



# The Open Door

## From the Director



Fr. Eric Schimmel,  
C.S.C.

Greetings from André House.

As this newsletter goes in the mail, we stand in the middle of the summer months. Of course this means frigid temperatures in Phoenix – that is if you think that 110 degrees is cold. Although this is my fifth summer in Phoenix (2 in a parish, my 3<sup>rd</sup> at André House), I am not yet used to the heat.

One positive about having so much sun in Phoenix is that you can make it work for you. In our Fall Newsletter I shared with you a dream to “go green” by installing solar panels. I am pleased to announce that we have installed solar panels for water heating at our transitional houses as well as the staff house. We are also moving forward installing solar water heating at the Hospitality Center. APS, our power company, generously donated these solar systems to us with the help and cooperation of Sun Systems solar company. We still dream of installing solar panels for electricity production and will continue working towards that goal. But at this point let us celebrate the success of installing solar water heating systems (see page 7 for pictures).

Unfortunately, with the good news I also have some bad news – and a corresponding request for help. Although I have received more inquiries from people interested in joining us on Core Staff than we received the previous two years, we have not yet secured a commitment from enough people to fill all the positions. To keep all of the services running at the level that we currently offer, we should have a minimum of 5 Core Staff members joining Br. Richard and myself (making a team of 7 total members).

If we desire to keep providing the same number of services with a reduced Core Staff, we need more people volunteering in areas other than the Soupline. Already we have some people helping us with Gate during the evening meal, as well as some who help with the clothes closet, laundry, or covering the Polk Houses. These generous, kind-hearted people help us tremendously. Having a few more may enable us to keep serving our guests in the way that we have become accustomed to serving at André House.

So, I ask you: Can you commit to helping us with some of our services? Several models are possible. Perhaps you can commit once a week to helping with one of our services (Gate, Pascente Office, Showers, Laundry, etc.)? Perhaps you can be part of a team that covers one of these each month – perhaps one or two committing the first week of the month, another couple the second week, etc.? Looking through this history of André House’s, these models worked in the past when we faced similar staffing issues. Is God calling you to be part of the solution today? If you feel you can help us, please email me at [director@andrehouse.org](mailto:director@andrehouse.org) or call me at 602-255-0580, ext. 301.

Finally, on a positive note, we are less than four months away from the canonization of Br. André Bessette, CSC for whom André House is named. Br. André will officially be canonized a saint in a ceremony in Rome on October 17<sup>th</sup>. We will plan a celebration here at André House, probably close to his feast day (January 6). Stay tuned for more details. As we move through the summer months and into the first week of August when we will welcome new staff, we pray through Br. André’s intercession that all people associated with André House: Staff, guest, volunteer, benefactor, friend may be specially blessed.

God bless,  
Fr. Eric

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## Turning to Christ

-by Charles Armstrong



Initially I chose to serve the homeless at André House principally because I admired previous staff members. Many previous staff members earned valuable degrees from prestigious universities and, rather than pursuing the natural path to work at a well-paying job, they choose to live in poverty in the middle

of the desert and serve the poor. Their sacrifice is commendable. I struggled for a few years between my desire to be as holy they were, and my perception that I was unworthy of such a calling. Now, after having served here for almost a year, my advice to anyone with similar feelings would be to consider the idea that God will make us worthy. As a good friend told me, if we demonstrate the willingness, God will take care of the worthiness.

When I began the year I felt the best way to treat our guests with dignity was to give them what they wanted, when they wanted it. Now I know that that was an immature assumption based on the idea that our guests were, for some reason, not bound by general societal norms. I now understand that treating our guests with dignity is paramount to anything else we do at André House, and in doing so we must genuinely treat them as we do anyone else, held to the same standards and expectations. That is the most dignified approach to helping anyone and the approach that could have the most long-lasting positive effects.

