

Chattanooga Community Kitchen



The Open Door - Newsletter of the Chattanooga Community Kitchen - Summer 2011

2011 Fast Day - Chairs Bill and Ann Aiken

We are pleased to announce Bill and Ann Aiken as Chairs of the 2011 Fast Day Campaign. No strangers to a little hard work, the Aikens are forging the path toward our \$700,000 campaign goal. Fortunately, they've been down similar roads before.



As a current board member and former president of the Boys and Girls Club, a former Chair of the Public Library and a past Trustee of the Baylor School, Bill has long been a volunteer leader.

Ann has too - leading the fund-raising, design and construction of a school in Petit Harpon, Haiti, serving on Chattanooga's Historic Zoning Commission and as a YMCA Board Member for both the Metropolitan area and Camp Ocoee.

Clearly, the Aikens are dedicated volunteers. They are also accomplished professionals.

A graduate of Auburn University and the University of Tennessee School of Architecture, Ann has been

licensed and practicing architecture since 1979 and is a LEED accredited professional. She is a former president of the Chattanooga Chapter and has served on the Tennessee Board of the American Institute of Architects. Ann has also been involved in public/private planning and environmental initiatives.

Bill was a Morehead Scholar at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and attended Vanderbilt University Law School where he was an editor of the Law Review. He is an attorney at Chambliss, Bahner & Stophel, P.C., where he focuses his practice on corporate law, commercial and business transactions, acquisitions and health care.

The Aikens live on Lookout Mountain where they attend the Church of the Good Shepherd, Episcopal.

When not working or volunteering, the Aikens enjoy exercise, reading, and spending time with their sons, Will (wife Bevin) and Ben (wife Amy).

Raising nearly half of our Operational Budget, the Fast Day Campaign is the single most important campaign of the year for the Chattanooga Community Kitchen. We are honored to have Bill and Ann as this year's Chairs and look forward to another successful campaign!

Thank you for your support.



Help from the Heart of the City

Brother Ron's Final Profession of Vows

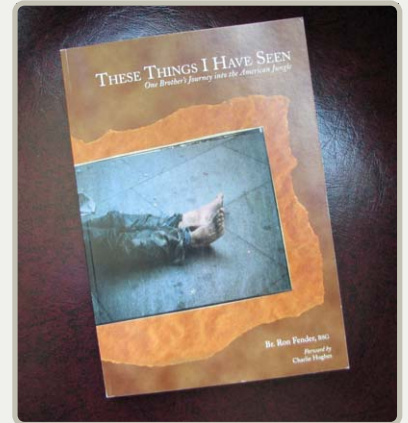
This summer, Brother Ron Fender entered a chapel in upstate New York to take his final profession of vows with the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory. Many of our friends and colleagues were able to attend.

As part of the discernment process leading up to the



Left to Right - Former Fast Day Chairs Allen and Maddin Corey with Brother Ron Fender, BSG, and Former Fast Day Chairs Pat and Angie Conroy at Brother Ron's Final Profession of vows.

convocation, Brother Ron assembled a collection of stories, sermons and other writings and turned it into a book.



“These Things I Have Seen - One Brother’s Journey into the American Jungle” is a short history of

Brother Ron’s work at the Kitchen, experiences with the homeless of Chattanooga and process of releasing one life to join another as a monk in service.

We will be printing copies for sale, so let us know (423.756.4222) if you’d like to get one, or several.

We may be a bit biased, but it’s a great read!

Remember to renew your BiLo BonusCard each year! The program resets each May, so reenroll now. Once activated, each time you shop using your BiLo Bonus Card, 1% of your purchases will support our work with the homeless and needy of Chattanooga!



1. Give this enrollment card to the cashier with your BONUSCARD one time during the program term.
2. One percent of your purchases will be donated to your designated group through May 31.
3. Call 800-768-4438 if you have any questions.

CHATTANOOGA COMMUNITY KITCHEN



Financial Contributions

We value your support and regard ourselves as accountable not only to you but also to God for stewardship of the funds you entrust to us. We are audited by a recognized, local independent CPA firm and publish an audited annual financial statement.



The Chattanooga Community Kitchen is a 501(c)3 organization. Contributions are tax deductible.

Help from the Heart of the City is more than just a slogan!

