

MANNA MATTERS

JUNE 2020



Refuge facilities manager Josh Harris



LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

It seems like all we've been talking about for the past several months is COVID-19. If you're like us, you're ready to focus on something new. Nevertheless, the coronavirus set into motion some astounding acts of kindness and generosity, so forgive us for talking about it just a little longer.

It would be impossible to thank everyone to whom we owe a debt of gratitude, but here are just a few examples:

The Stewart County EMA (Emergency Management Agency) needed additional

provisions due to COVID-19, so, with the help of local churches and volunteers, Manna Cafe launched a once-a-week food distribution in Dover. On the first distribution day, in spite of snow flurries, the collective team gave shopping carts full of food to 180 individuals and families!

Meanwhile, the CMC Community Health

Foundation, along with other businesses, organizations, and individuals, threw us a financial lifeline that literally enabled us to keep the doors open.

And MB Roland Distillery donated five gallons of hand sanitizer to help keep us healthy while carrying out our mission.

Thank you, friends and neighbors!



MISSION STATEMENT:

"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."

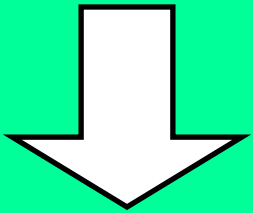
VOLUNTEER



We depend on our faithful volunteers to impact more than 20,000 people each year. Many Clarksvillians have found purpose as well as a second family while volunteering at Manna Cafe. Want to join the family? Check out mannacafeministries.com/volunteer.



Recently we were touched by the following message from a food distribution client:



"I was blown away by what I received. I starting weeping as I drove back home. I was in a state of disbelief. All that I had left at home were condiments. That's it! I had 81 cents in the bank.

"I am not getting work, and I understand that because my industry is taking a real hard hit nationwide, laying people off. But yesterday I witnessed God's love at work. Thank you so much."

On May 6, Manna Cafe quietly celebrated its 10-year anniversary. With all the coronavirus drama, we decided to put off a public celebration until fall, so stay tuned. But as the actual date came and went, I couldn't help but reminisce about the last 10 years — the thousands of stories, frequent miracles, and occasional struggles that have led to Manna being where it is today. And the faces! — let's not forget the faces of those who have laid down their lives to make sure that people in our community who are hurting were helped, loved on, and treated with respect. We made



Disaster relief sign from the Flood of 2010

distributing 2.5 million pounds of food per year and touching about 20,000 individuals each year.

I also couldn't help notice the similarities between now and 10

A WORD FROM KENNY

years ago. Back then our community was dealing with a flood, the likes of which we'd never seen before. Today we're dealing with a pandemic and the economic shutdown of our nation and world, which we've never seen before. Back then we jumped into doing what we knew how to do best, and today is no different: we've almost doubled our services recently. While a lot of our community was shutting down, we went from serving five hot meals a week to eight, and the number of plates going out at each meal has doubled. We've also started giving out food boxes every week in Stewart County because of COVID-19.

"We made some mistakes ... but glory to God, here we are."

Thank you all for investing in us to make the past 10 years possible. I can't help but wonder what the next 10 years will look like.

Peace out.

A PERSONAL PASSION

After more than nine years with Manna Cafe (four as a volunteer, board of directors chairwoman, and board secretary and five as administrator), our dear colleague and friend Sara Miller is moving on. "This decision didn't come lightly," she says. "It's been the hardest decision I think I've ever had to make. I've grown to love all our staff and volunteers and people we serve. There are countless times they affected my life way more than I could have affected theirs."

Sara's deep commitment these past years has come from a personal place: "I'm passionate about this ministry and about hunger because — though some people don't know this about me — I grew up in that environment. My parents divorced, and my siblings and I spent most of our time in our dad's care. We didn't have a

lot. There were times my dad didn't eat dinner so that we could eat dinner. There were many times he didn't know where our next meal was coming from. I didn't know that about my life until I was an adult because he shielded us. I grew up in poverty, so seeing people get fed is important to me."

What are Sara's plans for the future? "I'm excited about the possibilities ahead," she says. "I never finished my degree, so I'm hoping I can make that happen. Who knows where I'll go from there?"



"There are countless times they affected my life way more than I could have affected theirs."



TEXTING TO GIVE is easy!

Text "Give" to 931-542-4772.

Complete a one-time registration.

Designate your preferred fund and dollar amount.

THE END!

Recently we also said goodbye to long-time Chairman of the Board Mark Nash, though we're happy to say that he will continue to oversee Saturday morning hot meals. His leadership and commitment to Manna Cafe was vital to the growth we've seen in the past several years, and we offer our deepest appreciation.

In turn, many thanks to Board member Carlo Serrano for stepping up to the plate as our new chairman. We also welcome new Board member Pat Powers.



From L to R: Virginia Douglas, Shawna Spigner, Mark Nash, Carlo Serrano, Kenny York

**"YOU ARE GUESTS
AT MY TABLE
TONIGHT. I LOVE
YOU."**

THE GOURMET SOUP KITCHEN

BY VICKI YORK

Years ago, when Kenny and I were both serving at the same Nashville ministry but before we were even friends, we helped carry out a Thursday meal for the poor and homeless. One of Kenny's tasks was to gather food (and we all know how gifted he is at that!), and mine was to help set up for the meal. One memory that's stayed with me is the first time I realized what sort of food was served regularly at this small event. It wasn't just home-cooked and tasty, it was downright heavenly. As I dished up steaming, fragrant slabs of ribs and prime cuts of beef, my heart did a cartwheel. "The last will be first!" I recalled (Matt. 20:16 NIV). Our guests owned virtually nothing, yet they were feasting on the sort of food that many Americans couldn't afford that week. I believe God was saying to them, "You are guests at My table tonight. You are special. I love you."



This is still Kenny's goal: to gather the healthiest, most delectable food possible and serve it to "the least of these." Ideally, he needs a great food rescue program, a well-furnished kitchen, and a first-rate kitchen staff to pull it off — and God has blessed him with all three. Even during this pandemic, and in spite of decreased monetary and food donations, our team has pulled together only high-quality meals.

Think about how the homeless suffered during the COVID-19 crisis. To them, the directive to "go home and stay there" means nothing. It's almost a cruel joke. Showers, hand sanitizer, even public bathrooms were unavailable. Life became even more burdensome. And yet, in the midst of it all, God allowed us to serve our hungry neighbors one savory, satisfying meal after another.

"When you give a feast, invite the poor ... and you will be blessed" (Lk. 14:13-14 ESV). Indeed!

