

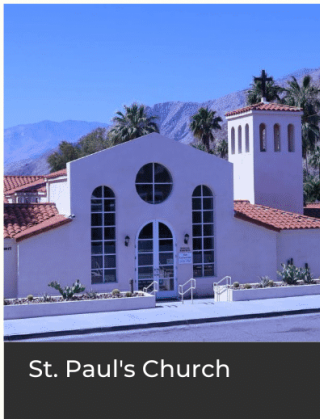


The Well In The Desert News

Poverty Prevention

Intervention

Advocacy



St. Paul's Church

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Message from the President of the Well in the Desert

Many people ask us, what are your goals and dreams, where is the Well in the Desert going?

I would like to try and answer that in this issue of our Newsletter.

The Well began as a 501c3 organization in 1996 with the purpose of making sure people did not go hungry. This Mission Statement made it clear that we were meant to serve those on very fixed income, as well as those with no income at all. That meant seniors, homeless people, families with children, and all people struggling to make ends meet.

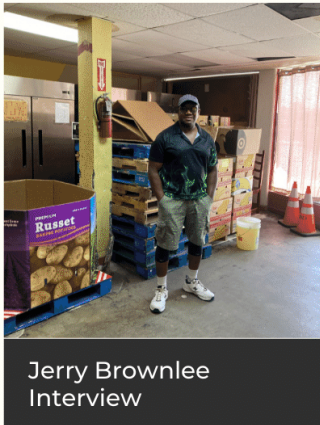
That is our primary purpose today, to make sure people do not suffer hunger, and that is what we focus on, offering many other services to help alleviate the pain and suffering that come with poverty.

Thank you to our Church partners who offer us their social halls to serve meals in, and also to cook those meals. We serve over 200 hot, nutritious, and very delicious meals daily.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Arlene Rosenthal



Jerry Brownlee Interview

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The majority of our clients are those facing, and in, homelessness. These meals are crucial to them. They keep them alive, and hopefully thinking with a clear head how they can: improve their lives, cope with their lives, and change what demons they are still facing. Food nourishes us and keeps us alive.

After food one must have hope and dreams, and know that they are respected and deserve dignity. And that is something the Well in the Desert specializes in. We believe that each individual is capable of doing good, and also, of doing bad. Drug and alcohol demons take hold of many, and getting rid of them is the most difficult task in the world. We support our people and try to enable them to do better, to kick out their habits, and try to rejoin a world that can sometimes be very cruel.

We also offer clients clothing, and refer them to the other services in town who focus on jobs, housing, showers, and also offer cool sites so that mean summers can be better tolerated.

We have passionately been boots on the ground, rolling up our sleeves, doing all these things, since 1996.

Some people say we enable homelessness because we feed people. They think that if we did not homelessness would go away. Smart people know this to be fiction. Homelessness is now the bane of American Society, and is everywhere.

We follow the examples of teachers like Christ, Mother Teresa, and all those that would not turn their backs on those suffering. We believe in compassion, love, dignity, and hope, even in the dark of the darkest tunnel.

So, we also have the goal of one day garnering the respect, and support of the Palm Springs City Council. The Well in the Desert is due that, after all the years of community support to thousands of people. That which was a problem for the current council has now been corrected: Our staff has been on payroll since we were "accused" of paying with stipends, something that was legal, and also done by other organizations. We have always had our 501c3 and we follow the necessary laws of the State and Federal Government that are required.

If not this Council, then the new one that will be elected, but we deserve the recognition, and support of those elected to represent ALL the people of Palm Springs.

I hope I have made it clear to all of our readers what the Well stands for, and what we see as the future.

Please call me or e-mail me if your have any questions: (760) 275-7297, or rose1944@aol.com.

Thank you all for listening.

