



HALEY HOUSE

December 2015 Newsletter

50
1966
2016



1960s



1980s



2000s



1970s



1990s



2010s



Dear friends,

On October 17th, Haley House lost one of its guiding lights: John McKenna. In 1966, John and Kathe McKenna opened their South End apartment to neighbors in need, planting the seed that blossomed into Haley House. John's life was one of action, his deeds an embodiment of his beliefs; as Haley House grew, he worked multiple jobs to make sure there would be food on the soup kitchen table. Many friends and colleagues have come forth with stories of John's generosity and spirit, including Julia MacLaughlin's reflection at the end of this newsletter. We hope you will share memories of John with us too.

2015 has been a momentous year at Haley House. This winter's snowstorms were especially difficult on those in our community displaced by the sudden closing of the city's largest shelter. Our days brightened at the end of February when we succeeded in purchasing 12 Dade Street, where Haley House Bakery Café has made its home since 2005. We know that ownership is critical to our sustainability from our experience in the South End, where we have owned the soup kitchen building since 1966. In addition to securing our place, the purchase has enabled us to construct a fully-equipped instructional kitchen in the basement which will increase our capacity significantly.

Today, Roxbury is buzzing with activity, and Haley House wants to ensure that longtime residents benefit from recent investment there. With this in mind, in October we opened Dudley Dough, our second social enterprise, in the brand new Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building. Dudley Dough is a gourmet pizza shop empowering workers with profit sharing and a voice in the workplace, along with fair wages. With beer on tap and a selection of wines, Dudley Dough is currently open 7 am – 8 pm, Monday through Friday (we expect it to be open weekends by the new year). Please come and check it out!

While growing in these new ways, we are also addressing critical repairs at our home base, 23 Dartmouth Street. Meanwhile, our new urban farm

in Roxbury now has 20 raised beds growing food for the soup kitchen and our social enterprises, and our schoolyard garden in the South End has continued to thrive.

2016 marks Haley House's 50th anniversary. This newsletter includes reflections from members of the Haley House community over the years, describing moments of transition and growth in our history. What links these stories, and the many others that could have been included, is the persistent courage and creativity of the Haley House community: to face society's most daunting questions and to seek innovative solutions to injustice, always beginning with genuine love for our neighbors.

As we look forward to joys and challenges to come in the next fifty years, we hope this year will offer many opportunities to celebrate the remarkable people who have embodied the mission of Haley House for the past fifty years.

We have begun to set the table for the next 50 years. Won't you join us?

Bing Broderick, Executive Director



Haley House 50th Anniversary 2016 Calendar of Events

In February 2016, we will begin a year-long celebration of our 50th anniversary. Visit haleyhouse.org/50years for a full calendar and regular updates, or email info@haleyhouse.org to get involved. Come celebrate with us!

February 21	Souper Bowl Annual Fundraiser
June 4	South End Block Party + Silent Auction
August	Outdoor Community Tables at HHBC
December 2-4	Haley House 50th Anniversary Weekend
Fri. 12/2	Charlie King Concert
Sat. 12/3	Breakout sessions
Sat. 12/3	HH50 Gala
Sun. 12/4	Gathering for spiritual reflection

TELEPHONE : 262-5781



1966: A Simple House of Hospitality

Excerpted from our first holiday newsletter

23 Dartmouth Street is the new address of Boston's House of Hospitality, and a new name accompanies its rebirth: Haley House – in gratitude for the life of Leo Haley. Leo's work as director of CIC, at St. Joseph's Parish in Roxbury, and with Packard Manse were expressions of his attempts at change and reconciliation, in fact his life.

This is our first attempt at printing a newsletter that will keep our friends informed of the work here. Sometimes the tone will be casual, sometimes more formal. Always we hope it will encourage communication and keep relationships alive.

John and Kathie McKenna

Introduction to the first Haley House newsletter.

The underlying premise of the house is a deep belief in the inherent dignity of every person; a belief that people respond with love when treated with love, with kindness when treated kindly, with trust when trusted, and respectfully when respected. Our aim is not to set up a value system – determining what is right and wrong – or a way of life for persons, but to allow them to form their own. The atmosphere is deliberately unstructured, informal, and personal. In this situation a man is not pressured or bribed into acting in a special way, and his eventual response is free, lasting, and more fully himself.

This past month has been a busy scrubbing and painting effort with many hands joining us. The building includes 4 apartments, 3 storefronts – 2 Puerto Rican family tenants, and 6 workers (part-time). Plans are flexible at present, with the storefront for the men off to a slow start. A little soup, warmth, T.V., cards, and friendship are what we offer. Dan Berrigan suggests, "For that look on his face for your hands meeting his across a

piece of bread, you might be willing to lose a lot – or die a little even." To live this death often meant accepting the frustration of little measurable "success." When a man is full of confusion, even despair and hate, a deluge of patience and love is essential before he can begin to trust himself or those concerned about him.

