

# MANN A *in the wilderness*

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The Newsletter of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker

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## St. John Neumann Youth Experience Soup Line

*“Whatsoever you do for the least of my people, that you do unto me.”*

by Julia Occhiogrosso

The words from a childhood hymn hum in my head. In Catholic School we had hymn practice every Wednesday afternoon. The powerful verses were sung and re-sung to be sure that we would remember them for the Sunday mass. Born and raised Catholic, I attended St. Jerome Parochial School in Brooklyn. I was taught by the Sisters of Mercy during the post-Vatican II transformation, where the emphasis was made on God’s love for all and the call to love one another. Yet even growing up with these powerful teachings, by the time I was graduating high school, I was doubting the efficacy of the Christian life. The values resonated but I lacked a sense of how to integrate these values into my life. The focus during my last years of high school was picking a college and defining a career. Like most eighteen-year-olds, I had next to no idea what career to pursue. I registered for a State University in central New York state.

The summer after graduating high school my parents gifted my twin and I with airline tickets to visit my older sister in California, living at the Los Angeles Catholic Worker. We arrived on a cool summer evening. We pulled up to the Catholic Worker— a three story Victorian mansion set on a hill in an east Los Angeles barrio.

It was during this summer experience that my Catholic upbringing began to make sense. I witnessed adults who chose to live in community, to give hospitality to strangers, to take to heart the call to love one another. I worked in the Catholic Worker soup kitchen on Los Angeles skid row. I saw for the first time the power behind the verse “whatsoever you do to the least of my people, that you do unto

me”.

At the Las Vegas Catholic Worker we take seriously the mission of supporting youth faith formation. Our role is simple. We provide opportunities for youth to participate in our soup line serving. We offer the model of the Catholic Worker expression of radical discipleship.

Consistently we hear from youth, the fulfillment they experience when they are given the chance to have hands on personal contact with people who are considered outcasts. It frequently transforms fears and misperceptions into an authentic human exchange. It helps young people piece together the gospel values that have permeated their religious education, with the gift of grace and hope that arises when the message is incarnated in the works of mercy.

Last month as part of a retreat weekend, thirty youth from St. John Neumann Catholic Community came to the Catholic Worker and helped serve a full breakfast feast on the soup line. Afterwards, at the Catholic Worker they helped to prepare the grounds for the summer gardens. In response to their experience each of the youth wrote a letter of gratitude. What follows are excerpts from some of those letters:

“It’s a whole different and surreal experience when you are actually there and interacting with the people. It was kind of beautiful to see how happy and grateful they were just to get a plate of food and how kind and cheery they were even though the majority of the world is working against them.”

“To be honest, I was a little scared to go and be near them, but that’s because I grew up thinking they were bad people... the majority of the homeless people were nice, not mean and scary like I would think they were.”

“First, my impression as we approached the food service area was very influenced by my personal judging and views on homeless people, such as believing that they would be rude, mean, and uncomfortable. However, my opinion was highly rethought and I see that most of them are extremely grateful.”

“It not only opened my eyes, but my heart to see what some people have to go through on a daily basis.”

“It makes me take a step back and realize that I should become more grateful for what I have.”

“It was really touching when I helped feed the homeless. They don’t complain *(continued on back, first column)*



# Financial Report for 2014

<b>Income (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31)</b>	<b>2014</b>
Christmas Appeal mailing:	\$ 23,332
Empty Bowl Benefit:	\$ 26,534
Other Cash Donations:	\$ 60,498
Noncash Donations (food, etc):	\$ 30,614
Funds to fix Bartlett Ave Property:	\$ 35,000
<b>TOTAL INCOME:</b>	<b>\$175,978</b>

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>2014</b>
Morning Soup line to homeless:	\$ 78,192
Hospitality Day expenses:	\$ 19,910
Monthly Food Box Program:	\$ 16,341
Grant, 1420 Bartlett Ave. Repairs:	\$ 6,394
Other Expenses:	\$ 26,489
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES:</b>	<b>\$147,326</b>
Funds left to ReHab Bartlett Ave:	\$ 28,606
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES + ReHab remainder:</b>	<b>\$175,932</b>

by Gary Cavalier

Thank You for your generous response to our Christmas Appeal; we had 148 donations. Each year we are sustained by a small but generous group of about 175 donors and twelve Roman Catholic Church communities and parishes.

