

the minor Prophet

You Put the Moves On Us

Denis Clarke, Director, MicahCenter

Wouldn't you know it? As soon as we move the Resource Center close to the action –it's a lovely, calming, hacienda with room to breathe and be, a garden full of Kawamura-style fruit and veggies, –as soon as we find furniture and get the phone company to plug us in, the place is filled with people of all stripes, sorting out documents, jobs, schooling, lives, planning and persevering, getting frustrated, finding hope, reinventing themselves — indeed, as Micah's Way reinvents itself. I am reminded of Dominick's image of an airplane being assembled as it flies at thirty-thousand feet, or, perhaps more darkly, of Jules Verne's image of a steamer feeding its own decking into the boilers in a desperate race for port.

And a wacky, rough-and-tumble ride it is. Seriously, what do you expect? In actually applying the prophet's principles: To act justly; to love kindly; to walk humbly with God, in an unjust, unkind and prideful Orange County –we support, heal and change ourselves and each other at the cost of things being properly ordered.

Despite which, it feels that at MicahCenter we're beginning to fly with the nose up, breasting the waves rather than wallowing in the troughs. And in the spirit of forgiveness, we allow a mixed-metaphor now and then.

Front-page thanks go to *hundreds* of, I dare say, kind, just and Godly people who have made MicahCenter happen in 2016. You know who you are... I'm not going to name names. At last count, we have *ten* new regular volunteers –many of whom are working the front desk – it's daunting, challenging and certainly satisfying. We even have a good-looking person to to co-ordinate everyone.



And then we have twenty-five occasional volunteers who tackle special projects such as moving into the new place; MiBistro; gardening; helping with the open-house art show; putting up drapes and shelving.

And the *art-show* went gangbusters. Many unexpected folk showed up and

were introduced to the mores and ways of Micah's Way. The band was excellent, the wine sweet, the art eclectic. Anthony Corradino left quite a legacy.

To my mind, the most important thing is that with all the new people come new ideas —and the energy with which to execute them. Which keeps the endeavor supple, young, idealistic —nothing wrong with *that*. Micah's Way has reformed itself from the inside out and it didn't hurt a bit!

Thank you, all!

From the Front Desk...

Mary McGowan, the Lady with the Smile

What does it mean to me to be a volunteer at Micah's Way?

Volunteering to me is simply doing something for others who need some sort of help and not expecting to receive accolades, pats on the back, or some kind of material gain, –to go silently through the day and night, serving those who are troubled. Charity leads to Hope and then to Faith in God and in others. Knowing that you can help another person through the pain and sorrow they experience and see them smile again is enough reward for me.

Here at Micah's Way we serve those who seek our help with getting birth certificates, IDs, computer help, education assistance, mail service, referrals, clothing, food, and many other services that are not usually provided elsewhere. My role here is helping at the front desk to greet and to make a visit to MicahCenter a pleasant experience for our brothers and sisters.



& From the Back Room

Dominick Corradino, Board President

In his autobiography *True Compass*, Senator Ted Kennedy talked about his first visit to Vietnam. Of all that he saw, the thing that overwhelmed him was the great number of Vietnamese people who were forced to migrate in their own country, looking for anywhere to exist, to survive. He realized that these people were in the same predicament as those he had seen in refugee camps in other countries he had visited. He called these impoverished, displaced people, 'in-country refugees' and realized that internal displacement was a real problem with which Vietnam was saddled. Fleeing a war that constantly endangered and disrupted their lives, hundreds of thousands were on the roads and pathways, desperate for whatever help they could find.

Recently, Orange County opened an unused bus terminal as a shelter. Certainly, this is an attempt to alleviate the problem of poor people who have no roof over their heads. It may also have exacerbated the problem: the number of homeless people living at the Civic Center has grown, as people came to Santa Ana in hopes of finding a place at the new shelter. That increased number of people strains already limited resources.