Arlene,
President, Well in the Desert



WHAT WE DO

Well in the Desert

501c3 #33-0694580

- Daily hot nutritious meal to over 200 people a day, 6 days a week.
- Phone and mail service.
- Free ID vouchers and DMV forms.
- Morning coffee, rolls and fruit.
- Furniture for people in need.
- Clothing for job interviews and those who need them.
- Assistance with food stamps, MISP, ID's and more.
- Utility assistance.
- Resume writing assistance.
- One way tickets home.
- Saturday food distribution of healthy foods to working families, seniors, veterans, the disabled, families with children.
- Emergency food boxes.
- Some transportation to medical and social service appointments.
- Van transportation to hot lunch sites.
- Home deliveries to seniors who are homebound or frail.
- "Well Assist" program to downtown merchants and other business owners.
- Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations for all in need. Christmas presents for all the children.
- Mental health counseling.
- Children's better eating program.
- Outreach 5 days a week with, snacks, coffee, sweet rolls, clothing, toiletries.

For more information: (760) 656-8905

HOT MEAL WEEKLY PROGRAM

*Please arrive no more than 15 minutes before service.
All lunch service is from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.*



Monday

**United Methodist Church
1555 E. Alejo Rd. — Palm Springs**

Bus line 24 takes you right in front of the Church. Lunch is served in the building in back.

Tuesday

**United Methodist Church
1555 E. Alejo Rd. — Palm Springs**

Bus line 24 takes you right in front of the Church. Lunch is served in the building in back.

Wednesday

**Church of St. Paul in the Desert--just up El Alameda from Palm Canyon
125 W. El Alameda — Palm Springs**

Bus line 111

Thursday

Our Lady of Solitude--corner of Alejo and Belardo 474 N. Belardo Rd. — Palm Springs

Bus line 111

Friday

**Our Lady of Guadalupe
204 S. Calle El Segundo at Arenas — Palm Springs**

Bus lines 111 & 14, Indian & Baristo

Saturday

Food Distribution Center--181 N. Indian Canyon Dr. — Palm Springs

6 a.m. to 7:30 a.m., 10-11 a.m.

Bag lunches from 9-10 a.m.

Food Distribution Center



181 N. Indian Canyon Drive, Palm Springs

A quote of Jerry's that he says a lot from his heart to his clients on Saturday morning is: "It doesn't matter where you are in line, I made sure I have enough for you all." He explains, "I tell them that because some people who are very disabled — I always put them in line to go first. I know others worry that they won't be fed, but I never let that happen." He tells them, "I have all of you covered. I'll get you in and out in a timely manner." He continues, "For my staff and the other part of Well in the Desert — our lunches are key in powering our clients to have a mind and thought of their own. Sometimes when you get so hungry you forget who you are. When you eat a meal cooked by our chefs you will realize how much we care in making sure that you are ok today. No one can tackle life on an empty stomach. Take it from an ex linebacker."

Saturday Distribution Hours

6 a.m. to 7:30 a.m., 10-11 a.m.
Bag lunches from 9-10 a.m.
No one is to be in line before 4 a.m.

Donations

Business Hours: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
If you do not see anyone up front or if they are closed just call Jerry at (760) 285-9024.

If you have any unwanted refrigerators or freezers that you would like to donate, please contact Jerry.

INTERVIEW



Jerry Brownlee

Jerry Brownlee is the Food Distribution Manager / Administrator — an integral part of Well in the Desert. Jerry is responsible for overseeing all aspects of our food distribution program, including managing relationships with vendors, ordering and receiving pallets of produce, inventory management, and ensuring that all food meets safety guidelines.

He has run operations here for 12 years.

Jerry is also responsible for the operations of the kitchens and dining rooms at St. Paul's Church, United Methodist, Our Lady of Solitude, and Our Lady of Guadalupe. Jerry's work is important because he helps make sure that all of our clients are fed with healthy and nutritious meals every day.



FOOD BOXES

FRIDAY HOME DELIVERY

Every Friday, the Well in the Desert distributes healthy foods to working families, seniors, veterans, the disabled, and families with children. We make it our mission to serve all those who are struggling with food insecurity in our community. It's a big job and we need your help.

