

Training & Resources

A SEASON OF GIVING: TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURE

Soup Run: Chaplaincy in Action

by Rev. Maria Scaros, M.A., CC/PC

Thousands of volunteers walk the streets of cities and towns throughout our nation, offering food, clothing, and friendship to people on the streets. Most are homeless and hungry. Some have a roof over their head yet are hungry. Some are mentally ill.

All are starving for human contact, compassion, and love. One such outreach to the poor and hungry began seventeen years ago on the streets of NYC. It is called “Soup Run.”

We venture onto the streets and find many souls in front of churches, abandoned buildings, and under scaffolds. They welcome us and are grateful for a hot meal and conversation. One woman was brought to tears when one of us climbed stairs to hand her food and drink. Her *legs were swollen and painful. It was difficult for her to walk*, and she was grateful that someone cared enough to climb up for her. Climbing to reach our hungry sister in pain reminded us of Christ saying, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers or sisters of mine, you did for me.”(Matthew 24: 34-40)

The group pointed out others who needed to eat. Finally, we met Danny, who was 25 and from Costa Rica. He told us he had been here for two years and somehow became homeless.

A few yards away, Rafael was listening to Celia Cruz, a well-known Cuban nightclub singer from the past. He reminisced about Havana in 1957. We danced salsa together, and he sighed happily, remembering the Cuba of his youth so very long ago. Then, he welcomed us with smiles and enjoyed his meal while listening to his music. “Muchisimas’ gracias”, he said.

Just as we were driving away, we noticed a person lying in the street, seemingly having fallen along with all their

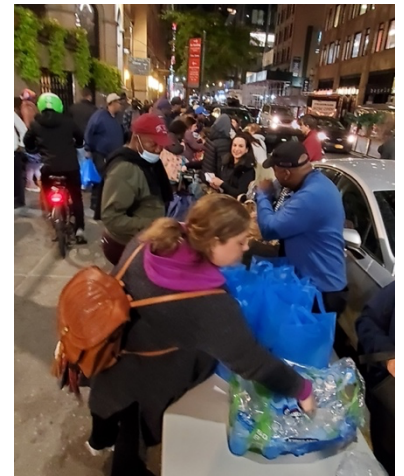
belongings. We pulled over to help and saw it was a woman who was not moving. Others nearby told us she had lost and was sleeping, but she appeared in distress to us. We looked to

see if she was bleeding or had broken any bones. She was difficult to wake, and we noticed that she smelled of alcohol. We got her to her feet, placed her on her chair in a safe spot, and discovered her name was Maxine. We called her by her name and spoke to her, trying to revive her. We helped her drink water and fed her some food.

Maxine barely opened her eyes but was able to thank us and reassure us she was going to be all right. Before we knew it, more hungry souls surrounded us, and we were happy to have enough food for all miraculously.

Whether we are a dozen or three, our street ministry is an expression of love in the purest sense. For a short time, we provide care to a stranger in need, without judgment and with humility and respect. This defines pastoral care. Embracing our brothers and sisters without prejudice and with compassion and maintaining the belief that we are all children of “The One” and are responsible for each other is the essence of chaplaincy. No matter their tradition, all people profess, “Love thy neighbor.” In chaplaincy, it is not merely stated; it is acted upon. Let us all embrace the chaplain within.

Rev. Maria Scaros is a Board Certified Clinical Chaplain/Pastoral Counselor and a member of the Spuyten Duyvil Chapter of CPSP.



A View from One Living Human Document to Another

by Rev. Andrew Harriott, M.A., DS, CC/PC, HPC

Volunteering at the Soup Run in Manhattan with my faith group's fellow committee members has been my pleasure. I was introduced to the group that began the Soup Run a few months ago through Rev. Maria Scaros Mercado, a fellow chaplain and a member of the Greek Orthodox faith. Maria is now part of the Spuyten Duyvil, NY Chapter. I am honored to serve the community, see how chaplaincy is effective during the time of engagement with the homeless population, and listen to their stories.

At the most November gathering, we provided one hundred and fifty meals of lemon chicken, rice, and vegetables, twenty-five peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, fruit, candy, coffee, and hot chocolate. We also distributed clothing, sixty backpacks filled with socks, underwear, blankets, hand-knit hats/scarves/gloves/baby blankets, diapers, and children's books and games.

We also experienced the migrant crisis first-hand. As we served our "regular" guests on one side of the street in front of a church. On the other side of the street, Venezuelan asylum seekers, many of whom are families with children and babies, were assembled, as the city houses them at a nearby hotel. There was tension between the asylum seekers and those homeless and it was palpable throughout the night.

Sadly, some of the folks from the church were aggressively telling us that we should not be serving the migrants and that they were being treated better than the homeless folks by the City of New York and us. We

redirected the asylum seekers and served them in front of the hotel they were staying in, and that alleviated some of the tension.

The Venezuelan migrants were lovely people, and many were waiting with babies and children. They expressed their appreciation, and some children smiled and proudly said "thank you" in English. Unfortunately, we didn't have enough shoes or sneakers for adults and children. Shoes and jackets were the most requested items, as many gestured to us that they were cold and needed anything with long sleeves.

I hope to see you make a difference in someone's life. I saw the glee in the eyes of the homeless as I served them a hot chocolate with whipped cream on top of the can. They were so delighted; their smile was fresh and childlike, and they felt special and cared for, even if just for a moment before they returned to their reality of homelessness.

The reflection of experiencing the delight that the homeless people had as they enjoyed their hot chocolate and reminisced on better times in their lives, as one recipient shared with me. With each hot chocolate is the unpacking of the living, human documents, as people share what is on their hearts and

their minds. I know this because I was asked to pray for a woman as she expressed her concerns to me about her daughter's LGBTQIA+ challenges. The mother was desperate to try to be inclusive and hold the family together, and she was praying for understanding. What a complex issue to run into on the street, right?

Chaplaincy is beyond the bedside; it is on the sidewalks, it is serving others, it is there for people as a source of comfort, with comforting prayer and holding space for people as they unpack what is on their hearts.



THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY

Accessibility | Clinical counseling services | Community relevancy
Cultural inclusivity | Intergenerational



Program History

International Chaplain Foundation was incorporated in 2016. Founders Rev. Andrew Harriott and Rev. Dr. Elaine Barry, realized their co-interest in community chaplaincy and their commitment to non-institutionalized training. Born out of outreach in a community program, Project FIND, a program providing services and support to seniors of low and moderate-income and homeless seniors in a non-institutionalized setting, they realized there was a need for clinical chaplaincy and pastoral counseling in the community. Utilizing technology and innovative resources, ICF, Inc. was one of the first CPSP online training centers.



trainees reflect and act on their experiential encounters. The trainees, wherever their visits are, are involved with persons from diverse social, economic, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. Reflection on these experiences will form the basis for individual learning.

Our Mission

The CPE/T program provides spiritual and religious resources and professional support for patients, families, caregivers, and staff. By focusing on the psycho-spiritual aspects of the persons in the CPE/T program, pastoral counselors/chaplains are encouraged to commitment to provide person-centered care and services.

The CPE/T program is committed to the following core values; namely: Respect, Compassion, Justice, Excellence, and Stewardship.

Program Objectives

The Clinical Pastoral Training program utilizes the action-reflection-action learning process, which is central to CPE/T in several ways. One of the basic tenets of CPE/T is that trainees are involved in hands-on and direct pastoral care experiences with patients, families and caregivers. The

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