

City Mission

July 31, 2011 - August 6, 2011

Rev. Barbara Williamson., Debbie Flagg, Andy Sugg, Eric Kimble, Ben Sugg, Sam Sugg, Kelley White, Ryan Kenney, James Wagner, Madison Herel, Sara Ledbetter, John Kodera, Jose Darius, Erin Santomenna, John Newton, Chris St. George



Sunday, July 31

Day 1

On a gorgeous summer morning, we congregated at St. E's at 10:30am while Barbara was leading the service at the Church. A group of us had assembled 150 sandwiches the day before in preparation for the Common Cathedral, so we loaded our bags and foodstuffs into the cars and headed to the Common for our Noon start.

After a circuitous ride into the city (courtesy of Steve Kenney's interesting route) we arrived at Park St. right at noon. We served all 150 sandwiches over a 45-minute period and then celebrated a service with the gathered crowd. Anyone could preach, and several homeless folks stepped up to the microphone and thanked the Lord for all their blessings. It was very powerful to hear those who have so little profess their gratitude for all they had.



We hung around the Common until 3:30, after invading the UBurger joint across the street. Erin had the order of the day (Classic Burger--without the burger) while the rest of us downed our burgers greedily.

We decided to walk the 2 miles back to the Charlestown church on this beautiful day. Our trip took us past several graveyards, Faneuil Hall (including a performance from amazing street dancers who shook us down for a few bucks), the North End (where we saw this sick Lamborghini), over the Charlestown bridge, and along the primrose path to The First



Church at 10 Green St. We settled into our new digs just after 5 pm, sweatily.

The UBurger feast caused us to delay dinner (lasagna!) until 8:30, so several of us ventured to the Bunker Hill monument to throw around the football and work off the burgers. Kelley, the only female contestant, surprised everyone with her amazing skills, including her perfect spiral, perfect hands, and her humility. According to her, she's a keeper. Erin and Deb capped off the day with an interactive quiz/lesson on the various neighborhoods of Boston, and we shut it down for good by 11pm.

Monday, August 1

Day 2

We awoke at 7am (although some of us were awoken permanently at 5am thanks to the I-Pod alarm of He-Who-Shall-Not-Be-Named), and gobbled down pancakes graciously cooked up by Sam. We hit the T promptly at 8:30 and took it 4 stops to Downtown Crossing, where we arrived at the steps of the Episcopal Cathedral (so named because that is the seat of the



Eastern Massachusetts bishop) to begin food preparation for the lunchtime program.

We received a terrific orientation from Chris Nourse, the Cathedral's sexton, who described his travels and travails through addiction, homelessness, and recent redemption (sober and clean for three years). Chris also gave us a lesson on the various living arrangements, welfare options, and revenue sources for the homeless and noted that lunch traffic may be a little lighter that day because it was the first of the month and the Medicare checks come out!



After our one-hour orientation, Chris led us further into the basement where we sliced rolls, cut watermelon, and prepared the meatball sandwich meal. Around 11:30am, about 120 homeless folks arrived and patiently waited until we served the meal at noon.

We were encouraged to mix and mingle during lunch and this proved to be a terrific way to get acquainted with more of the "clients" who were being served. The youth continue to be amazing ambassadors, showing a great deal of respect for, and interest in, all the folks we have had the pleasure of meeting and serving. We closed the experience with a brief service (our second one in two days--a new record for many of us!).

The first woman that Kelley, Ben, and Ryan met at lunch was very interesting. Though she did not have kids, she continued to tell us about how she was going to raise them in the suburbs and create a cool "teen Chuck e Cheese" for them so they aren't sitting around the house. She then continued to talk about her husband and how they are going to renew their vows in a VERY expensive wedding. She did not know where her husband was at that time and didn't even know his background! We



also met a very interesting man who had unique views of how communism is taking over the world and that we all need to trust in Christ to get through. The most interesting conversations we've ever heard.

Our trip to the Cathedral ended with a heartfelt thank you from Chris and his recitation of the following:

A Franciscan Blessing

"May God bless us with discomfort at easy answers, half truths, and superficial relationships, so that we may live deep within our hearts.

May God bless us with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that we may work justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless us with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, and war, so that we may reach our hands to comfort them and turn their pain to joy.

And may God bless us with enough foolishness to believe that we can make a difference in this world, so that we can do what others claim cannot be done. Amen."



We arrived back in Charlestown for some down time -- and rousing games of Uno which Kelley won....by cheating.....before a large group embarked on a trip to the Bunker Hill Monument. Many frisbees and footballs subsequently were flying

and a couple games of pigskin ensued. Some of the play was spectacular...some was not quite so. But a great deal of fun -- and sweating -- was had by all.

After showering and getting ready for dinner- pasta and salad, our guests Danielle, Joanne, and Damon arrived. They are all recovering addicts and spoke to us in varying degrees of detail about their struggles with the disease. Damon, who was kind of a jokester when he first arrived, was far and away the most powerful speaker. He spoke to us in an unvarnished, eloquent way that was absolutely amazing. His message was not "preachy" in any way; he just talked about his life in a manner that connected on a very personal level. It was a lot to absorb, but really inspirational and fantastic.



It was interesting to hear that each speaker had a different catalyst that caused them to break the cycle of addiction and it was apparent that God was a deep part of their recovery.

The day ended with a run to Emack & Bolio's for ice cream and goodies. That place has an amazing ability to separate you from your money!

Tuesday, August 2

Day 3

We moseyed out of bed at a luxurious 7:30am and waited in the church for an orientation by Carl McDonald, our City Mission contact. Carl encouraged us to keep our eyes, ears, and minds open to what we experience. He also shared how he got involved in City Mission, a

meandering tale starting as a businessman, a church outreach coordinator, a calling to the seminary (when he heard God's Voice while riding in his car listening to a Neil Diamond song), and then as a full-time employee for City Mission.

Kelley just finished working out and decided she was thirsty. She was having a banana and peanut butter and needed refreshing COLD water. Of course the Poland springs bubbler says DO NOT USE.... but she persisted to take some water anyway. Little did she know that once you pull the lever, the water does not stop going out. She ran away in embarrassment while Andy was called out of his shower to fix the problem. Now the sign says.....



We headed out to Diablo Glass School in Mission Hill via the Orange Line around 2pm and arrived a few minutes before 3pm. The staff and youth assistants were ready for us, with the youths responsible for demonstrating the proper technique for glass blowing and flame working. We divided our group into two based on apparel (those in the glass blowing section needed to have pants below the knees--which wasn't a problem for the long-shorted among us).

The flame working participants were quickly mesmerized by the gas flame's white-hot effect on the different glass colors. We started with beads, added some polka dots and stripes, then moved up to different shapes and sizes over the two-hour period.