

The Helping Hand

Father Gene's Help Center Newsletter

Spring 2023

Derrick Lowe Weathers Lean Times with Help From FGHC

Derrick Lowe came to Fr. Gene's Help Center (FGHC) for the first time 10 years ago, after a recommendation from his Mom. At that time FGHC provided not only clothing, but also household items, such as bedding and dishes.

"I received dishes and curtains that I still own," said Derrick.

Since then he has returned whenever he needs help with clothing. "The center has come a long way," he says. While clients can choose to shop for their own clothing now, Derrick prefers to pre-order clothing. He likes the styles that the staff and volunteers select for him.

A carpenter by trade, Derrick also holds a culinary degree and has worked in food service. He dreams of opening a restaurant someday.

"When we've struggled financially, it's helped a lot to be able to come to Fr. Gene's." - Derrick

He also cares for his longtime girlfriend, Porsche, who has a disability.

"Receiving clothes from Fr. Gene's Help Center has made a big difference in our lives," said Derrick. "When we've struggled financially, it's helped a lot to be able to come to Fr. Gene's."

He recently brought Porsche to the center for the first time to shop for clothing. "She didn't know what to expect but was pleasantly surprised at the quality and selection of clothing."

Derrick said the FGHC staff and volunteers always make him feel welcome. "The people are great. I feel the love," he says.

Sr. Jean Ellman Joins FGHC Board of Directors

FGHC is pleased to welcome Sr. Jean Ellman, SSND, to our board of directors. Sr. Jean has been involved with the Latino community in Milwaukee for more than 30 years as principal and/or teacher at Bruce-Guadalupe, Nativity Jesuit, and Notre Dame Middle School.



A Milwaukee native, she graduated from Pius XI high school and then entered the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Mount Mary University. She also holds a master's degree in reading and bilingual education from UW-Whitewater, and a principal's license from Marquette University.

Sr. Jean joined the staff of Casa Romero in 2016. In her ministry, she assists the Spanish spirituality programs, providing spiritual direction to adults and engaging them in retreats and evenings of reflection. Previously, she served as Urban Plunge coordinator, leading groups of high school and college students in immersion experiences in Milwaukee. The students learned about issues in urban areas, such as poverty, hunger, and homelessness.

Sr. Jean became interested in the mission of FGHC after bringing students to the center for an urban plunge. She joined the FGHC board to become more involved in alleviating problems that are faced by people who are experiencing poverty.

Connect with us:

Website: FatherGenesHelp.org

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Service Spotlight: Pius XI Catholic High School

FGHC often hosts service groups from elementary schools, high schools, and universities. In this issue, we would like to highlight the service group from Pius XI High School.

Tom Holschuh, campus minister at Pius, says their students come from all over southeastern Wisconsin - from the inner city to the suburbs.

“The service experiences give them an opportunity to see parts of the city that they haven’t been to before,” said Tom, adding “it’s important for them to get a sense of their community and what the needs are.”

Pius requires students to complete service experiences in four categories: family, community, vulnerable populations, and environmental.

By volunteering at FGHC, students learn about the community we serve. Our clients are dealing with poverty, homelessness, addiction, and mental health issues, among others. Serving at FGHC also gives the students



an opportunity to reflect on the environmental impact of clothing.

“I wonder how many clothes end up in landfills. It’s great that people can donate their clothing to FGHC to be reused by people in need,” said Anya Richardson, a junior at Pius.

Tom says that several of the students who initially came to FGHC to fulfill the school’s service requirement, now serve on a regular basis. “We’re blessed that the students work hard when they show up for the service experiences,”

he said, adding, “we’re happy to serve at this place that’s such a cool piece of Catholic history in the city.”

We’re grateful for Tom and the Pius students who generously give of their time and talent. If you or your organization is interested in volunteering at FGHC, contact Executive Director Jessica Luebbering by phone at (414) 258-4357, ext. 101 or by email at director@fathergeneshelp.org.

Critical Needs List

- New underwear
- Men’s jeans, size 28”-36” waist
- Athletic/tennis/casual shoes
- Activewear bottoms, especially sweatpants & basketball shorts
- Sweatshirts/hoodies
- Plus-sized tops for men & women (2XL and up)
- Children’s pants, sizes 3-18
- Pajamas & loungewear



How to Donate

Donations can be dropped off at: **Father Gene’s Help Center | 5919 W. National Ave., West Allis, WI 53214**

New Hours

Monday-Thursday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. | First Saturday of each month from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Please call the center at (414) 258-4357 with any questions regarding donations.