It seems unbelievable that a city as large as Santa Ana and a county as wealthy as Orange County (the thirty-fifth largest economy in the world) are unable to do more than provide poor people a place on concrete to sleep. The Gospels tell us that the poor (for whom there are two thousand references in the Bible) will always be with us. Perhaps this is to remind us that we are called to take care of the poor as a ministry.

As we at Micah's Way continue our work, it is clear that Orange County, and much of the rest of the country, is saddled with an enormous problem, large numbers of people, poor, under-employed or unemployed, who must daily struggle to survive. One can understand that there are refugees in war-torn countries, but in Orange County? –*Inconceivable*.



micahpeeps!

Top Center: Hilary, adamantly refusing to get sucked in to the volunteering game, gets sucked in to the volunteering game, delivering 240 bags of homemade Christmas cookies. Top Left: Alma shows up at the new place with an empty half-hour in her busy schedule so she and a very well-behaved daughter set to cleaning up the front yard. Top right: Father of the year, Chris L: Picture of proud! Bottom left: Yes, we have our very own Japanese gardener. Bottom right: Dominick sneaks into shot with the Baldwin tribe at MiChristmas.

The Crazy Russian

Ken Kawamura, Indie Musician, talks with Vaskin Koshkerian, People's Advocate & Mr. Outreach

Micah's Way volunteer, Vaskin Koshkerian, travels this world on foot. He walks and walks and walks. Every day he walks 20 miles through the streets of Orange County. Everyone he meets he greets with a boisterous "Hello! My Friend!" So, Vaskin has become well-known in the many homeless communities in the County for his kind heart and giving spirit. On the streets, he has been affectionately given the moniker "The Crazy Russian."

He tirelessly volunteers seven days a week, primarily at Micah's Way, but also at the Tustin Senior Center and at the Lights-On Program (St. Vincent de Paul). He has increased the awareness of the services provided by Micah's Way in the local community. As a result, more people in need are now seeking help at the Micah's Way Resource Center, and more businesses are making donations. Vaskin literally engages in boots-on-the-ground service to the County's impoverished individuals and has gained a first-hand perspective of what it means to be without a roof that most people do not achieve.

Let's hear what Vaskin has to say...

How did you learn about Micah's Way?

Accidentally. I was talking to a homeless guy that I had helped before and asked him, "Who are the major players in helping people in the streets?" He referred me to a County worker who told me that Micah's Way is a good organization and that I should go over there if I want to help people in need. So, I visited the Micah's Way Resource Center and met with Denis. Afterwards, I thought that he was a good guy, and I also saw their big picture approach to helping people. I like that. It's the way to go.

Why did you decide to become a volunteer?

I like to help people. It's very important that some people are present in the streets helping others. I love seeing people getting helped - one person at a time. It's my goal that everyone in the streets receives help.

What kind of things do you do at Micah's Way?

Oh, everything (chuckles)! I get up at 4am and start walking to MicahCenter from Orange. I prepare the sandwiches and morning coffee to take to the streets. I wait for Denis or Dominick to arrive, and then we head down to the Civic Center to provide breakfast for people who have been sleeping rough. After, I clean the tables and coffee pots and prepare for the next day. Next, I go to the various businesses that donate food and supplies to pick up donations. Then I work at the front desk - answer the phones, schedule appointments, and greet clients. Later I do Outreach in the streets. I meet a lot of people that way. I try to find anyone who needs help out there. I also talk to business-owners and preach Micah's Way to the people. Also, I get involved at the County and City level with community leaders to find ways to help the homeless and poor. If it's a night where Micah's Way is serving a street meal, I help cook and serve the meal. Also, on Mondays and Fridays, I volunteer at the Lights On Program from 10pm to 3am in front of the Orange County Jail. We help people who are released from jail get clothes, food, and access to a phone. We encourage them to come to Micah's Way for further help in getting on the right track to becoming good citizens.

What are some of your observations on walking the streets of OC?

