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

Contact Brenda Ray Scott, 503-241-4340 x103, brscott@blanchethouse.org.
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 drinking. 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.

“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 Blanchet 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!

“A long time ago I didn’t have hope, but now I do.”

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

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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 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.

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: ______________________________

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

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.