W E L L I N T H E D E S E R T

CHRISTMAS IN JULY



For those of you who have not yet heard, the Well in the Desert will be back at the Palm Springs Convention Center on Christmas Day, December 25th.

The last time we were there, in 2019, we gave out over 1200 Christmas presents to the children in attendance with their families. We had close to 2000 people in attendance and offered a full and delicious Christmas Dinner.

Santa was there to make the children happy, gave them their presents with a huge smile, and they got to sit on his knees if they wanted.

We do not want to be short on presents, so we have decided to begin collecting them in July. A gift worth \$15.00 or more would be perfect. We tend to run out of gifts for the 9-12 year olds.

Gift cards from popular stores, coffee houses, etc. are favorites among the older kids and the seniors.

If you want to be one of Santa's elves please consider a present in July.

They can be brought to our lunch sites, which can be found on our website, wellinthedesert.org. We are at those sites from 10:00 a.m to 1:30 p.m.

Huge thanks on behalf of the children we serve.

NEWS

The Official Well in the Desert Newsletter



The Church of St. Paul in the Desert, and their Clergy

By Arlene Rosenthal

The Well in the Desert has been privileged and honored to have had the friendship, and the kitchen of St. Paul's for at least 20 years. Thanks to the leadership of the esteemed Reverend Andrew Green, we have been able to cook our hot meals at St. Paul's and take it to all the other church sites we use.

This church is an open-minded, progressive church, open to all. They were one of the first to welcome gay people to the church, and conducted gay marriages, even before the State made them legal.

They have a Social Action Committee, and are committed to justice issues, and making sure people are treated compassionately and equally.

Beside cooking there, we also serve our hot meal every Wednesday in the Social Hall. And the people of the church volunteer with setting up tables with much needed clothing items, backpacks, and whatever they can get that our clients need.

The congregation collects funds for us and quite frequently supports us with a much-needed check.

They recently brought in their new rectors, and, I am telling you personally, they make us all feel welcome. I have never met such nice people as Dan and Jessie, hands-on, loving, understanding, and compassionate. And Brothers John and Steve are also always there for us.

We thank them from our hearts for "walking the walk", not just "talking the talk".

You all lift us up, and keep us soaring.

WE ARE SHARING WITH YOU A STORY FROM MATTHEW NAYLOR, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE WELL, PUBLISHED IN A 2021 ISSUE OF A PROMINENT MAGAZINE. WE THOUGHT YOU MIGHT ENJOY HIS WORDS OF WISDOM.



By Matthew Batista Naylor

"The measure of society is how it treats its weakest members."

- Thomas Jefferson

Caring for the less fortunate, while at the same time building pools for the affluent, provides a striking contrast explains Matthew Batista Naylor. Serving the "houseless" people of Palm Springs, Calif., is a crusade for many concerned local citizens but it has also pitted Naylor and an organization known as "Well in the Desert" against local politicians who he says have demonstrated a stunning lack of compassion for those who need it most.

As a designer and builder of mostly high-end custom pools and backyard environments, I work closely with homeowners who enjoy lives of creature comfort and considerable means. I've seen first-hand what having money can do.

That experience is very different from my other consuming passion. For the past seven years, I've been heavily involved with an organization called *Well in the Desert*, a 501c3, non-profit dedicated to providing critical services to the homeless, which we refer to as "houseless". It was founded back in 1996 by a devoted humanitarian and selfless leader, Dr. Wayne McKinney, who personally inspired me to become involved along with our current president Arlene Rosenthal.

In that setting, I've also seen what the *absence* of money, and resources of any kind, can do to someone's life. It is a brutally stark comparison to say the least. I've lived in Palm Springs, Calif. for more than 28 years, and work largely in the arid cities of the Coachella Valley, among other areas. For the most part, it's a beautiful place but one where the temperatures are literally among the hottest in the world, and at times can be lethal.

DIVERSE NEEDS

That's especially true if you're houseless. Palm Springs has an estimated 250 people desperately trying to live on the streets. In the summer, most are exposed to temperatures that can exceed 120 degrees, and while that is a severe problem, beating the heat is only one part of the challenge, and their story.