There are good and effective non-profits working hard to take care of problems to do with poverty. At the same time, I think there are too many organizations that only talk the talk and do not help the people. I see it when I make calls to these organizations on behalf of the homeless and poor and I get no response. They are also almost non-existent on the streets. You can't expect people to come to you when all they've ever got is the run-around since they were in kindergarten. Micah's Way is out there, and I am proud to be a part of it. I think that people need to be aware of the fact that many of the veterans and individuals with mental problem are being abused by housing programs that are supposed to help them. These houses collect a lot of money from the government, then give the residents only \$20 a week of their own money. The people end up

coming to Micah's Way for basic stuff like a mailing address, a pair of socks, a bus pass, a little food—even a smile and the time of day. I think veterans and disabled people and youngsters—the most vulnerable, should be provided with better care by the housing programs.

What do you feel are some of the biggest problems facing the homeless?

I think many people with mental health issues are just being pumped with pills and are not being given enough proper care. They're not being taught how to deal with their problems. I know it's a very complicated problem, but I don't think the County has any clue about what's going on with the mentally ill. I see what's going on with the senior employees at County Mental Health; they're either lazy—or so busy with bureaucracy that very little gets done to help the mentally ill.

What do you think are some steps in working toward a solution?

It's very difficult, because it's all about money. The County or the State is not going to spend money to solve the issues, because they "talk the talk" but they don't "walk the walk". During the elections, I met some of the County officials. They talk a good game but don't follow through. They opened the bus terminal (The Courtyard) to help the homeless, but they actually created a big open-air jail. Many people seeking help there feel that they are in a jail. They have to wear orange-colored cards round their necks so that they can be controlled better. I understand the intentions are good, and I appreciate that it's early days yet and there plenty of wrinkles to iron out, but right now I think people are losing their dignity in that bus terminal, and they are losing trust in the people who are running it. As soon as Micah's Way shows up on the street (especially me) people open up about how bad they are being treated and how bad they are living.

So, what are some steps in working toward a solution?

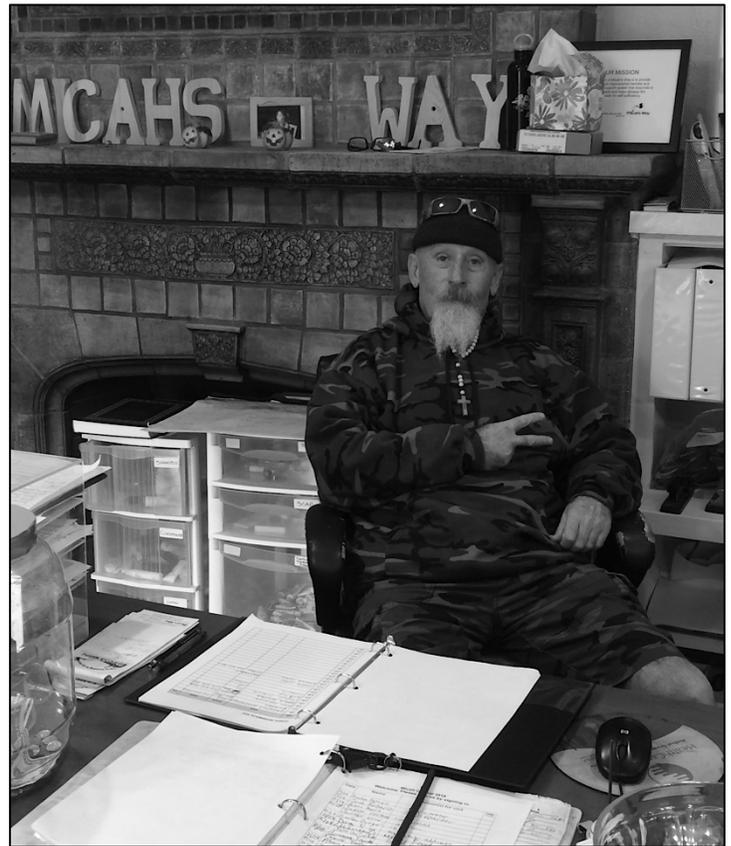
We need to get all the non-profit organizations and the County officials in a very good and open-hearted meeting to find solutions. The County cannot do it by itself, and all the non-profits and churches cannot do it by themselves. We also need leaders to be in charge to take action who have been doing this in the street and who actually know the homeless in the streets. We at Micah's Way actually know these individuals and what their needs are, but many of non-profits and County do not know exactly what is going on.