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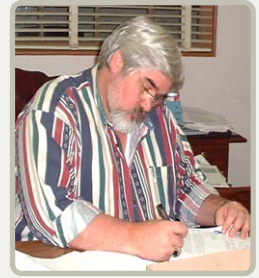
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Charlie's Corner:

From the depths of my emptiness/Comes a feeling of inner bliss/I feel wanted, I feel desired/I can feel my soul on fire/I feel loved - Depeche Mode



Charlie Hughes
Executive Director

I have two grandsons. Jamie is nine and Josh is three. My wife, Cindy and I love having them at our house. This summer, Cindy kept them at least three days a week. One morning they were eating breakfast and Josh asked my wife where I was. She told him that I was at work. He then said, "Me and Jamie want to play with Grand Daddy." It warmed my heart when Cindy told me about this.

All of us have this primal urge to be wanted and needed. It is so basic to our humanity. One of the biggest battles that we face at the Community Kitchen is making our clients feel wanted and needed. Every day much of society tells them that they are not wanted and are definitely not needed.

Our Day Center is one place that we really try to reach our clients. It is a place where they can feel welcome and important. It is also a place where they can be motivated. Our case managers are in the Day Center constantly working with clients. Each month we have activities geared around a theme for that month. Several times a month we have foot care activities taking place in the foot care room. Haircuts are going on. Several outside agencies come in each month to meet with clients.

One day last week, I sat in the Day Center and just watched all that was going on. There were several clients at the front desk checking their mail. This is a service we provide for clients that have a case manager. An older couple from Wisconsin was seeking help. They were stranded in Chattanooga and their luggage (with their ID paperwork) had been lost during their bus ride.

A new resident in our Family Housing and Learning Center was using one of the phones that we have available while his son played in the Children's Corner. A few feet away, a married couple with a baby was on one of our computers trying to make contact with family.

A case manager was in the Meditation Room counseling with a client about the recent death of another client. At one of the recreational tables, a group of people was watching a very intense chess game. At an adjacent table, a 2000 piece jig saw puzzle was being put together. About this time, a client volunteer came to the front desk with a load of towels that she had washed and dried for people to use when they showered. The other three washers and dryers were being used by clients for their own personal needs.

I looked outside and two clients were cleaning our front porch area. I spoke to them and they told me that they had to hurry because they had to be in the job training life skills class at one o'clock.

Someone from Veteran's Affairs was meeting with a client in one of the meeting rooms. I was told that the Department of Human Services representative had met with 39 people earlier in the week. I checked the Day Center calendar to see what else was going on this week. We had our monthly birthday party scheduled, hair cuts were tomorrow and there was an art class scheduled for Friday.

As I was leaving the Day Center, I noticed that a poster with thank you cards for Brother Ron had been put up. I read one of the notes. It said, "Thank you for loving the ones that need it the most and for never giving up on any of us." My heart was warmed again.

Message from the Monk - not a drop of rain

*Streets are almost empty, shops are closed down/
There's not a soul left in the bar to tell my troubles to/
Think I'll walk down to the river that runs just south of
town/ I hate like hell when there ain't nothin' left to do/
But stand beneath the river bridge and listen for the
train/ It's been a long hot summer, not a drop of rain*

It has indeed been a long hot summer. And, as always, those on the street have suffered. We have been giving out a lot of bottled water and I have exhausted our supply of insect repellent. It seems like we see new faces, and hear heartbreaking stories every day.

*I broke down in December/ I headed for the coast/
I thought the wind and water would elevate my mind/
I surfaced in the springtime feelin' like a ghost/
Missin' more than ever the things I left behind/
Now I'm standin' on this riverbank and still cannot
explain/ It's been a long hot summer, not a drop of rain/
My bag is full of letters unopened and unread
I'm sure they'd tell the story of worry and of form/
My heart is beating heavy with all we left unsaid/
I swear to you I never meant you any harm/
But sacrifice and compromise could never stand the
strain/ It's been a long hot summer, not a drop of rain*

Each person who comes here has a story. Often the story is about the loss of employment or home, or one of addiction or alienation, and sometimes it is about a heart that has been smashed, or a life that has been battered.