The sad truth is more fortunate people don't typically give the houseless much attention. It's unsettling to see them living on the streets and many among us choose to look the other way. It can be hard to face the truth of their dire circumstances and there's a tendency to simply lump them all together into one category. Nothing could be further from the truth.

As the current vice-president of the organization, I'm in daily contact with the people we serve. As I've taken the time to get to know them and hear their stories, it's become clear that like all people, they are not all the same, far from it.

The houseless are an incredibly diverse segment of society with vastly different needs. There is no one-size-fits all solution. We serve houseless families, including those with children, as well as seniors, veterans, and the disabled. There are people with severe mental health issues, drug and alcohol addiction, and vocational disabilities. Some have criminal records, while many are estranged from, or are no longer in contact with family. Many have no one to turn to and no place to go.

A MENU OF CARING

Starting with the most essential needs, the Well provides nutritious lunch meals for approximately 200 (six days a week, plus sack lunches for evening and weekend), clothing, showers, water and a 24/7 cooling center, but that's just the start. We also provide transportation to medical facilities and social-service appointments, one-way tickets home, resume writing assistance, phone and mail services, internet access among many other forms of assistance. We also help people that are on the fringes of becoming houseless including the Well's Saturday Food Bank that serves many including seniors.

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WE ARE SHARING WITH YOU A STORY FROM MATTHEW NAYLOR, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE WELL, PUBLISHED IN A 2021 ISSUE OF A PROMINENT MAGAZINE. WE THOUGHT YOU MIGHT ENJOY HIS WORDS OF WISDOM.

According to Rosenthal: "People are homeless for many different reasons. Losing a job, then losing your home, then living in your car until it breaks down, then having nothing. You cannot even protect your children. The spiral starts and depression sets in. If you were someone never taking drugs or drinking, it is now something you might turn to blunt the pain. We are a group of many who offer compassion, hope and dignity to those who walk through our doors."

While our organization strives to help everyone we can, we're also realistic about the more severe problems some of the houseless will bring to the table. That's why we maintain a strict code of conduct and will refuse service to people who pose a threat to others. The vast majority of people we work to assist are happy to comply. There is, however, an element of the houseless that are not part of the Well's services that can disrupt areas of town with theft etc.

We have devoted volunteers who give selflessly of their time, some who themselves were once houseless and benefitted from the services we offer. We have garnered tremendous support from the local community and I have learned just how wonderful many people can be.

NOT ON BOARD

Unfortunately, we have also encountered tremendous resistance from the city council and particularly the mayor, Christy Holstege, and Mayor Pro Tem Lisa Middleton who have personally mounted a disinformation campaign aimed at discrediting the organization.

At this writing, the city council has unilaterally decided to not renew our facility's conditional use permit, which in effect means that the organization that serves the houseless will itself become displaced. We are currently engaged with a fight for survival and are determined to prevail.

The source of the conflict is something of a mystery to many of us, because it makes no sense. With less than 300 people on the streets, the resources needed to house and care for them is considerably less than the cost of some of the public artworks that festoon our fair city.

This is by reputation a progressive city that espouses charitable and inclusive ideology, but when push comes to shove, the city leaders have decided to largely sweep the houseless challenge under the rug. We have been part of an ongoing series of painful public meetings and exchanges in the press.

It has, at times, become ugly and the proverbial gloves have come off. We have pointed out that the city has re-appropriated grants to benefit some of their wealthy constituents, committing what I believe is public fraud. Not surprising, we have run afoul of those who seek to conceal their malfeasance and violation of the public trust. These are the same exact "leaders" who should be instead working for the well-being of all of our citizens, not just the fortunate ones who live in the nice houses.

OVERCOMING HYPOCRISY

We do receive support from a number of local churches and religious leaders in the area and many progressives, but even in this community, we've encountered a puzzling sense of detachment by many. In other words, there's plenty of shared hypocrisy on this issue.

