



Love, Peace, and Manna

The Manna Cafe Ministries newsletter

February 2024



"Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them."
—Isa. 58:7, NLT

The Gift of Choice

BY VICKI YORK

When folks find out I was raised in Chicago, they often assume I have a high tolerance for winter, but nothing could be further from the truth. I don't get along well with blustery weather; in fact, being cold feels almost like physical pain to me. Even so, I like to exercise outdoors, so recently I invested in all the gear: insulated pants, thick socks, a balaclava, fleece gloves. Since then I've stayed tolerably warm when venturing outside.



Until a few days ago.

My dog, Annie, needed a walk, and I needed to clear my head. It had been an overwhelming week, and I was grumpy. But I didn't have a lot of time, so I hastily leashed Annie, grabbed a windbreaker, and drove to Liberty Park. Once there, however, I knew I'd goofed. The wind was sharp, the sky overcast. Annie didn't mind — she adores cold weather — but I had to spur myself on: *You can do this. Just a few miles and you're done. You got this.*

My pep talk failed miserably. In spite of scolding myself for being wimpy and walking so fast I thought I might dislocate a hip, I soon circled back to the car, threw open the door, and climbed in. As Annie scowled at me in confusion, I checked my exercise app: .48 miles. The most pitiful workout of the year.

But all was not lost. That brief, embarrassing ordeal was just what I'd needed to fix my perspective. For the next hour all I could think was *Not everyone gets to do what I just did. They don't get to come in out of the cold. They don't have that choice.*

For Clarksville's homeless community, the bone-deep misery of wind, rain, and freezing temps is a daily part of life. My failed workout was a compelling reminder of the many blessings I enjoy every day: a cozy house. Hot cocoa. Clean, dry socks.



A down jacket. Decent shoes. Central heating.

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The relief I felt when I jumped back into my car that day was immediate and exquisite. To know that my team at Manna Cafe is able to give that kind of relief to others via the emergency warming center is one of the greatest rewards of doing what we do.



The brutality of living and sleeping in a car, tent, or park bench is the status quo for Clarksville’s homeless, so the opportunity to offer them comfort and rest – along with a home-cooked meal, hot shower, and fresh clothes – is the driving force behind the sacrifices that our staff and volunteers make.

February in Tennessee can be brutal ... but this month when you’re tempted to moan about the cold, count your blessings. And thank God for the priceless gift of a warm bed.

Thank you to our generous partners



The O’Reilly Automotive Foundation, Inc., is pleased to announce a \$10,000 grant to help fund Manna Cafe’s work. “They have such a great mission and have found unique ways to meet the hunger needs within their communities,” said Julie Gray, president and executive director of the O’Reilly Automotive Foundation, Inc., the philanthropy arm of O’Reilly Auto Parts.

“We are very grateful for this grant,” comments Vicki York, Manna CEO. “Helping feed our community and serving our homeless friends is an expensive mission, but partnerships like this keep us moving forward.”



American Snuff Company Charitable Trust recently awarded Manna with a \$5,000 grant for hunger relief efforts. We're thrilled to continue our partnerships with local industries like American Snuff Company as we care for the hurting in our community.



Be a part of the Manna Cafe mission of feeding the hungry and caring for the homeless in Montgomery and Stewart Counties.

MannaCafeMinistries.com/donate



Cold weather heroes bring warm relief

Baby, it has been cold outside, and the frigid temperatures can be deadly if you are living on the streets. During one cold snap in January, Manna Cafe opened the doors to its warming center for 10 days straight, offering hot meals and a cozy, safe place to stay. For eight of those days the warming center was open around-the-clock, providing breakfast, lunch, and dinner to guests. According to Outreach Coordinator Tanya Johnson, "We averaged 40 guests per night and 80 meals each day."



An operation like the warming center requires a village of people committed to making it run smoothly.

Dedicated staff, amazing volunteers, and area groups and businesses have been pitching in with various resources, all in a spirit of love for others. Thank you to all the heroes who are making a difference in the lives of so many.



Share the Love

Create a free will and make a lasting impact on Manna Cafe

• **Protect what matters**
Ensure the safety and care of the people, pets, and communities you cherish.

• **Ease for loved ones**
Offer your family clarity and reduce complications by detailing how your estate should be managed.

• **Legacy with Manna Cafe**
Leave a mark with Manna Cafe and support feeding the hungry and homeless.

Visit FreeWill.com/MannaCafe to create a free will or revocable living trust.



Leadership Clarksville visits Manna

Manna Cafe hosted the 2024 class of Leadership Clarksville. What an amazing group of leaders who are working toward a better understanding of our community.

These caring people were given a tour of the Manna Cafe campus and treated to a delicious lunch prepared by our culinary staff.

Following lunch there was a panel discussion from local nonprofit leaders. Thank you to Rob Selkow from Habitat for Humanity, Tabitha Hackett from Judy's Hope, Vicki York from Manna Cafe, and Mary Laremore from Butterfly Moments. It was a wonderful day of people coming together to serve our area.



***For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.
Matthew 25:35-36, NIV***



Manna Cafe is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and a proud member of United Way of the Greater Clarksville Region and the Clarksville Chamber of Commerce.