The one aspect of my life which changed the most over the course of the year was learning how to freely love without the normal reservations like whether or not someone "deserves it." After reflecting on this idea I now feel that it was truly bred out of seeing the potential and goodness in everyone that we serve at André House. I will be justly grateful to everyone involved with André House for

maintaining such a wonderfully spiritual context where staff, volunteers and guests can mature, change, evolve and grow in shared service to our guests.

Serving for a year at André House has provided me with a glimpse of God's enormous love for all of us. As Richard Rohr loves to discuss, God's love is freely poured out for us in an endless river of mercy and compassion. How different is that from the world we live in which consists of prices, merit, warrant, cost and reward? But at André House there occurs every day a turning back to Christ by giving without counting the cost and a laboring without asking for reward (thanks St. Ignatius).

When Christ was asked what the most important commandment was, He said to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. *Our heart* - because that is where our passions and love are, and we must give up every other love for the love of Jesus. *Our soul* - because it is how we know God and how we communicate with God. C.S. Lewis said humans are interesting in that we are half body, half soul. Half animal and half spiritual. Our spiritual half has a soul which fits in perfect union with the love of God. *Our mind* - because that is where our human intellect and free will reside which God gave us so that we can know Him and glorify Him more completely. Finally, we are to love God with all of *our strength* - because by doing so we indicate that God is in control of our lives, and we place our trust in Him above all else, no matter the temptation. We are also to love our neighbor as ourselves. At André House this is frequently practiced and develops in our staff, volunteers and guests more soft and compassionate hearts, able to more fully comply with the first part.

✠

- CA

## Food

- by Katty Paulino

**André House has a pretty set schedule. Lockers are M-T, 3:30 to 4:30pm. Dinner is from 5:30 to 6:30pm. No exceptions. And, for the most part, that's the way the dinner menu is. However, sometimes lack of resources (or unusual resources) lead us to new and amazing side dishes. For example, a surplus of bread once gave Katie the idea of making bread pudding, and I hear it turned out amazing. I was the Saturday Soupline coordinator this year; here are a few Saturday side dishes, how they were received, and where they rank. Enjoy!**



### GOAT GOULASH

I don't know who donated the goat, but it came beautifully wrapped in white butcher paper, every package neatly labeled with the cut. We had ground goat, goat shoulder, goat loin, etc. Now, I had never even deboned a chicken, so by the time the volunteers got here, I was already exhausted. Using goat instead of beef in the goulash; what was I thinking? And would the guests even eat it? But it was too late to go back, the meat was defrosted, and I had hacked at too many pieces. Two hours later, I was done, and the rest of Soupline was a breeze.

*Result: That night during dinner, as I walked around our main dining room, I smiled to myself. The guests were eating goat, what they would have considered a crazy exotic dish, and they had no idea. They thought it was a normal Saturday.*

*Winner for: Most memorable. Some people still can't believe we put goat in the goulash.*

### GOAT STEW

After the goat goulash, we still had another forty pounds of goat in the freezer that no one was going to use, so two weeks later, I went for it again. The goat goulash had been good, but unfortunately the noodles and tomato sauce overwhelmed the very unique taste of the meat. The second time around we happened to have a lot of carrots and broccoli, so I asked our cook if he'd be ok with not making goulash at all. It became goat stew, and when the guests asked what it was, we just called it stew (remember, we have to get them to eat it.)

*Results: Goat stew was amazing! And I think some of the guests really appreciated the change.*

*Winner for: Best taste.*

### KOSHER PARFAIT

We did this twice, and each time the preparation turned into a huge frenzied assembly line. The idea was simple: grapes + yogurt + donated multicolored Kosher cereal = Parfait! And who doesn't like parfait? The complicated part was making 600 of these little things. It was so time-consuming that at 5:15 (15 minutes before opening time), everything else was done, and we were still at it. I remember I even dropped a bin of tiny seedless grapes all over the floor! Crazy, crazy stuff, I tell ya. Thankfully, we had very hard working volunteers that night, and they got a rhythm down and made it work.

