



Chefs Antoine Golden and Shannon Chasteen outside Blanchet House.

 Blanchet House & Farm

MAY 2024

# HOSPITALITY HEROES CLUB

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A plate of food tells people what we think about them, and what we think is that they're worthy of our time. Worthy of comfort. Worthy of hope. Worthy of love.



## Meet Our Guests

We're always glad to see our friend and booster Ronnie walk through the doors of the cafe. This month we got to celebrate his 70th birthday!

Ronnie takes the bus from home to dine with us most days of the week. He always has a kind word for the chefs but especially enjoys spaghetti on Wednesdays and pizza on Saturdays.

Like Ronnie, many people who dine with us are housed but may have challenges preparing or providing hot meals for themselves. Or they simply enjoy dining with friends in the cafe. Whatever the reason for joining us is fine because, at Blanchet House of Hospitality everyone is welcome. No questions asked. Which is only possible because of your generous support. Thank you.







Katie Hennessy talks with a resident at Blanchet House.

## Retired Social Worker Volunteers to Uplift Residents

Katie Hennessy, a semi-retired clinical social worker, volunteers Tuesday mornings at Blanchet House. As the sole volunteer in the residential program, she nurtures connections with men who have often lost it all.

### VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

"There seems to be something deep in me that connects with our Blanchet residents," she reflects. "I am very comfortable here."

Quite a few men staying at Blanchet are challenged with physical and mental health issues, and benefit from individualized attention from an experienced social worker like Katie. She offers them friendship informed by a profound understanding of the human need for connection.

Katie's volunteering can look like gently coaxing a resident to leave their room for a walk or asking about the side effects of a new medication. She's also helped residents embark on journeys to obtain their GED.

With decades of social work experience including roles in oncology and palliative care at OHSU, Katie's uniquely skilled at navigating delicate situations and providing holistic support. And, our small residential staff appreciates her help.

"I feel that something as simple as a walk in the neighborhood or a meaningful conversation is beneficial," Katie says. "I hope that I also offer support to the incredible staff by being a listening ear amidst the challenges of their work."

Katie exudes empathy, which we

*"We can all change, grow, and experience healing until the moment we die. Our mistakes are not the whole of who we are."*

—Katie Hennessy

learned is rooted in a life marked by both personal loss and professional expertise. Her parents, both World War II veterans, struggled with addiction. Katie was shaped by family complexities, but also by her mother's work as a nurse.

"Remorse and the longing for healing feel very familiar," Katie revealed. "As my mom's life was ending when I was in high school, I took her to her AA meetings, the only place she really wanted to go. I sat in the back of the room, listened, and was humbled. I loved my parents. They both died early because of their illnesses and histories of trauma."

Katie's path to Blanchet House is rooted in a lifetime of service including with her senior year in college at Gonzaga University in WA. There, she was asked to run a student volunteer program that operated a soup kitchen on Sundays when the regular staff were off. The kitchen located in House of Charity had a similar mission to Blanchet House.

Many years later, after being named OHSU's Social Worker of the Year, Katie caught the attention of Blanchet's leadership. They asked her to join the board of directors. In 2013, she joined the board alongside nurse Emily Harrington, who runs the Harrington Health Clinic.

Together, as healthcare professionals, they advocated for hiring case managers to help residents establish a stronger base before exiting the program.

Katie says that her Catholic faith and belief in a "merciful God" underpin her volunteerism.

"We can all change, grow, and experience healing until the moment we die," she asserts. "Our mistakes are not the whole of who we are. Sometimes people end up in a place in life where they've lost everything and everybody. It's important to restore a

sense of relationship. That's possibly what my volunteering can do."

In a community where many feel isolated and filled with despair, Katie's presence serves as a beacon of hope—a reminder that even on dark days, there are people who believe we are worthy of living and healing.

From all of us, thank you, Katie.

**You can donate to our residential program in honor of Katie or another volunteer. Please use the envelope included. Thank you for giving people an opportunity to change, grow, and heal.**



**We're collecting NEW men's and women's underwear for our guests.**

If you can help, please drop off donations Monday-Saturday, 8-10:30 a.m. or 1:30-4 p.m.

>> You can also mail packages to ATTN: Cafe, 310 NW Glisan, Portland, OR, 97209.



## Staff Update

You'll be seeing some new faces at Blanchet because we've welcomed new members to our small but mighty team.

These special people are helping to serve more than 1,000 meals a day and assisting guests in finding employment and housing. Visit our website to learn more about the amazing team alleviating suffering in our world.

- Elizabeth Ashworth, *Cafe*
- Emily Coleman, *Programs*
- Steve Cook, *Development*
- Maggie Cornish, *Residential*
- Ava Duckworth, *Cafe*
- Rick German, *Farm Residential*
- Heidi Janowski, *Volunteering*
- Duke Reiss, *Peer Support*
- Colleen Scovill, *Finance*
- Liz Walker, *Cafe*



Jim O'Hanlon Sr. takes in the view alongside Anne Marie Harrington in a room located inside the new dormitory at Blanchet Farm.

## Founders Tour Farm Building

Jim O'Hanlon Sr., 95, co-founder of Blanchet House visited Blanchet Farm on April 7, along with Anne Marie Harrington and Dorothy McGinnis.

FARM NEWS

Both are the wives of co-founders and friends Dan Harrington and Hugh McGinnis.

Also in attendance were distinguished members of past and present boards along with their families.

The group gathered for a special mass led by Fr. Gary Smith, then took a tour of the new facility which is scheduled to open in the fall.

In 1962, Mr. O'Hanlon convinced his friends to purchase a 42-acre prune

farm in Yamhill County to turn into a sanctuary for people to heal from alcohol addiction, free of charge. They built a bridge of hope for thousands of men and their families.

The new dormitory will bolster that bridge for years to come with housing for up to 24 men and meeting spaces for the community to gather.

Recovery facilities are desperately needed in Oregon and we want to open the doors ASAP but we need your help. We need to raise \$1 million to reach our goal. If you can contribute to Mr. O'Hanlon's legacy please call Meg Stark at 503-241-4340 ext. 109.



## Lend a Helping Hand Brunch 2024 Recap

We had a wonderful morning with our generous supporters at the annual Lend a Helping Hand Brunch on March 3 at the Portland Art Museum. Thank you to everyone who contributed to raising more than \$400,000 to fund life-saving programs. We hope you will join us next year!

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ART BY SHANNON AXELSON

## Art Show Benefit

We're accepting submissions for On the Ledge, an annual art show to benefit Blanchet and artists.

This year's theme, *Homegrown*, is an invitation to artists to reflect on the concept of home.

We invite you to submit an original work for consideration by May 31. Selected work will be displayed with prints being produced and sold in August.

Go To >> [BHOntheLedge.com](http://BHOntheLedge.com)

## A Meal. A Home. A Future.



Lou drove in 31 dozen fresh eggs collected from the chickens at Blanchet Farm to Blanchet House. That's 372 eggs we can serve for breakfast. On one busy morning, we served 325 plates so we should have enough eggs to scramble and serve to the public, residents, and volunteers.

### RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT

Lou is staying in the program at Blanchet Farm and has taken on the job of driving the truck. This role is so important to keeping the special relationship between farm and house going. After Lou drops off farm fresh eggs he then picks up bins of food scraps to bring to the pigs and goats. This is one way that we keep tons of food waste from ending up in landfills.