Do you see any coordination with the various non-profit groups with each other and/or with the County?

Some, but not nearly enough. I don't care which organizations are giving help, as long as the people are being helped. At Micah's Way, we feel it's an achievement when people receive help and get off the streets. That help can come from us or anyone else. I don't care who helps—the main thing is that people get help. But, some other organizations and the County, especially the County, don't look at it this way.

What are some small ways in which everybody can help?

Sit down and listen to people in need. Talk to them. When they see us in the streets and see the way I, Denis, or Dominick and other volunteers talk to them, they appreciate it. We let them share their stories and listen to them. We enjoy talking with them.



Micah's Way for Left-brainers – 2016

155	family and individual intakes
4805	recorded visits to MicahCenter
148	birth certificates obtained
7	Board meetings
140	MiChristmas children
288	people use MicahCenter mailing address
10,200	cups of coffee served at MiCafé
30	pairs of new work-boots
15	people helped with college textbooks
252	California IDs obtained
10	new regular volunteers
25	new occasional volunteers
1	open-house cultural extravaganza

To make sure the Internal Revenue Service can't grab your end-of-year extra cash for your favorite politician, we are set on getting a modest, used truck in the next few weeks –and at press time, we have \$1270. With a little more, we'll be able to inflate the tires. For twelve years we have been using the vehicles of volunteers, but as we collect and redistribute an increasing tonnage of the County's material wealth, that plan is past its sell-by date. The good people at Anaheim Free Methodist Church, driven by Nancy and Walter Kawamura and the Rev. Kevin Wong, have raised a lot of the money so far. If you donate at their church, you get a super-speedy toy truck as a Thank You. How's that for seriously creative? You can also prod the PayPal button on the MW website, but then all you'll get is the satisfaction that your money is not going to ease the burdens of this or that slimy politico. However you donate –Thank you!



A Director's Report is read at every Board meeting. Perhaps we should publish these things regularly. Perhaps not, there are enough boring bits in the world. On the other hand, if you're curious, here's a recent one as an example of the the background work that goes into making a non-profit happen. Bear in mind that this report is a month behind the times.

MicahCenter Director's Report –Denis 11/16/2016

800 recorded visits since the last Board meeting. This is double the rate of visits that we were working with this time last year (which was 430 over eight weeks). This means twice the amount of service, twice the amount of time and attention, twice the amount of stuff, going out the door... For example:

Under the MicahDocs program: We now receive & distribute mail for 270 people. (196 have dropped from the roster), more than double the number of people for whom MicahCenter was an address this time last year.

Does MW have the capacity? Short answer: Yes –mainly because we have a larger place, a little more money, and a new cadre of volunteers. Which brings me to:

Last Thursday Ken convened an ad hoc committee to answer the question: 'In the light of the MW Mission, what are our goals for 2017?' Ken, Dom, Denis & Vaskin discussed for 90 minutes. The result: five points which we would like the Board to entertain, put in order, discuss, adopt, augment, or throw out.

- Get a truck
- Sort out volunteer co-ordination and training
- Get MicahU running properly –adding at least one evening class
- Increase Outreach to the street and to institutions
- Establish a group in support of people on probation and parole

For now, I think it would be best that we don't launch in to a major discussion of these points. But does anyone have first reactions? If you will, think about things, and we can table this as material for the next Board. Bear in mind that the next Board agenda will be busy too (budget, MiChristmas review, results of end-year mail out, etc.)

We are signing families for MiChristmas. IMPAC Corp has taken on providing for 20 families. \$300 special donation, should we need it, for turkeys or other food. Someone is making cookie gifts for 140 kids. So far, 17 families are signed up.