Over the months spent at Upton Street and certainly here, a wonderful variety of people have participated in the house, building friendships which will diminish occupational, financial, and educational barriers. The learning experience for everyone has been a realization of the humanness we all share and how much we can teach one another. Maybe it is with this kind of interrelationship that we will begin to build a community rather than a society.



Kathe & John McKenna on their wedding day in 1966. Leo Haley (in glasses) appears to the left of Kathe.





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1977: Welcoming Elders, Affordable Housing and a Love Connection

by Annie & John Doyle

John: After Annie's return from a tour as a missionary nurse in Sierra Leone in 1977, she was looking for a place to live and somehow heard about this opportunity at the Catholic Worker soup kitchen in Boston to be part of a start-up community. Annie worked at Mass General as a nurse and the soup kitchen the rest of the time.

Sometime during that first year, someone came up with the idea to initiate an evening meal program for the neighborhood elders, who were living in one-room apartments in the neighborhood rooming houses, many in social isolation. It was this program that first brought me to Haley House, as a volunteer.

Annie: I remember walking down Montgomery Street (no trees then) leaving leaflets in the doors of rooming houses (no condos then) and simply inviting folks to a meal. Was it \$1 or \$2 for the meal? I am sure it wasn't free. It had to be with meat, not just soup. I recall a guest saying it was a real bargain. Mabel, Robert, Mrs. Simpson, Mrs. Comadore, Nora, Mr. O'Hearn – it is easy to smile remembering them!

John: The elder meal program was an overnight success – creating a community where none existed before with folks sharing a meal, playing cards, and sharing stories (and of course some epic arguments). I will always be grateful for the Haley House Elder Meals Program for this is where I met my wife, Annie (she was washing dishes and I was drying them).

This was a real home for us
and many others for a while.

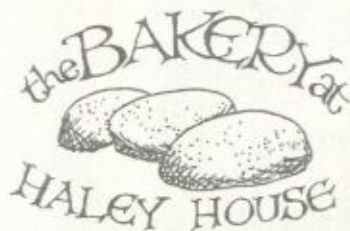


Residents of Haley House's original rooming house
at 575 Tremont Street.

We married in June of 1979 and moved into a room in the McKennas' house right across the street from the soup kitchen. Not long after, we volunteered to manage a rooming house located at 575 Tremont Street, right around the corner. Haley House was able to purchase the 5-story bowfront, having outbid a developer who wanted to renovate the building after evicting the residents, most of whom had lived in the house for many decades. After the resident who had lived in the front apartment on the top floor died, we moved in to so we could be closer to the folks in the building and be of service to them where we saw an opportunity to do so.

Annie: The resident's name was Thomas Burdett, and when he died he left two small rooms and a closet piled high with empty whiskey bottles. There were dressers full of worn-out electrical wires and hundreds of small pieces of cardboard, carefully cut out of cereal boxes. There were many years' worth of Christmas cards, too – all from the others who lived in the building and no one else. We washed windows and knocked down walls and it was "a palace" for newlyweds! Years later, we dug down a good foot in the basement to make room for a washer and dryer. The soil was wet, black, and full of seashells!

This was a real home for us and many others for a while. Up and down the sloped and slanted steps we went for years, stopping to visit, collect the rent, to say hello and goodbye... simple neighbor stuff... Many blessings.



1996: Adventures in Baking + Second Chances

by Jane Moss

In the mid 1990s, several homeless men who had been helping regularly in the soup kitchen were ready to make a life-shift. To the surprise of many, we invited them to move into the upstairs community. Now *formerly* homeless, the men were proud of being on the "right side" of the serving counter, and of resisting the temptation to join the pickup basketball games in a nearby courtyard park – always topped off by a whistle-wetter. And they needed a little pocket money.

Someone proposed baking bread during the soup kitchen off hours. Milton and Rabbi Gabriel brought in their family recipes. The smell of fresh-baked bread on Friday nights lured South End neighbors in to find out how early the loaves would be on sale. By Saturday noon, we were sold out!

We scanned the soup kitchen clientele for potential new trainees. In true Quaker spirit, clearness groups were set up around each man, with old Haley House friends stepping in as mentors, listeners, and tutors. As the entrepreneurial spirit flowered, we began convening weekly Bakery Business meetings – which often lasted until midnight! – to help set up a workable model for this novel small business. Renovations funded by a grant created a tiny shop out of a corner of the soup kitchen. We dubbed it the Bakery at Haley House as we harbored the hope to someday have a full-fledged Bakery Café.

