



It Takes A Village To Serve

Non-profit partners extend the Capuchins' impact



▲ Staff and students from Wayne State University's School of Medicine's Wayne Health Mobile Unit team serving at CSK include Megi Kola, Research Assistant; James Young, Research Assistant; Josephine Quaye-Molex, RN; and Mena Refai, Research Assistant



▲ Tiffany Humes, Optometrist from Henry Ford OptimEyes in Grosse Pointe Woods adjusts a guest's posture as she prepares to test his vision. Tiffany is one of several optometrists who helped guests with their vision problems. See back of letter for more.

The Capuchin friars of the Province of Saint Joseph live by a common mission: they, with their partners in ministry, prayerfully strive to build sister-brotherhood in the world, wholly attending to the spiritual and basic human needs of the poor and disenfranchised.

A transformative mission to live by, yes—but not by one can this be done. One of the core values the Capuchins embody in their spirituality is “Partnering,” or sharing gifts and responsibility to fulfill a common mission.

The Capuchins Friars are beyond blessed to have the hands and the feet to live out their mission daily by the generous partnering of nine major nonprofits:

- Henry Ford OptimEyes
- Street Democracy
- Catholic Charities Southeast Michigan
- Wayne Mobile Health Unit

- WSU (School of Social Work)
- Secretary of State
- Genesis Hope
- FAN (Face Addiction Now)
- Detroit Street Care

Marketing Director Katie Darr explains, “One of Henry Ford OptimEyes’ values is to support the communities where we live and serve. We are proud to be in our 10th year of partnering with the Capuchins. Our team gets lots of hugs [from extremely grateful guests] which warms your heart every time.”

Wayne Mobile Health Unit Site Lead Coordinator, Barbara Vernon, shares, “[To me, partnering means] coming together to make healthcare more accessible. Meeting the people in the community where they are. I love what I do. If I only help one person a day, that makes me feel good about the work I do.”

WORKS OF MERCY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The Capuchin Soup Kitchen depends on others in the community who share our concern and commitment to people in need. You can view and sign up for the volunteer opportunities below here: <https://ofmcap.cc/CSK-Vol>

SCAN ME



Capuchin Soup Kitchen – Meldrum & Conner locations:

- Preparing food & trays for guests
- Wiping and sanitizing dining room tables and chairs
- Special events & projects

Capuchin Services Center:

- Sorting and organizing clothes
- Stocking and organizing food items
- Special events & projects

Rosa Parks Children & Youth Program:

- After school tutoring assistance
- Art therapy program assistance (no art skills required)
- Special Events & Seasonal Activities
- Volunteers are asked for a weekly commitment per academic semester

Earthworks Urban Farm:

- Mixing soil/making soil blocks or germination trays
- Planting/seeding/thinning seedlings
- Cultivating/weeding beds & flipping compost
- Other tasks related to gardening or farming



Touching the Hearts of Others Through Literature

by Br. Gary Wegner, OFM Capuchin
Executive Director



Yesterday, I was in the waiting room of an eye clinic with Br. Dan, who was seeing his eye surgeon. Purposely leaving my cell phone in the car, I was reading *Browsings: A Year of Reading, Collecting and Living with Books* by Michael Dirda. An older couple came through the door. They sat down, and the woman said, "You don't always see someone reading an actual book." This led to a delightful conversation in which she shared with me that she and her husband were originally from Ukraine and Israel. She perfected English (her fifth language) by reading novels.

We discussed books, including some authors like Chaim Potok, who we both loved. Her husband wrote down the title and author of the book that I was reading. She talked about her granddaughter, who is ten years old and on the fifth book of the Harry Potter series, but she was not sure her other grandchildren would be as big of readers. Afterward, it occurred to me that those looking at their cellphone send a message, "Don't talk to me," while reading a book can invite conversation with another book lover.

Delving into a book is a wonderful pastime. So, I am happy

that Pope Francis is also an avid reader. Pope Francis' love of literature comes through in a letter he recently wrote about the role of literature in the formation of priests and others whose vocation is to serve God's people. Francis writes, "The task



▲ An optometrist from Henry Ford Optimeyes fits a guest for glasses in the Rosa Parks Children and Youth Program library, a fitting place to help our guests see and read better.

of believers, and priests in particular, is to 'touch' the hearts of others so that they may be opened to the messages of the Lord Jesus. In this great task, the contribution that literature and poetry can offer is of incomparable value."

Those who read know that a good book can move one to experience genuine emotion. Some books, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin", changed a nation. I read "Black Like Me" by John Howard Griffin as a boy. A true account of a white man who darkened his skin and traveled through the segregated South in 1959, the book's account of hatred and prejudice opened my eyes. While "Black Like Me" is now dated and, in its time, served a purpose that may no longer be relevant.