The 2016 *Minor Prophet* is slated to be mailed out around December 9th.

And... a word of thanks to Nancy and Ken and Mike and Dominick and Sharon and Christine and Malaika and Mike Koshkerian and Amy Vandenberg who made the Open House Art Show a jolly and entertaining evening. We invited about 250 people, 51 came. About \$1900 was raised, Mike B. went nuts with upping the bidding. Ken's 4th Street Jazztette played like they meant it, and we got two good new volunteers out of the deal!

Micah's Way
P.O. Box 1631
Santa Ana CA 92702

At MicahCenter we can always find use for:

- men's clothing and shoes
- clean blankets
- \$10 store gift cards
- #5 & #6 diapers
- postage stamps
- deodorant
- toothpaste
- socks
- backpacks
- day bus-passes
- prayers

The Minor Prophet Volume 10 No. 1
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Micah's Way is an All-Volunteer Public Benefit Corporation, 501(c)3 tax ID: 54-2166918
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ACT JUSTLY, LOVE KINDLY, WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD

FOR THE TIME, TREASURE, TALENT, COMPASSION & DECENCY YOU CONTRIBUTE, THANKS TO: MIKE BALDWIN & FAMILY, MARY BALDWIN, NANCY BIGDA, JUDY CARREON, ARACELI GARCIA, BARBARA BENUN, DONNA ENGLISH, BEVERLEY CAMPBELL, BRAD & JAN KARELIUS, RICH & MARCIE VOGL, LORI PECK, CHARLIE ELL, SHARON CORRADINO, ERINN, PATTY Mc, PETE, RANDY McMAHON, RICHARD MEREDITH, SAARAH, SVEINN & SIGRID, VASKIN & MIKE KOSHKERIAN, RJ, JOHANNA ASIS, GLEN ARMSTRONG, ANITA RIVERA, MILTON, JOANNE GOETZ, MAGDA SALDANA, MARYJO RYAN, AMY VANDERKAMP, JUDY MICHALEK, LEN & LORI GALASSO, JEAN CARVILLE, DANA & MARK MALMBERG, THE LITTLE COMPANY OF MARY, THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS, ST. JOSEPH HEALTH, STARBUCKS, MICROSOFT, PAT DENNIS, JOANNE STRAUSS, JACQUELYN & WAYNE SHEPARD, DIANA MACALUSO, JULIE, LEROY SCHMAUS, NANCY, CLAUDIA SAWAYA, JOSEPH KELLY, RJ SERRA, RAMONA LEOPOLD, TIM KOCH, LEIGH ADRIANCE, JEANETTE CURRAN, RANDY & SUE FRANS, DORIAN HINESLY, JANE HAMMOND, BETTY FARRELL, MARY ELLEN & SCOTT, MICHAEL & KAREN CHRONLEY, BONNIE LAYMAN, MARY KERSHAW, ANTHONY BUBE, STEVE BRUCE, DENNIS MILLER, MALAIKA CLARKE, FRAN STERGAR, JEAN DUFFY, THE WEISER FAMILY, KOREAN MARTYRS CATHOLIC CENTER, PETER KIM, PATRICK & HELGA, MARGARET WALSH, ANTHONY CORRADINO, THOMAS MCCARTHY TRUST, CURTIS WEIGEL, DIANE JOHNSON, KARINA CERVANTES, MARY VENAZI, MARILYN FURSE, ST. NICHOLAS CATHOLIC CHURCH, MAGDALENA, BRIAN KELLY, LARRY BUDNER, LINDA KNIGHT, CHARLES MUDGE, KAREN ABDALLAT, UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, LOURDES HORTINELA, ROSE CHAMBERLAIN, TONY & LINDA SEIDEL, JANICE WRZESINSKI, NANCY & WALTER KAWAMURA, JULIE RULAND, ANITA ZULKARNAIN ...
AND PLENTY OF OTHER MARVELOUS PEOPLE.