*Result: Mixed. Some guests loved it, others were confused and just stared at it sitting on their plate. I had four!*

*Winner for: Longest preparation time.*

### COOKED CABBAGE

One day I went to St. Mary's Food Bank, and they had tons and tons of cabbage. We don't cook cabbage where I come from (the Caribbean), but I loaded up four big coolers of it in the van and hoped for the best. Thankfully, I found some great cabbage chefs who took on the project and made it their own. It was my first kitchen experiment, and I was happy that it gave our volunteers the opportunity to use their cooking skills.

*Results: The guests loved it! I don't really understand their love of cabbage, but I'm a sucker for a good result, so we made cabbage many times after that.*

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## Scripture, Language and SB1070

*-by Fr. Eric Schimmel, CSC*

These last few months Arizona has become a focal point in the immigration debate. I believe that all can agree that the US has a problem with illegal immigration. I see Arizona's SB 1070 law as a sign of frustration at inaction and poor policy decisions at the national level. But something I do not see in all of the discourse disturbs me. In discussions about immigration, I rarely see or hear how one's faith can – or should – affect one's position on this issue.

Of course I am not going to argue against a separation of Church and State. We do not want a theocracy. However, two things come to my heart and mind right away while writing this. First, as a priest, I feel obliged to care for souls. We live this relatively short life with the goal of living eternally with God in heaven. One thing that keeps André House alive is the fact that people want to put their faith into practice. That is how we can walk with God in this life so as to be with God in the next. For the care of my soul, I must live my faith. So, an important question to me in any potentially hot topic issue is this: **what does Scripture and our faith tradition teach us on this issue?**

The second question that comes to me is this: Why, even though I am a priest writing a newsletter article for a Catholic organization, why do I still feel like I have to plead for permission to appeal to faith when discussing an important issue? Have we reacted so strongly against theocracy that we have allowed secularism to become our accepted creed in public discourse?

Let us turn to the Scriptures. Someone asked me recently what I thought about SB 1070 (a law which I actually read). My reply seemed to surprise the person. I simply said, "It seems to conflict with Scripture."

I say that because I see a constant and recurring theme in the Scripture that one must take care of people who are vulnerable. Most people understand this. Usually people nod in agreement when I mention that Scripture lists as vulnerable widows and orphans. My experience is that most people are surprised when I mention that Scripture also includes foreigners/aliens in the list of people who are vulnerable. For example, Exodus 22:20-21 says, "You shall not molest or oppress an alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt. You shall not wrong any widow or orphan." (see similar passages in

Jer 22:3, Ez 22:29, Zec 7:10, Mal 3:5). I find the Book of Deuteronomy particularly strong in its prohibition of wronging the immigrant as it says, "Cursed be he who violates the rights of the alien, the orphan or the widow" (Dt 27:19).

The passage from Exodus and those similar to it speak in the negative, what you should not do to aliens. But the Bible not only talks about what you should not do, it also says what you should do for them. Perhaps the Book of Leviticus speaks most clearly: "When an alien resides with you in your land, do not molest him. You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you" (Lv 19:33-34). Other passages will talk about the need to offer charity to aliens (see Lv. 19:9, 23:22, Dt 24:19-22).

Other parts of Scripture speak more indirectly about immigrants. In the New Testament, Heb 11:9 reminds us that Abraham lived most of his life as a foreigner. We know that Ruth, the great grandmother of King David, was an immigrant. The Holy Family had to flee their homeland with the flight into Egypt. We also know that Jesus, often to the surprise of his audience, spoke about foreigners doing holy things (for example, the story of the Good Samaritan, or the story of the 10 lepers cleanse in Lk 17:11-19).