I know my life is richer and more enjoyable with poetry or novels to read. In his letter, Pope Francis quotes the great French novelist Marcel Proust. "Novels unleash in us, in the space of an

(Continued on next page)

hour, all the possible joys and misfortunes that, in life, it would take us entire years to know even slightly, and of which the most intense would never be revealed to us because the slowness with which they occur prevents us from perceiving them.”

Good literature opens us to worlds we might otherwise never visit or provides us with a deeper experience of what others experience in life, including the guests we serve. As Director of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, I have found that reading contemporary literature helps me enter the lives of characters who face challenges not unlike those faced by our guests at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen.

There are three books that I have recently read that have given me such a perspective. **Abundance** by Jakob Guanzon tells the story of a father and son living in a pickup truck after being evicted from their apartment. **Demon Copperhead** by Barbara Kingsolver, set in the mountains of southern Appalachia, is about a

boy born poor to a teenage single mother. The story is sometimes funny, tragic, despairing, and hopeful. **The Stars Beneath Our Feet** by David Barclay Moore tells of a boy in Harlem whose brother died in a gang-related shooting.

We cannot live every life, but through literature, we can enter the lives of others whose experiences are far from our own. This can build greater sympathy, if not empathy, for others, thereby giving us the opportunity “to ‘touch’ the hearts of others.” Such literature is another way for us to be for and with those who are poor or struggling with life's challenges.

Good literature also opens children to new worlds and ways of thinking. This is why I am passionate about acquiring new books for our Rosa Parks Children & Youth Program and grateful to the donors who bought them. It is also exciting to know that Michelle Anderson, the program's new manager is an author of children's books.

Michelle: Motivated by Mercy, Love & Compassion

Join in welcoming new staff member Michelle Anderson, who began serving as the Rosa Parks Children & Youth Program Manager on September 9th.

The program's objective is nurturing the minds of young people through the exploration of violence alternatives using creativity. Michelle enthusiastically shares, “I believe the call of my life is to serve others. I do this not only through direct services, but through showing mercy, love and compassion. This is what I hope to bring to the Rosa Parks youth.”

Michelle's impressive educational background begins with a Bachelors in Early Childhood Education, Masters in Family Studies,



▲ Capuchin Father Gary Wegner, OFM and Michelle Anderson, new Manager look over the books in the Rosa Parks Children & Youth Program library.

Trauma-Informed Specialist certification, and published Children's Book Author status.

Her love of literature translates into the program with a book-of-the-month and adding her 'dream books' to the Children's Library. Michelle emphasizes, “I would like to add books where children see themselves. Not just their ethnicity, but their stories.

My hope is [to] teach children that life's challenges aren't their fault and to empower them to use their voice.”

Welcome New School Year!

by Michelle Anderson
Manager, Rosa Parks Children & Youth Program



At the start of the school year, the Rosa Parks Children and Youth Program offered a week of events to welcome back our families, see some old friends at Alumni Day, and participate in a service project. We started with the service project, in which many of our current participants and former gardeners came to help the garden program clean up the garden beds for the winter.



▲ Current and former participants gathered in September 2024 to celebrate Welcome Back Week for the Rosa Parks Children and Youth Program.



▲ Br. Fred Cabras, OFM, Cap. & LMSU shares some game time with the young people.

Many of our current families attended and enjoyed a fun day filled with pizza, a gaming truck, board games, art, and conversation. We ended the week with Alumni Day. We invited many former employees, families, and participants to celebrate the program and enjoy a nice meal together.

CAPUCHIN SOUP KITCHEN

CSK Conner Meal Site:
4390 Conner
Detroit, MI 48215
313-579-2100 ext. 4216

CSK Meldrum Meal Site:
1264 Meldrum
Detroit, MI 48207
313-579-2100 ext. 2205

Spiritual Care:
Offered at both CSK Conner & Meldrum Meal Program Sites
313-579-2100 ext. 2209

Capuchin Services Center:
6333 Medbury St
Detroit, MI 48211
313-925-1370

Rosa Parks Children and Youth Program:
4390 Conner
Detroit, MI 48215
313-579-2100 ext. 4224

On The Rise Bakery & Cafe:
1780 Mt Elliott St
Detroit, MI 48207
Phone: 313.922.8510

Earthworks Urban Farm:
1264 Meldrum St.
Detroit, MI 48207
313-579-2100 Ext. 2204

Jefferson House:
8311 E. Jefferson
Detroit, MI 48214
313-331-8900

Christmas Cheer Drive

On now through December 15, 2024



What to Donate

New and unwrapped toys, books, coloring books, and crayons suitable for ages 0-12. Please do not donate clothes or perishable items.

How to Donate

Shop the wish lists below, mail, or drop off your gifts at:
Capuchin Services Center, 6333 Medbury, Detroit, MI 48211
Mon-Fri, 8:30am-4pm



Target



Amazon Toys



Amazon Books



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