

MANNA MATTERS

OCTOBER 2020



Manna Cafe "veterans" (L to R) Ron Hindman, Laura Hindman, Jennifer Baker, Craig Groomes, and Sherry Wingfield.



SERVICE WITH A SMILE

Paul Davis, 63, joined the Manna Café team (via the National Council on Aging) in October of 2019, but it feels like he’s been around much longer. Day after day, in rain, heat, and snow, he greets clients and loads their cars as they drive through the grocery pick-up line. “NCOA couldn’t have placed me at a better job site,” he told me recently. “I don’t have much to do at home, and this keeps me fit. I try to keep active, and while I’m here at Manna, I keep moving, keep moving! People have told me, ‘You work like you’re 25 or 30 years old!’ I believe you should thank God if you’re able to get to the age I am and keep moving the way I am.”



This father of four and grandfather of ten is well-liked by staff and clients alike for his diligence and calm demeanor. Says Program Manager Doretha Minor, “Paul’s got a great attitude. It doesn’t matter what’s going on, he’s very professional and down to earth, always willing to pitch in.”

One of Paul's favorite things about the job is witnessing people’s reaction to both the quantity and quality of

food they receive. “As people come through the line, you see tears in their eyes because they’re so thankful to get the food. We give them a whole shopping cart, and they’ll say, ‘Is all of this really for me?’ And I’ll say, ‘Yes, this is all *your* food.’ If they have kids in the car, those little kids will see chips or candy, and they’ll be jumping from the front seat to the backseat just to see what else is in the box. It’s really a blessing to see that.”

Like most everything else, COVID-19 has



MISSION STATEMENT:
"Manna Cafe serves people in need in Clarksville/Montgomery County through a soup kitchen on wheels, food box distribution, and other vital resources. Propelled chiefly by volunteers, Manna Café strives to restore hope, dignity, self-reliance, community, and the love of God through Jesus Christ."

MR. MANNA

Part of every **Manna Matters** is dedicated to looking into the life of a specific Manna staff member, volunteer, or client. All over town, Kenny

York is known as the organization's founder.

Occasionally, when someone can't remember his name, they call him "Mr. Manna." But of course he's more than just

Manna Cafe's founder. That's why we chose this issue to find out more about the man behind the mission.

Q: Tell us: Who is Kenny York apart from Manna Cafe?

A: I'm a husband, musician, sound tech, dad, and grandfather. I like blues and rock 'n roll, and I love to cook.

Q: Can you describe your perfect day off?

A: I'd go for a motorcycle ride with my wife, stop somewhere for lunch, ride some more, then come home and play with my dog, Annie. I call her my therapy dog because she doesn't let me get by without giving her attention, which helps to "get me out of my head" sometimes.

Q: You've built an incredible ministry, but do you have additional dreams in your heart?

A: It's true we've accomplished a lot, but until



SMILE, CONT.

affected Manna's food box program, but Paul assures me that they've adapted well. "We're short-staffed right now, and it's been pushing us pretty hard, but we've been managing pretty good to keep things running. Some clients have to load their own cars now, but if a disabled or elderly person comes through, we load it for them. Especially the older people will think they're at Walmart, where they have to load their own groceries, but we tell them, 'No ma'am, you don't have to do that.' And they'll say, 'Wow, I don't even have to get out of my car?'"

Paul chuckles with delight and adds, "Especially in the summertime when it's really hot, people say, 'I just don't see how you do it.' But to stand there and take their tickets, and just to see the smile on their faces as they come through the line—well, it's a blessing from God."

Continued on next page



We need you! Combat Hunger 2020 is almost upon us! Each year, this city-wide food drive is wildly successful in helping us stock our shelves for the winter. But each year, our volunteer coordinator has the

challenging job of ensuring that food drive locations are not forced to shut down early for lack of volunteers. Will you help us this year by taking a two-hour shift to offer shopping lists to shoppers? Sign up at MannaCafeMinistries.com/events/combathunger. Thank you!

MR. MANNA, CONT'D.

we have a place for people to lay their heads at night — to get off the street and get back on their feet — the mission is incomplete. We have to create housing opportunities, whether through transitional housing or a full-blown shelter, because it's too hard to start over if you're living in a tent.

Q: You said you're a musician. Tell us more about that.

A: I've been involved with music since I was six. In high school I started playing the bass, and



now that's my main instrument. It allows me to be creative. I enjoy playing cover tunes, but I've always been drawn to original, spontaneous worship music because then I'm playing what God put inside me to play. It's just who I am; I can't imagine not playing.



Q: What's the best book you ever read?

A: *The Barbarian Way* by Erwin McManus. Before I read it, there were many times I felt I didn't fit in with "normal" church or ministry. That book gave me permission to be me. Sometimes people still don't know what to do with me, but McManus's book lets me know I'm not by myself. Some of us were called to be barbarians, to live on the edge, to run ahead of the crowd.

Q: Final question: What's the meaning of life?

A: The song that was playing when I was saved was "Go Tell It on the Mountain." Our job is to go tell the news about Jesus. Also, to quote a late friend of mine, Ken Murray, the purpose for living is "to leave more than you took."



Here's wishing a crunchy, spicy, brisk, cozy, cinnamon-y, happy autumn to all our Manna Cafe friends!



Shout-out to Harvest Sound Nashville, whose Thunder Camp participants spent an afternoon giving a much-needed facelift to our beloved mascot, the Love Bus.



TEN-YEAR ANNIVERSARY GALA MEMORIES



On August 28 in the Madison Room of City Forum, Manna Cafe celebrated its 10-year anniversary. Party-goers enjoyed good food, music by Syd Hedrick and the Phalcons, a live painting by Olasubomi Bashorun, and speakers Ron Edmondson, Carlo Serrano, and Kevin and Jenn Miller. Many thanks to everyone who made this an unforgettable night!

Photo credit: Diamond Tiaral

