



SAINT HERMAN HOUSE NEWSLETTER

FOCUS North America - Cleveland

Dear Friends of the St. Herman House,

God is with us!

All of us, the whole world, has had to learn to live with COVID-19. We have exchanged our familiar face-to-face existence for one that is virtual. Handshakes and embraces have been supplanted by elbow taps and bows. None of it's easy, none of it's natural, and all of it creates a sense of isolation and loneliness.

One of the palpable griefs for us at St. Herman House is the sure knowledge that so many of those we serve are struggling with an overwhelming sense of isolation and loneliness. We are reminded daily that the work of FOCUS Cleveland has more to do with relationships, a sense of family and community, than the material things we are able to provide.

The truth is humankind was never designed for such isolation. In the first book of the Bible, God proclaims that it is not good for us to be alone and then establishes the first family, Adam and Eve. (Genesis 2:18) In the book of Ecclesiastes, the Preacher says, "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up." Furthermore, loneliness can just make you plain crazy. "A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; He rages against all wise judgment." (Proverbs 18:1)

The past year has reaffirmed what we already knew: people need more than food and shelter and clothing. They need companionship. They need love. Although the last year has been trying, we continue to seek to provide those deeper needs for all whom we encounter. And your support makes that possible.

As I consider the season of Great Lent, I am also reminded and very thankful that our God seeks to deliver all of us from isolation. Thank you for being there for us so that we can be there for those we serve. Thank you for allowing us to continue to tear down the walls of isolation as we move, in 2021, towards normalcy, community, and togetherness. Pray for us as we pray for you!

Your fellow servant in Christ,

H. Paul Finley, Local Director



*Icon of the Creation of Adam
and Eve, from St. Basil Greek
Orthodox Church in Chicago, IL*



Profile of Our Resident *Jonathan*

Jonathan remembers how he first heard of St. Herman House, many years ago. Someone said to him, “If you want to eat every day, go to St. Herman’s.” At the time, Jonathan was working but couldn’t make ends meet. St. Herman’s became a lifeline. Sometimes he would come for meals every day of the week.

Jonathan is a lifelong Clevelander and the proud father of five adult children and nine grandchildren. After graduating from high school, he held jobs in factories and warehouses. For 11 years, he had seasonal employment with the City of Cleveland, most recently in waste collection. In 2019, he started to notice that he was tiring easily, feeling weak, and losing his balance. Unfortunately, a nervous system disorder was later diagnosed, and he had to quit working.

Although he had paid child support for years, Jonathan learned in 2014 that he was in arrears, and owed the state a considerable amount of money. The news came as a surprise, and he is still paying off the money owed. The payments have made it difficult for him to make ends meet, and he lived with various family and friends for a few years. He came to St. Herman’s transitional house in 2017. His stay has been prolonged because of his diagnosis. Asked how St. Herman’s has helped him, he said “Tremendously. If there was ever a place to go when you’re down on your luck and have no hope, this is it.”

Despite Jonathan’s trials, he maintains a positive attitude. “Doesn’t make no sense to be upset about a problem you can work through,” he says.

He is hoping soon to move into his own apartment, in a subsidized building downtown. When asked about his hopes for the future, he says “To be on my own two feet.” He looks forward to having his own place, in his own name.

FRIENDS OF ST. HERMAN’S

BUILDING COMMUNITIES
TRANSFORMING LIVES

In 2017 we created a special designation for donors who give \$2,500 a year or more, called “Friends of St. Herman’s.” (Of course, all of our donors and volunteers are our friends!) Since we can accommodate up to 40 men at a time, our goal is to establish 40 donors at the Friends level – one for each resident. We haven’t reached our goal yet, but we’re making great progress. In 2020, we had 27 Friends of St. Herman’s, a significant increase over 2019. Hear what one family had to say about why they give:

Volunteer Spotlight *by Laura Bartlett*

In May 2020, I saw a post on Instagram of a car trunk filled with brown bag lunches. The caption explained that a group of friends had made meals to drop off for St. Herman House. ‘I have friends,’ I thought, ‘We could do that.’ Later that summer my good friend Debra Hrin and I hashed out the details. Debby and I have taught together for the last 10 years at William Foster Elementary School in Garfield Heights and during that time we have convinced our coworkers to donate to sock drives, victims of assault, animal shelters, and more. We knew we could count on them to contribute meals. Our first delivery of 160 brown bag meals was made on July 24. We got such a response from our friends and coworkers that we scheduled another date, and then another, and another!

As of February 2021, our group of over 45 people has contributed almost 2,000 meals. Donations have come from as far east as Mentor, as far south as Copley, and as far west as Grafton. (I think my favorite donation came from a Girl Scout Troop in East Cleveland.) We get regular donations from a retired teacher, teachers who have moved on to different jobs, and friends of coworkers who I’ve never even met. All departments in our school district have contributed: teachers from all grade levels and disciplines, a lead food service manager, a technology assistant, a school psychologist, building principals, and even our school district’s Assistant Superintendent.

“I’m a helper!” my coworker’s 2-1/2 year-old proudly announced to me. (Our youngest helper, perhaps?) I’m glad we’ve all been able to be helpers and donate to St Herman House. But I’m also appreciative for this opportunity from St Herman’s that allows us to come together in this way during a time when we’ve had to stay apart.



“Our family supports St. Herman’s House because we see first-hand its “love-in-action” in our city of Cleveland. The leadership, house members, and volunteers all share the love of Christ with those in dire need. By volunteering our time and resources, we can also show mercy to those in need and in turn receive mercy from God. We all need that mercy!”

In 2020, Friends of St. Herman’s contributed almost one-third of our annual operating budget. We are so grateful for this incredible support, which is vital to our ability to carry out our daily programs.

If you are able, please consider becoming a Friend of St. Herman’s in 2021.



+ CLEVELAND

ST. HERMAN HOUSE

4410 Franklin Blvd
Cleveland, OH 44113

2020 By the Numbers

Thank you to all of our donors, volunteers, friends and neighbors who contribute each day to the mission of St. Herman's. Here's a snapshot of some of our achievements in 2020, which were made possible with your support.

45,701 Meals Served

65 Men Receiving Shelter

44% Percentage of men who moved out of St. Herman's and into stable housing

163 Families receiving grocery bags

122 Number of Volunteer Groups

More than **170** New donors

39% Percentage of Men in the Shelter w Temp or Part-time Employment (on average)

Save the Date

St. Herman's 8th Annual Golf Classic

June 14, 2021

Tanglewood Club, Chagrin Falls

More details soon on our website