I feel that SB 1070 fails to follow Scripture because it certainly treats the immigrant differently than others (see Lv 19 above). The general thrust of the law has the obvious goal of trying to make immigrants uncomfortable. I believe this contradicts the overarching theme of the Scriptures that invite us to look at people first as people and to offer them care and compassion – hence the passages that speak of offering charity to the alien. Because the law has been untested, a question arises whether a charitable organization violates the law when trying to assist the people its mission calls them to serve. For example, should André House have to check the immigration status of people desiring to live in our transitional houses because SB 1070 makes it illegal to transport, conceal, or harbor an alien? To me this contradicts the teaching of Jesus. When speaking about the criteria for entering the Kingdom, Jesus clearly spoke of welcoming the stranger (Mt 25:31-45). I feel that SB1070 fails to live up to the call of Scripture.

This does not mean that I feel that we

## Scripture, Language & SB1070 - *cont'd from previous page*

should have completely open borders. As the Bishops (both in the US and elsewhere) have clearly taught, nations have the right to control their borders. I encourage people to visit [www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org) for more information about what the Catholic Church teaches about immigration, most especially comprehensive immigration reform. It is fair to say that a system is broken when it contains only 5,000 permanent visas for unskilled laborers to come to the United States while the demand for their work is so high that as many as 300,000 undocumented people are absorbed into the workforce each year. I believe that I can unequivocally say that none of us here at André House believe that either open borders nor complete amnesty will solve the real problem of illegal immigration. Nor does the Catholic Church. Laws like SB 1070 come from real concerns of real people negatively affected by illegal immigration. But as we try to address those issues, we should do so in a way that allows us to live our faith – to remain true to who God calls us to be.

### A Question of Language

Finally, I want to make an appeal to watch our language. I believe that the language we use affects how we think and feel. I first became conscious of this when I was in the seminary and the Director of the Center for the Homeless in South Bend gave a presentation to the seminarians about his work. He told us that he tries not to speak about “the poor” or “the homeless.” Instead, he spoke of people who are poor, people who are homeless. He felt that referring to those he helped as people first and then what drew them for services helped to maintain their dignity as human beings first rather than referring to people by potentially negative labels.

One of the foundations of Catholic Social Teaching is the dignity of each and every person. Therefore, I have tried to follow the example of my friend who gave that presentation to us in the seminary so many years ago. I like the fact that André House has a tradition of being careful with our language as well. We do not refer to people who come to André House to use our services as “the poor,” “the homeless,” or even “clients.” Instead, they are “guests.” As guests we welcome them and try to recognize their full human dignity, even when they may not recognize it in themselves.

Language and labels are important. How we use them can both undergird as well as undermine human dignity. That is one reason why, in the immigration debate, I do not like hearing people referring to other people as “illegal.” We do not say that someone who killed or raped (or committed any other crime) is illegal. We find other words, or labels, for these people. I know that we can find and use other appropriate words to refer to the people at the center of the debate so that we do not dehumanize them and put them on a par with crack cocaine or other things that are illegal.

Immigration is a very large, complex and sensitive issue. May God guide us as we deal with it. I pray that as we face this and other important issues we may have the courage to address them as people of faith. May we always work to solve problems in a way that recognizes all people as children of God. ✠ - Fr. Eric

## Food

- *cont'd from page 3*

### **COOKED CABBAGE *cont'd***

*Winner for: Guest approval. Also, we boiled many things this year (corn, green beans,) and this was the best boiled dish. It might even become a Saturday night staple (when cabbage is in season, that is).*

### **HONORABLE MENTION: FRESH-SQUEEZED LEMONADE**

Did you know that in the old days (before Country Time Lemonade and Crystal Light), people made lemonade with actual lemons? We did this a few times, and when I told the kids to squeeze all the lemons by hand, I got some blank looks! Thankfully, adults joined in, and it became a real team effort.

*Results: Sometimes the lemonade turned out great and other times it was really just glorified sugar water, but the process was a guaranteed good time!*

*Many thanks to all the Saturday night volunteers for your creativity and your hard work; you did an amazing job! Also, thanks to all the cooks and regular volunteers. I hope you had as good a time as I did. ✠ - KP*

## Eight Weeks of My Summer

*-by Erika Hansen, Summer Service Staff Member*



I decided to spend eight weeks of my summer in the scalding hot desert of Phoenix when I was in the middle of a Midwest winter at Notre Dame. The warm sun was so appealing, as was the thought of serving the homeless and giving myself an opportunity to really grow.

