



# BLANCHET HOUSE

JANUARY 2020

NEWSLETTER

## A NOTE FROM BOARD PRESIDENT, EMILY HARRINGTON

Happy New Year! I'd like to share a quote with you from Dorothy Day, a co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, who inspired the creation of our mission. "The greatest challenge of the day is how to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution which has to start with each one of us."



Blanchet House has benefited from the hearts, hands, and minds of many over the past 68 years. As an organization we remain committed to our mission, even as the issue of homelessness becomes more expansive and complex.

I invite you to join me in celebrating and supporting Blanchet's efforts to alleviate suffering and give others hope for a better life at our annual brunch on March 1. I look forward to visiting with you there.

## A NOTE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SCOTT KERMAN

A housing guest recently said to me, "Blanchet House is the only semblance of family some of us have."



You are part of that family, and our annual brunch is an opportunity for us to gather and celebrate another incredible year of service to others.

I feel so fortunate to be part of this community, and over the past six months I have learned much about Blanchet's legacy and impact.

Our staff and board of directors are actively planning for the future of the organization and determining the best ways to serve our food and housing insecure neighbors. The generosity of supporters like you is the engine that drives this mission.

I look forward to attending my first Lend a Helping Hand Brunch and I hope to see you there!



## City Commissioner Nick Fish to Be Honored at Annual Brunch

It took nearly a decade to raise the funds and secure a location for the construction of the current Blanchet House of Hospitality. A living monument to charity, the building wouldn't exist without the work and support of Portland City Commissioner Nick Fish. Fish, who died from cancer on Jan. 1, helped to find a site for the new building and convince the city to donate the land.

"I could not be prouder of the city's association with such a fine, worthy service organization," Fish said of Blanchet House. The new larger building, which opened in 2012, greatly increased Blanchet's capacity to feed and house people in need.

"Nick was a great friend and supporter. We were able to realize our dream for a new building because of his efforts," says Dan Petrusich, Board Vice President.

Join us in celebrating the life of Nick Fish at our 6th annual Lend a Helping Hand Brunch on March 1 at Multnomah Athletic Club. We will also be honoring the support of Stumptown Coffee, Red Running Lizards and St. Thomas More's "Golden Girls" Sally Follen, Sue Healy, Barbara Niedermeyer and Patty Stember.

**Tickets, tables and sponsorship available at [BlanchetHouse.org/Brunch2020](http://BlanchetHouse.org/Brunch2020)  
Contact Brenda Ray Scott, 503-241-4340 x103, [brscott@blanchethouse.org](mailto:brscott@blanchethouse.org).**



6TH ANNUAL

*Lend a Helping Hand  
Brunch*

MARCH 1, 2020

SUNDAY, 11:00AM - 12:30PM  
MULTNOMAH ATHLETIC CLUB

**Tickets at [BlanchetHouse.org/Brunch2020](http://BlanchetHouse.org/Brunch2020)**

### SUCCESS STORY



## Moving On After Making Change

"A long time ago I didn't have hope but now I do," says departing and much loved Blanchet House resident, Jay Mac.

You may remember Jay as a superstar cafe host who was featured in a KGW television news segment with Joey Harrington in 2018. Jay gained recognition from the community for his compassionate and caring service. He came to live at Blanchet House after he lost his job running a food cart. He wasn't able to make rent and found himself needing to make difficult choices.

"It's the best decision I ever made. The amount of hopelessness this place saved me from is huge," he says.

Jay slowly built himself back up through serving others in the safe and supportive environment of Blanchet House.

As a cafe host he was a model of empathy for staff and residents. Jay welcomed all meals guests with a warm 'hello' and smile. He handed out blankets, shoes and clothes when he could.

"I treat them like regular cause that's who they are," he says. "You never know what's hidden under the layers of a person."

Jay recounted how before coming to Blanchet he was always inches from living on the street because of his drink-

ing. He credits the housing program with helping him rebuild his work ethic and giving him time to rebuild relationships with his ex-wife and children.

Since those early days, Jay has secured a full-time job he enjoys (of course he was employee of the month within his first year there) and a rented room near his work. He's moving out, which is bittersweet because we will miss him, but as usual he soothes us with a bit of lived wisdom to ease his exit.

**"A long time ago I didn't have hope, but now I do."**

—Jay Mac

"You can enjoy someone's successes just as much as you can enjoy your own. Hearing about a guy moving into his own place after living on the streets for years, watching that weight come off him is the best feeling. Or finding a job that he wants,

or when he's getting sober," Jay says.

