



# *Parish Heartbeats: Stories of Faith In Action*

## **“I heard there was a need.”**

Those who know Barb Fair will often insist that there must be at least two or three of her in the parish. She seems to be everywhere. She is a long-time member of the Contemporary Choir, she serves on the parish Peace & Justice Advisory Working Group, she is active in our parish Earth Care Committee and she is an organizer and leader within our Sharing Parish Ministry.

But one of Barb's greatest commitments is to our parish PADS (Public Action to Deliver Shelter) Ministry. Every Thursday evening from September through May our parish hosts 30-50 homeless individuals and families overnight in our parish center. On the third Thursday of the month our parishioners provide the hospitality, food and laundry services for our guests. But most Thursday evenings Barb Fair is there greeting guests and helping volunteers.

When asked about how she got involved with PADS Barb said, “I heard that there was a need and felt called to answer. That is one thing I have learned through my PADS ministry--- if you ask, there are people out there who are willing and eager to help. They are looking to be called, as I was.”

She went on to say, “My parents raised me with a strong belief that ‘to whom much is given, much is expected.’ I have been blessed with so much; support and love from family, knowing that I have a warm bed and nutritious meals, and a support network for times of trouble. Not so for so many others. My Catholic faith has taught me to be Christ to the poor and vulnerable -- our PADS guests.”

Barb's involvement in PADS has shown her that most people are very generous, “Ask – others are willing and eager to help. We have been blessed with so many caring hearts at SMMP who are willing to share this ministry. Our ministry is not possible without each caring volunteer.”

“Through my PADS ministry, I really feel like I am able to make a difference. Every guest is so appreciative that

someone is willing to care for them, whether that is with ‘substantial’ things like food and a warm bed, or just having someone who will listen. Every guest has a different story that brings them to PADS. There is no single face to homelessness; men and women, adults and children, the healthy and sick or disabled. Our guests include people who are working and cannot make ends meet, people who are retired and cannot live on their fixed

income, people who have become homeless due to foreclosure, people who are mentally disabled....each person has a unique story, and that is nothing like the standard image of ‘homeless people’.”

Barb points out that there are many ways to volunteer with our PADS ministry. “We have volunteers who shop and prepare and serve food. We have people who set up and clean up; people who stay with the guests overnight, for security and hospitality, and do their laundry. We can always use financial contributions (to

SMMP PADS) for food items and other miscellaneous needs. We need donations of coffee, cereal, peanut butter and jelly, laundry detergent, hand towels and washcloths, sheets and pillow cases (twin size only), small (travel size) toiletries, – especially detergent, toothbrushes and toothpaste. I am always happy to work with young people (service hours), and groups, for special projects – craft projects with the young guests, baking cookies, making holiday decorations, and other special ways to get young people involved in this ministry.”

**If you would like to hear more about this special need in our community contact Barb Fair at [pads.bemfair@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pads.bemfair@sbcglobal.net) to become a PADS Volunteer.**



**Parish Heartbeats is an occasional bulletin column that celebrates the ways St. Margaret Mary parishioners make a difference in the lives of others.**