

MANNA MATTERS

FEBRUARY 2020



Food distribution volunteers Ellen, Phyllis, and Paul.



GETTING IT DONE: MANNA CAFE BEBEE TOWNSEND

Bernard “BeBee” Townsend has skills. Lots of them. As warehouse manager of Manna Cafe, he balances a compassionate and amiable personality with no-nonsense, organized efficiency. There’s little doubt that he could find employment someplace other than a nonprofit and earn a heftier paycheck. When asked why he’s chosen to work at Manna, he admits with a smile, “That’s a good question.” Then he adds, “The short answer is that I’m needed here.” Indeed he is.

In 2016, BeBee had just finished a job as a supervisor in manufacturing. (Before that, he had spent 31 years in the military.) After taking some time off,

BeBee told some friends he was ready to go back to work, and they mentioned that Manna Café was looking for a driver. He got the job, but he didn’t just drive. “I also helped around the warehouse,” he says. “For seven months I did whatever needed to be done. Then I was offered an opportunity to work with the army again, and I couldn’t turn it down.”

The Manna team hated to see BeBee go, but after the army assignment morphed into a 2-months-per-year position, BeBee came back to Clarksville. The day after I got back,” he says, “[operations manager] Pat Lemons came to my house to play bunco with my wife. I was in my man cave — secure, watching baseball — when she told me Manna needed me to come back as warehouse manager. She wouldn’t leave me alone until I said yes, and I’ve been there ever since. I could probably go somewhere else and make a bunch of money, but at this stage of my life — I’m 60 now — I’m comfortable. I could be retired, but if I sat at home I’d go crazy. The reason I want to be here is to help people. I think I’m doing some good in the community.”

In turn, the community appreciates BeBee’s efforts. He was touched by the level of encouragement he received from both staff and clients not long ago. “I told people about my granddaughter Maya’s cancer, and everybody was really



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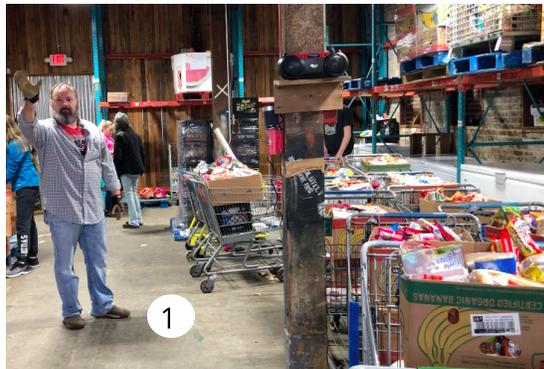
“Manna Cafe serves people in need in Clarksville/Montgomery County through a soup kitchen on wheels, food box distribution, and other vital resources. Propelled chiefly by volunteers, Manna Café strives to restore hope, dignity, self-reliance, community, and the love of God through Jesus Christ.”

In 2019, Manna Cafe distributed more than 2.5 million pounds of food to hungry individuals and families. It would take 18 military tanks to equal this much weight!



IN A NUTSHELL: MANNA CAFE'S FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM

If you decided to volunteer to help with Manna Cafe's food distribution program, what would your day look like? First, you'd make your way to the distribution warehouse at the Manna



Village (photo 1). "Basic" food boxes, holding between 30 and 60 pounds of canned and other nonperishable goods, are assembled by volunteers after regular hours in another part of the building. But on distribution days (M, W, F), these basic boxes are loaded into shopping carts (one per client), and lots more items are added. Some food items have been donated, while others are purchased by Manna.



Each additional food category has its own station.

As a volunteer, you push your cart from station to station. First, you collect loaf bread, rolls, and/or tortillas

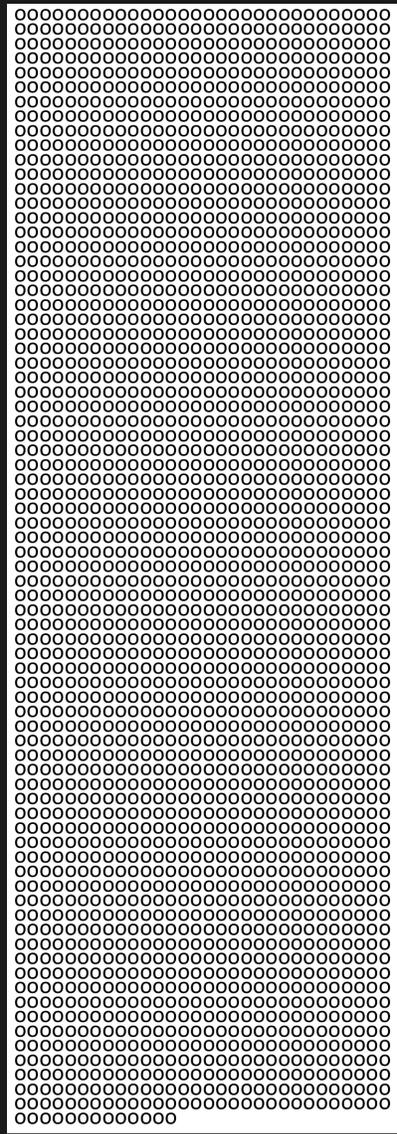
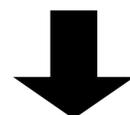
from the bread station, headed up by Tommy, who calls himself "the boss of bread" (photo 2). Then you stop at the produce

