



Magic or Not?

The other evening I walked down the hall at the end of the day and remembered the clothing volunteers hard at work taking in bags of clothing, a crew cleaning and chopping vegetables for lunch, Richard Howell directing a crew of volunteers as they cleaned a hallway, and several scenes of intense activity, along with some conflict and tiresomeness mixed in.

I thought, "There is no magic in what we do here—it's just a lot of hard work, day-after-day, year-after-year." It's important work, but it's never easy. Nine hundred volunteers worked here last year, along with thirteen staff members, some of whom look utterly exhausted when they leave for home at night.

Hard work is a good thing, but there are additional elements in the picture here—plenty of encounters with mental illness, the rough edge of street living, no shortage of interesting smells and sounds, and the grinding discouragement of seeing things get worse for some of our friends.

"No," I thought, "no magic in this—just determined gutting it out."

But then I remembered running into Bill, a guy who had just found a warm hat that fit him and exclaimed his thanks to me as if he had just won the lottery;

and seeing Jenna and Emily skipping down the hall holding hands after they had eaten a meal in Kids Café;

and enjoying how much one of our volunteer groups delighted in each other's company as they worked hard on a meal;

and I remembered that, with few exceptions, this good, important work is generated, supported, and sustained from within our own community; and I changed my mind

—it IS magic!

--Dave Benson, Executive Director

Spring 2014

What's Inside:

- Magic or Not?
- Soup Kitchen Update
- Volunteer Spotlight
- Thank you to supporters
- Honorarium and Memorial Donations



Volunteer Member Spotlight



Jessica Jensen has been volunteering with the Damiano Center for five years. She is a senior at the University of Minnesota Duluth campus and generously gives her time each week to assist with the clothing exchange.

Soup Kitchen Update

The soup kitchen expansion and remodeling is complete. All that remains is to replace some of the old appliances, which we are continuing to use as we raise funds for new ones. We are still in need of just over \$200,000 to complete everything. In the meantime, the new space looks great. The windows at the end of the dining room add more light and the lower ceilings give a warmer feel.



Our diners like the new dining room. There have been many positive comments including that the new space feels safer. If you haven't seen the new dining room, stop by for lunch and have a look!

Thank you...

The Damiano Center wants to thank all of our supporters for their contributions. With spring around the corner, there are a few donations in greater demand. Timely donations including **blankets**, **toys**, **bread**, and **men's blazers** are especially appreciated!



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Clothing Exchange: 722-5991

Clothes That Work: 722-5247

Damiano Community Services: 727-1834

Kids Cafe: 336-1033



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Please Help Today!

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All clothing donations go upstairs (There's an elevator inside!)

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