Back in June, the city officially announced it was cutting ties with us, a move that has hit us hard both financially and in terms of our local reputation, but it is our constituents who will be the most deeply affected. We have worked to affiliate with other similar organizations in the other cities, many who are reporting that they too are running into local resistance to varying degrees.

Still, we are determined to keep our doors open, the cooling center/service center operating and lights on.

As much as some of the powers that be are lined up against, this work is far too important to ever give up. Allowing this sanctuary to be vanquished is *not* an option. It might move locations, but will remain a voice for those that don't have one.

Fact is, many people in our society simply do not want a center for the houseless anywhere near them, the "not in my backyard" syndrome. Of course, the brutal irony is that by denying disenfranchised people a safe place to rest, bathe, and nourishment, they are left to fend for themselves and might literally wind up in your backyard, or outside your place of business or on the sidewalk in front of your home, or sometimes in your swimming pool.

For my part, I hold the belief that all people, regardless of their station in society, should have a safe place to live, lay their head, food to eat, clothes to wear and medical care. It's not so much a matter of ideology, but a basic human decency and dignity. More than any thing, Well in the Desert provides compassion and it will never run dry.

For more information about Well in the Desert, to make a donation or get involved, visit wellinthedesert.org.

Matthew Batista Naylor is president and founder of Architectural Blue, a designer and builder of custom pools, spas, landscapes and other watershapes based in Palm Springs, Calif. He is also a professional musician/composer and an outspoken advocate for the houseless.

Our Upcoming Events



Desert Jam - "Jammin' for the Well"

Monday, December 12, 2022

Agua Caliente Casino Resort, Rancho Mirage

6:00 p.m.

\$175.00 per person, \$1750.00 for a table of ten.

Honoring Kal David and Lori Bono.

Come hear world class musicians playing your favorite music, in a tribute to Kal and Lori.

Delicious buffet, silent and live auction, dancing, a feel good event. Brian Wanzek, your Emcee, will make the magic!!



Christmas at the Palm Springs Convention Center

Sunday, December 25, 2022

Noon - 3:30 p.m.

Delicious Christmas dinner, toys for the children, mariachis, Santa Claus. This event is FREE to the public.



Broadway Under the Stars

Sunday, April 24th, 2023

Indian Wells Renaissance Esmeralda Hotel

6:00 p.m.

\$175.00 per person, \$1750.00 per table of 10.

An evening of magic, delicious sit-down dinner, jazz during the reception of cheese and fruit.

No-host bar. Your favorite Broadway songs, and some Opera too. Our Honoree will be Jeannie Cunningham, a world known musician and composer.



DONORS



JULY 2022



The Well in the Desert would like to thank all of our Donors, those who help monetarily to keep our programs going. You are the "Wind Beneath Our Wings."

We thank the foundations, businesses, individuals, churches, and all for your generosity.

We would also like to thank those of you who bring in donations of clothing, food, toiletries, bicycles, and more. You keep our clients clothed and clean, and help them realize how much they are cared for and respected.

Thank you goes out to those of you who buy tables at our creative, fun, and meaningful fundraisers, and indulge in our silent and live auctions.

Thanks goes to those of you who help furnish the homes our staff and families live in, who paint them, help landscape them.

And thanks to our wonderful and dedicated volunteers.

We are all Family, and you are appreciated more than you could ever know.



The Well In The Desert News

Mission Statement

The Well in the Desert provides daily nutritious hot meals, emergency food assistance, weekly supplemental food distribution, and access to community services to those affected by poverty, including the working poor, the homeless, seniors, the handicapped and others in need throughout the west end of the Coachella Valley. Our mission fuels programs for poverty prevention, direct services for poverty intervention, and organized efforts to advocate for the poor.

Well in the Desert News

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We appreciate all donations, and they can be made online at wellinthedesert.org, by check to Well in the Desert, P.O. Box 5312, Palm Springs, CA 92263, or by calling (760) 285-7297, Arlene's phone.

The Well in the Desert

P.O. Box 5312, Palm Springs, CA 92263

(760) 656-8905 • www.wellinthedesert.org