The fourth floor of Banchet House is meant to give men who completed the initial nine month program continued support. The additional months of free room and board puts residents like Jay in a really good position because they had time to save money and build sobriety.

"I'm in a really good place mentally and physically. I'm just going to keep doing what I'm doing," he says.

We look forward to visiting with Jay at our monthly alumni volunteer days!

### NEW STAFF



**Meet Kathy Finkle**, Blanchet House's new Office & Operations Manager. She got to plate these sweet unicorn cookies donated by JaCiva's Bakery & Chocolatier on one of her first days here.

Kathy brings more than 20 years of nonprofit experience to her work at Blanchet House. She has a B.A. in Communications and Environmental Studies from Lewis & Clark College. After working in the education and air quality fields she is excited to be in a role of service to the Portland community.

### IN THE KITCHEN



A generous supporter donated a new electric stove top to replace our broken one! Chef John is very excited to have improved equipment to prepare food for thousands of hungry meal guests.



## BIRTHDAY SERVICE



### Birthday Party or Volunteer? She Chose Both!

Stella Moore celebrated her 14th birthday by volunteering with her friends at Blanchet House! They served a delicious baked potato smothered in chili with a side of fruit.

We appreciate her commitment and sacrifice to do this on her birthday. What a fun idea!

## LEGACY SERVICE



### Thank You Mary

Mary McNicholas has been volunteering to serve lunch every Wednesday for 18 years! She always stations herself on the plating line where she enjoys visiting with our resident chefs and other volunteers.

"I know it'll be a good day when Mary is here," says Emily Reiling, Blanchet's Community Engagement Coordinator.



## Mornings with Brian & Evelyn

Blanchet House is lucky to have so many volunteers to help serve our meals, without them we would not

### BREAKFAST CREW

be able to carry out our mission. We are especially grateful for the breakfast volunteers. They have to arrive bright and early at 6:15 am, ready to hustle and offer hospitality to people who have spent the night sleeping outside in the cold, in their car or in a noisy crowded shelter.

People often ask why we serve breakfast so early. It is because most emergency shelters require their guests leave around 6:00 am. and we want them to have access to a warm meal as soon as possible.

Such an early start time can make it difficult to recruit volunteers so we are so thankful to have regular breakfast volunteers like Brian Marron. He serves nearly every morning along with his elderly chocolate lab dog, Evelyn.

When asked about why he likes volunteering at Blanchet House, Brian says, "I just like the atmosphere. Everybody seems to pitch in and want to do their share. I like getting to talk with the meal guests. You get the feeling you are needed here."

We don't usually allow volunteers to bring their dogs but Evelyn is a

registered service animal. She lies patiently while Brian plates food on the line, busses tables or serves. Our residents and staff love petting and visiting with her. Dog therapy is an added bonus to Brian's volunteerism!

Blanchet serves a cause that is close to Brian's heart, "My son has addiction problems and has been homeless. In fact, he is probably back at it. I thought he would stay clean but he didn't. I wanted him to go to Blanchet Farm, but it is up to him. He is a nice kid, a beautiful person when he is sober. But when he is on drugs he is a different person. I have spent thousands of dollars and years trying to help him. I'm glad I can help people here."

Brian knows that addiction doesn't discriminate and can happen to anyone. It impacts the lives of so many people. He appreciates that Blanchet gives men who have struggled with addiction a chance to build healthier, successful lives and we appreciate Brian giving his mornings to serve others.

—written by Brittany Brock

Join us for breakfast! Sign up to serve at [www.BlanchetHouse.org/Volunteer](http://www.BlanchetHouse.org/Volunteer) or give Brittany a call at 503-241-4340 ext. 108.

## Lending a hand with compassion and purpose.



### Happy New Year!

Here's to continuing Blanchet House's critical work of feeding, clothing and housing people suffering in our community. All of this is done because of your support. Thank you for a wonderful year!

**325,000**

plates of food served to our homeless and low-income meal guests.

**175**

men provided life-changing housing, clothing, support and basic needs.

**400,000**

pounds of fresh food rescued then turned into delicious healthy meals.



**OUR LITTLEST DONOR** 4-year-old Oliver Murray brought in \$20 of his chore money to support our meal program. He enjoyed a tour of our kitchen, cafe and building to see how his donation will be used.

### Please support our work with a donation.

I'm giving a one-time gift of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I'm giving a monthly gift of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Card #: \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

Expires: \_ \_ / \_ \_ CVV# (back of card) \_ \_ \_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**[www.BlanchetHouse.org/Donate](http://www.BlanchetHouse.org/Donate) | 503-241-4340**

Donations are tax deductible as permitted by law. EIN #93-6031009