

"We want to improve our lives!" We recently held two focus group sessions to inquire how to better support our guests and how they could better support each other and the Rebuild Center. The top recommendation was to host "self-improvement" classes. On September 22, the HTC will begin hosting weekly self-help classes led by community presenters with topics ranging from health and well-being to job preparation. Students in the LSU Physicians' Assistants Program will start off the program with classes on diabetes prevention and treatment. If you are interested in hosting one of the weekly classes on a self-improvement topic, please contact Dayna Kirkpatrick at: [dkirkpatrick@harrytompsoncenter.org](mailto:dkirkpatrick@harrytompsoncenter.org)

## Facility Highlight: **Rebuild Center Renovation**



The Rebuild Center was closed to guests for 2 weeks in August in order to create a new and improved oasis. The project included resurfacing the courtyard and making repairs to our bathrooms and shower vents. The Center opened once again on August 18<sup>th</sup> to a gracious crowd eager to see the changes. Thanks to the Rebuild Center Board for facilitating these much needed renovations!

Here's what some of our guests had to say about the changes:

"The place looks excellent. Ten times better"- **Charley**

"It's wonderful and a beautiful place to come"-**Kirby**

"Looks good, nice and clean. I like all the plants. Sharp! - **Charles**

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

December 14, 2014

### **Interfaith Memorial Service**

St. Joseph Catholic Church 4 p.m.

Sponsored by the Ignatian Spirituality Project, St. Joseph Church,  
Harry Tompson Center and others

to remember homeless persons who have passed away over the past year.

March 14, 2015

### **Harry Tompson Center Annual Gala**

Jesuit High School

# HTC WISH LIST

Ponchos/umbrellas  
Travel size shampoo/conditioner/lotions  
Razors  
Books/magazines/newspapers  
Art Supplies  
Men's athletic socks  
Men's shoes (especially size 11 + higher)  
Men's belts  
Backpack/tote bags  
Reading glasses (especially 2.50 + higher)

## Want to Get More Involved?

If you would like to become a volunteer, donate items on our Wish List; coordinate a donation drive, serve on our Gala Committee, make a financial donation, OR have a completely new idea about how to help (always encouraged!), please contact Vicki Judice at [vjudice@harrytompsoncenter.org](mailto:vjudice@harrytompsoncenter.org) or 504-273-5547, ext. 135.

For more information about our mission and services, please visit our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Harry-Tompson-Center/205625902803839>



Or our website [www.harrytompsoncenter.org](http://www.harrytompsoncenter.org)

*(Please note that our website is currently under construction and cannot accept donations via credit card until mid-September. Meanwhile, you can make a donation via credit card by contacting Vicki Judice.)* Also, checks can always be sent to our mailing address:

c/o Immaculate Conception Church  
130 Baronne Street  
New Orleans, LA 70112

***Thank You!***