In 2014 we received anonymous funds (\$35,000) to rehab the three buildings we own on Bartlett Ave. These building were given to the Catholic Worker in 2004 by the Franciscan Friars of Santa Barbara Province. In 2014 the buildings were painted and plumbing and electrical work was done. In 2015 we plan to put in new water pipes, the water barely trickles out when a faucet is turned on. \$6,394 was spent on Bartlett Ave. in 2014 and \$28,606 remains for repair work in 2015.

In 2014 the vacant lot behind the Catholic Worker that is used as a parking lot went up for sale and the Catholic Worker purchased it.

Detailed financial reports are available at the Catholic Worker or on our website. Visit [www.lvcw.org](http://www.lvcw.org) and click on the "Donate" link to view them.

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and yet we (wealthy) complain about stuff we don't have...I (from my retreat experience) cannot see how they can survive with little food and no shelter. I barely lasted one night and they do it for very long times."

"I honestly was slightly nervous, thinking about where I am in Las Vegas and being told that some of the homeless are mentally ill. The experience isn't exactly what I expected. The less fortunate were very thankful about being served and politely said thank you."

### Nearly 1/3 of U.S. Homeless Live in 10 Cities:

New York City	67,810
Los Angeles (city and county)	34,393
<b>Las Vegas / Clark County</b>	<b>9,417</b>
Seattle / King County	8,949
San Diego (city and county)	8,506
Washington, D.C.	7,748
San Jose/Santa Clara (city & county)	7,567
Denver	6,621
San Francisco	6,408
Chicago	6,287

Source: The 2014 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress

## FIFTEENTH ANNUAL NEVADA CLAY GUILD

# Empty Bowl Benefit



**Saturday, Mar. 21, 2015**

**11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

**Green Valley High**

**School Cafeteria,**

**460 Arroyo Grande Blvd.**

**(just North of Warm Springs Rd.)**

**Henderson, NV, Adults: \$15,**

**Children 12 & under: \$12**

**Tickets Available at Event**

**[www.lvcw.org/emptybowl.htm](http://www.lvcw.org/emptybowl.htm)**

**Buy Tickets Online (fee)**

**SOUP LINE CLOSED:  
July 29 to August 8, 2015**

**WE NEED VOLUNTEERS**

**Apr. 2 & May 7 for Christ the King**

**Hot Dog Party at Soup Line**

## PLEASE JOIN US:

**Wednesday-Saturday, 6:00 a.m.:**

Morning prayer at Catholic Worker.

**Wednesday-Saturday, 6:30 a.m.:**

Breakfast served to 150-200 poor & homeless people.

**Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.:**

Hospitality Day, we invite 20 homeless men home for showers, to wash clothes and for a great lunch.

**Thursday, 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.:**

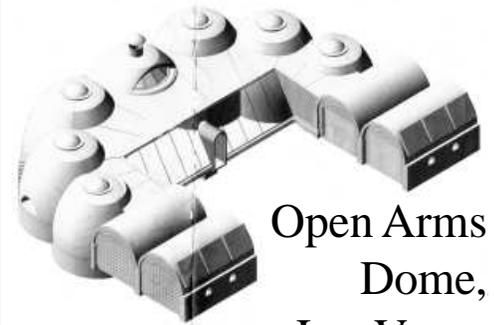
Vigil for Peace in front of Federal Courthouse, 333 Las Vegas Blvd. S.

**Thursday, 10:30 a.m.:**

50 lunches taken to the homeless.

**Third Saturday of the month:**

Deliver food boxes to homes in need.



### Open Arms Dome, Las Vegas

Robert Majors is a member of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker community and he has been working each week at the Open Arms Dome project, learning the craft of building the first earthship / superadobe home to be built in a major city. We hope to someday build a superadobe home for the homeless on the parking lot behind the Catholic Worker house.

by Robert Majors

Ash to ash and dust to dust  
mud and love created us  
as we are we will become  
and love is left in all we touch  
the path we walk and seeds we sow  
turn light to love and mud to gold  
when love is all we see and know  
the sword will be a tool to grow  
and mud will be as strong as stone  
the smallest seed will build a home  
the thoughts we own will all be sold  
to treasure all we see and hold

Grace is found in all we find  
The rain that falls and Sun that shines  
What good is faith if not applied  
To all we come to know in life  
And so we build with grace in mind  
A house that is a different kind  
The method used is old in time  
But is entwined with new design  
Composed to use the heat of light  
from every inch the sun provides  
And in the ditch the earth will guide  
The rain to drain in the supply  
As I dig with faith at side  
The mountains move and tools collide  
The mustard seed has shown it's might  
When those with less can still provide  
When those who work can find delight  
When worth is found by faith not sight