*Tonight I'll close my eyes again and try to see your
face/ And listen for your voice to tell me it's alright to
sleep/ Convince myself I'll wake up in another time and
place/ Knowin' all the while that it's a promise I can't
keep/ A string of broken promises, another link of
chain/ It's been a long hot summer, not a drop of rain*

But, every person, every man, woman and child who is homeless tonight on our streets, each one dreams of something better. For every homeless person wants what you and I want: work to do, a happy home, Sunday supper, a front porch to sit on in the cool of the evening, ice-cream, to listen to the radio with the one we love. But, in the August heat on the Chattanooga asphalt, our dreams

dissolve and leave nothing but pain and anger and surrender.

*The children on the playground, the lovers in the shade/
Remind me of a life and time that feels more like a
dream/ When the sound of love and laughter was the
music that we played/ As we lay beside the waters of a
never ending stream/ Now the stream has gone to
hiding, the dream lives on in vain/
It's been a long hot summer, not a drop of rain*

The summer has brought death to us as well. We have had two funerals in as many weeks, and even as I write this, I am sitting beside the telephone, waiting for the sad news of yet another. Two days ago we held a memorial service for my friend Glen. Glen was a decorated veteran and college graduate. He was a sweet, gentle soul, and fine friend who lived in a tent in the woods and consumed a lot of vodka.

Something was broken in him that was never mended, and he had a powerful thirst that could not be quenched. But, we here at the Community Kitchen loved him and he will be deeply missed. I will especially miss his music; he was a gifted guitar picker and singer. The song I have quoted here was one of his favorites. It is called "Not a Drop of Rain," and was written and performed by Robert Earl Keen, one of the Austin musicians that Glen and I both love.

*The clouds are building slowly on the skyline to the east/
The wind and dust are dancing like the devil across the
lake/ I could try to find a bottle or try to find a priest/
Salvation won't be traveling either road I take/ So I turn
my collar to the wind that echoes this refrain/ It's been a
long hot summer, not a drop of rain*

As I was sitting at his bedside, the day before he died, Glen turned to me and said: "It's almost day break. I can see it!" I have to believe that now.

And, this morning when I came to the Community Kitchen, it was sixty-five degrees and the air was sweet and fresh. And, while I know that there will be more hot days to come, and more homeless faces, and still more struggle, I also know that there is the promise of autumn and a season of harvest. And perhaps rain.

- Br. Ron Fender, BSG

Like Animals in a Zoo - Field Trip and Writing Class

Over the past several months, LaDonna Guffey, case manager in the SAFAH program, has been hosting a creative writing class for clients in the day center. This class has become critical to our efforts to engage the homeless and help provide them with a voice, an outlet, a sense of self-worth.

As part of the class, LaDonna has been planning outings and celebrations off-site, then encouraging the participants to write about their experiences. Most recently, LaDonna arranged a trip to the zoo. After a couple of hours of fun and tour, the clients all sat down to put their words to paper.



Some of the experiences and insights were impressive, others funny. But, most importantly, the process helped develop self expression and build self-worth - just as recreation and cultural experiences do for every person.

Here are just a few excerpts from the writings:

"I identify with all of the animals because we are both uprooted from our homes and put on display."

"I enjoyed the trip to the zoo because I got to see exotic animals and it was my first time to a zoo."

"Field trips like this inspire me to share my experiences with others."

"I enjoyed the trip to the zoo because I got to be a kid."

"Field trips like this help me with writing by helping me relax."



"I identify most with monkeys because I'm a great swinger. I like fruit. I'm sort of hairy, but I'm seeing a specialist."

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Thanks to all that helped make our 2011 Summer Cookout a great success! We served 775 plates of



barbecue that day. Special thanks to Matt Galas, R&D Custom Slaughtering in Dunlap and David Soloff of Poppy's Barbecue on Signal Mountain!

- Food • Shelter • Employment • Clothing •
- Housing • Health Care • Case Management •
- Phones • Mail • Showers • Restrooms •
- Supportive Services •

• **COMPASSION** •



Inside:

Page 1: Bill & Ann Aiken - Fast Day Chairs

Page 2: Brother Ron's Final Profession of Vows and Book

Page 2: Financial Information & Renew Your BiLo bonuscard!

Page 3: Charlie's Corner - Feeling Loved

Page 4: Message From the Monk - Not a Drop of Rain...

Page 5: Animals at the Zoo? The sensation of being Homeless

For newsletter inquiries or change of address, contact Jens Christensen at Jens@homelesschattanooga.org or 423.305.6822.