station to collect fresh fruits and veggies; then dry goods such as pasta and rice; and then frozen

meat — everything from chicken to bison burgers to beef ribs (photo 3). The next station is dairy; and the final one is non-food items.

Finally, it's time to push your cart out the warehouse door and load it into your customer's vehicle. Then the process begins all over again!

If this sounds like fun, sign up here:



In 2019, Manna Cafe distributed 27,520 BIG boxes of groceries. These included meat, dairy, non-perishables, bread, fruits, veggies, and more. The circles above represent just one month's worth of boxes!

BEBEE, CONT'D.

supportive.” (Maya, who is 12, is now in remission.)

What’s the best part of the job at Manna? “When we give a family a basket of food,” says BeBee, “and I see the appreciation on their faces ... Knowing we helped

someone who really needed it. But the thing that really blows me away is the level of

volun-
teerism we get here. These people give us their most precious resource: time. You can’t buy one second of time, but we get people who come every week. Every week they’re here, making this a success. They help me get these carts out the door, they put up with rude people — and with me! — but they just keep coming back. If we

"Our volunteers give us their most precious resource: time."

Three cheers for our local **Walmart** stores for their support of our food distribution program!



Madison St.: \$1,000

Fort Campbell Blvd.: \$1,000

Wilma Rudolph Blvd.: \$1,000

Dover Rd. (Neighborhood Mkt.): \$500

Tiny Town Rd. (Neighborhood Mkt.): \$1,000



PASS THE TURKEY 2019

THANK YOU TO **CLARKSVILLE RUNNING CLUB** FOR YOUR TIME, EFFORT, AND SUPPORT!



A WORD FROM VICKI: RAGGEDY PEOPLE



Almost six years ago, a friend of ours discovered a scruffy, skinny dog wandering up and down a rural road. The poor thing was covered in fleas, cockleburs, and motor oil. My friend already had a houseful of dogs, so Kenny and I took the little stray in and named her Raggedy Annie.

Annie settled in immediately. She was utterly carefree and drunk on life. Her days consisted of eating, sleeping, and finding new ways to dem-

stronate her affection for us. Though she quickly doubled in size, she'd loll, like a 55-pound lap dog, all over

Kenny the moment he settled onto the couch. Although Annie was a very sweet soul, she also kept us on our toes during her puppy phase. We had to buy her stuffed toys from Goodwill because she'd rip their heads off in less than three minutes. She adored children but greeted them so enthusiastically that they sometimes toppled over. We had to use a special harness because she pulled like a Belgian draft horse. During one 36-hour period, she killed a bird, ate two sports bras, and destroyed a footstool. Even so, our affection for Annie wasn't contingent on her behavior. All the while, we were — and still are — crazy about her.

The Bible teaches that we humans would do well to become more like children, but soon after bringing Annie home I realized we

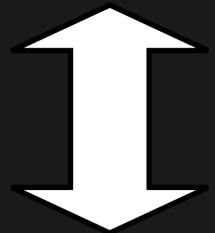
needed to take a few lessons from our dogs as well. Instead of simply enjoying God's love for us, we agonize over our imperfections. You know the drill: *I'll never be good enough. I forget to read my Bible. I eat too much, pray too little, and lose my cool*



too often. We're convinced it's all about performance and perfection, but meanwhile God's saying, *I'm crazy about you.*

Annie's brand of love is exuberant, undiluted, and genuine. What if our love for our Creator were the same? And what if we, "raggedy" and flawed though we are, were like Annie: *fully confident that we're lovable and loved?*

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to **Region's Foundation of Tennessee**, who recently awarded Manna Cafe with a grant toward the Refuge Community Center!



Kenny and Vicki would also like to thank the **Leaf-Chronicle** for the honor of being named People of the Year for 2019. "We were shocked, delighted, and touched by your confidence in us, our team, and the mission of Manna Cafe."



onstrate her affection for us. Though she quickly doubled in size, she'd loll, like a 55-pound lap dog, all over



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