

## Future Hope Board granted Charitable Status: An update

Carol Peloquin, SNJM

The Future Hope Board, formed by Father Dave Creamer, S.J. in 2012 to take charge of the Next Step/Quixote House/Massie Apartments corridor offering released offenders guidance and friendship back into the community, applied for charitable status in 2013. On December 24, 2014, we received the good news that this status had been granted. Future Hope Board, under the leadership of Michael Radcliffe of St. Ignatius Parish, can now put every effort into the fund raising needed for an endowment fund so that a half time salary for our Next Step facilitator, rent shortfall at Quixote House, educational opportunities, etc. can be assured into the future. What a lovely Christmas present! We are exceedingly grateful for so many blessings over the years.



The Massie Apartments: a dream come true

On January 1st Quixote House celebrated its 7<sup>th</sup> year as a temporary “home” for released offenders. The number seven is considered by many a “holy” and “special” number. Our hearts are filled with gratitude as we bear witness to the community building that has happened over the years in this drug and alcohol free residence begun through the joint efforts of Next Step and Father Dave. Jesuit priests from around the world, one by one, have joined Father Dave in his efforts to provide friendship and support for parolees searching their way toward “belonging” outside the prison walls. These years have been blessed indeed. From the brief four month stay of our Irish Father Conall , who left us after Christmas, to Father Eduardo Soto’s long term commitment as he completes a fourth year of study at the Mauro Centre and begins his PhD. Each of these Jesuits has come as blessing. In my role as Assistant Director, I have had the awesome privilege of interviewing and accepting newcomers. I provide a link with parole officers, facilitate monthly house meetings, and provide support in times of crisis.

Over the 13 years of its existence, our Next Step Program participation has more than doubled. From being just myself with one Volunteer, and 4 parolee participants in 2001, we now squeeze a 7-8 mix of parolees and inmates, along with 5-6 volunteers, into the Ross Convent living room every Thursday night. We are ever aware and deeply appreciative that the Sisters at Ross, past and present, have been willing to vacate their living room one evening a week, and be so warmly welcoming to guests. We are grateful for the increased quality of heartfelt, honest sharing.

In 2010, just two and a half years into Quixote’s existence, a crack house next door that had been the regular scene of sirens and ambulances, sported a “for sale” sign in its front yard. Parolees concerned about future housing persuaded Father Dave to persuade his Jesuit Order to purchase the property. With financial contributions from SNJM's and Next Step, Quixote residents were hired to demolish the house and prepare the way for a small apartment block of 4 one bedroom apartments to be constructed on its foundation. Named after Father Brian Massie, one of our biggest supporters who had recently died, the newly constructed Massie Apartments opened its doors on November 1, 2013, to one of our alumni members who wanted to remain connected . Today, each apartment has a resident.

Also from the past, what a blessing it was in 2010 to hear the recommendation from our Regional Chaplain in his evaluation of the Next Step Program and Quixote House Initiative: He said, “I am concerned



Fr. Eduardo., Graeme, Craig, Fr. Dave, and Gerry



Fr. Conall, a **very** interactive Santa!

that there be a succession plan for Sr. Carol so that this community chaplaincy effort can continue into the future.” His words came as music to my ears. Within the next few years, Kathleen Mico, a Next Step volunteer with five years volunteer experience and a rich background with Mediation Services, felt called to say YES to this part time ministry and was hired by CSC Chaplaincy to gradually take over my position of Next Step Facilitator over the next few years.

It seems that every worthwhile undertaking must go through its hard times where one says, How can we surmount this difficulty? In 2013, government funding was cut for Kathleen’s position as facilitator of Next Step. Our Manitoba SNJM community and the Jesuits of Winnipeg agreed to share the cost of Kathleen’s salary for one year to give the newly formed Future Hope Board time to figure out a plan for fund raising. Our prayers were answered.

It is an awesome moment in the life of any project or organization when one can look around and realize that persons we once welcomed as clients have so grown as persons and in relationship to the project that they now have the potential and are ready to join us in our efforts to help others as they were helped. We feel blessed that two of our former residents, Brian and Shawn, both employed, are eager to give time and energy for the well- being of Quixote residents. Brian has been pleased to simply “give back” as a wise and kind listener. We saw in Shawn the potential for the provision of assistance for Father Eduardo, who is now alone at the helm. Here, again, we are grateful to Manitoba Sharing for matching Next Step funds so we can offer this new “house manager” a stipend for his addictions counselling and help with house maintenance.

We enter a New Year that promises to be both rewarding and challenging, grateful for each and every blessing and to all who have helped the “Next Step/Quixote/ Massie Corridor carry on.



Kathleen Mico with Sr. Carol and Quixote residents



(L to R): Brian and Shawn, invited guests at housing meeting