I had a few orientation sessions at Notre Dame and was required to read and reflect before I arrived. Even so, I couldn't imagine what working at the André House would be like.

The first week was confusing, but everyone was super helpful. I learned how to manage in Pascente when approximately 53 people need to make an international phone call, and I was able to navigate through the basement for a pair of men's jeans, size 36. Front gate still presents a challenge, so I always remember Ali Hurney's words of advice, "Don't let anyone give you any business!"

Besides learning the ropes, the first week was also an immersion in the ministry of André House. It is not too hard to learn how to administer the tangibles things; anyone can learn the rules of the Clothing Closet. I found it much more difficult to just be a presence or a listening ear for the guests. We always hear so many stereotypes about the homeless, and it was hard to overcome that. Some of our guests may have substance abuse problems or mental health issues, but you could never stereotype all the different people I have met and interacted with over the past four weeks.

Many of the memories I have been making at the André House have been the result of simple exchanges with guests. The other night I was working back gate, and I asked a couple who are frequent guests how their weekend was. The husband answered, "It's going well, all things considered. And you know, it could always be worse."

I expected to learn a lot while working this summer, but I really had no idea. I won't even try to imagine what the next four weeks will bring, because there are always surprises at the André House!

✻

- EK

## We know it's early, but don't forget...

**The Arizona State Charitable Tax Credit** became easier to take advantage of in 2009! No longer requiring a baseline year of giving, donors need only itemize their taxes to benefit from this credit. When you donate to André House, a qualifying charitable organization providing help to the working poor, you can receive the tax credit by completing Form 321 when you file your tax return. Single individuals can earn up to a \$200 dollar-for-dollar tax credit (married, filing jointly, can earn up to \$400.) For complete details:

- Call the AZ Dept of Revenue: 602-255-3381
- Check out the AZ Dept of Revenue website: [www.azdor.gov](http://www.azdor.gov)
- Contact your accountant

***It is a "Win-Win" for you and for André House!***





## ANDRÉ HOUSE HAS GONE “GREEN!”



The André House Transitional Homes proudly display their new solar panels, thanks to APS's generous donation. For more information, please see Fr. Eric's Letter on page 1.



## MAILING LIST

If you have changes to your name or address, OR if you would like to be removed from the André House mailing list, please use the enclosed envelope and send the mailing label on this newsletter with either the changes that need to be made or the word "Remove" on it. The list will be updated before our next mailing.



If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please contact Teresa Hipp:  
Email: [coordinator@andrehouse.org](mailto:coordinator@andrehouse.org)  
Phone: 602-255-0580 x302

If you leave the information on the voicemail, please leave a phone number in the event there are questions. Thank you!



**\*\*André House's mailing list is not sold or given to any other organization\*\***



## DO YOU NEED COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS?

As the snowbirds head home, the school groups break for the summer and people head off to vacation, André House typically needs volunteers during **August & September**. Beat the rush to get your service hours in for next Fall by coming in and helping us this summer! Email or call to schedule a time or if you have questions...

**(no drop-in's, please)**



Teresa Hipp, Volunteer Coordinator  
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## The Open Door



**Join us every First  
Friday for Mass and a  
Potluck Supper at  
1203 W Polk at 6:30 pm**



## André House Needs: Summer Focus Items!

- Deodorant
- Toothbrushes & razors
- Travel size: toothpaste, lotion, shampoo & conditioner
- Men's underwear: sizes 28-38
- Men's jeans & shorts: sizes 30-38
- White tube socks
- Sweatshirts— hooded & non
- Men's sneakers: sizes 6-13
- Cough drops, Ibuprofen & multi-vitamins
- Plastic grocery bags
- Pens
- Old/used small printer ink cartridges
- We do accept car donations