Our first shop sales trainee came from Compass School, which took in teenagers booted out of Boston Public Schools. A psychiatric rehabilitation program for adults (Gould Farm) occasionally placed a client with us to learn how to manage



a commute and make well in a job. When young Chinese mothers, new in the US and recently divorced, needed to learn English for their bakery training, an artistic trainee designed a picture dictionary of kitchen equipment and utensils. Women who had served jail time and teenagers in the care of DSS honed job skills, including the operation of the fifty-quart mixer. A young woman with claustrophobia learned to stay mindfully present in order to master sheeting pizza

At heart, Haley House has always been about the joy of working, serving, and building community, the promise of a fresh start.

dough, an operation that took place in our small basement prep space. Lives changed as people worked together.

Motivation ran high, as did emotions. We all benefited from Sister John Paul's weekly training in listening skills, and, little by little, business flourished. DA's rendition of organic pizza dough sent us on weekly deliveries to Veggie Planet. Our chocolate chip cookies were gaining fame. Inevitably, the Bakery at outgrew 23 Dartmouth Street.

Happily, Kathe and others were already hard at work seeking a new location in Dudley Square. Christian worked up an impressive business plan which enabled us to garner grants for a full-service café. Didi Emmons came on board as our founding chef, designing a unique, healthful, and locally-sourced menu. In August 2005, Haley House Bakery Café opened in Dudley Square with visions of helping to revitalize a struggling neighborhood while giving second chances to our staff. At heart, Haley House has always been about the joy of working, serving, and building community, the promise of a fresh start.





HALEY HOUSE
BAKERY CAFÉ

2005: A New Enterprise

by Rod Owens

My memories of the early days of Haley House Bakery Café are colored with a sense of excitement, enthusiasm, and a feeling of jumping off a ledge and hoping, as the Zen Buddhist maxim goes, that the net would catch us. Indeed it did, but maybe it didn't seem like that initially.

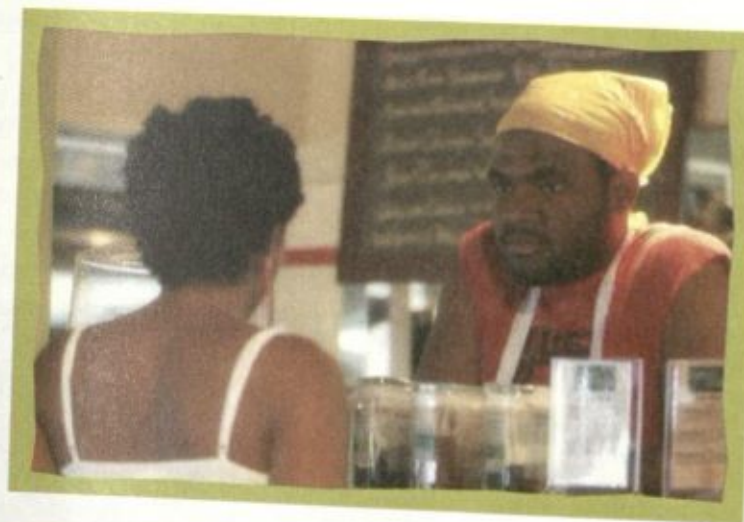
To be honest, I knew nothing about being a professional cook. And to be even more honest, none of us really knew how to perform professionally in this weird new venture! We became explorers and adventurers of sorts. I had been living in the Haley House community, cooking for the soup kitchen and helping out in the bakery program, and had expressed interest in helping the bakery expand into Dudley Square. Some time after, Didi Emmons was tapped as the head chef and I was assigned as her assistant or sous chef. She had such a comfort and creative energy around food that helped me really learn the art of cooking.

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because we wanted something
different, healthier, and sustainable.
Change is hard.**

After a few months of planning, the day came when the move was upon us. One of the things that I remember most leading up to that day was an interview with the Boston Globe. It felt special to be recognized and it felt like we were embarking on something historic. The article came out the day the bakery was moving out of Haley House and I remember going to the newsstand and buying several copies of the paper and showing the vendor the picture of Didi and me.

With the bakery and soup kitchen co-existing together, there was a certain kind of energy that felt like a heartbeat pounding through the

house. It was impressive to be in a space where so many people were working elbow to elbow producing over a hundred meals a day, as well as baked goods for our storefront and vendors all over the city. When the day came to move out, it felt like a kind of death, because it was hard to imagine what life could be like separated.



The first few days and weeks felt like a tentative meet and greet in the neighborhood. We were still trying to figure out the menu, and many of us were really working at the boundaries of our skill sets. There were some hits and misses. The encouragement that we received kept me going. Some of our experiments did not work well. Some of my more memorable flops were serving Mel King undercooked grits, burning pizza specials, and developing a mac and cheese that some customers would literally throw back at me! Back then it felt like a war, and I knew tampering with standard soul food was asking for trouble. But we were tampering with things because we wanted something different, healthier, and sustainable. Change is hard.

I left the café as my path into my current field was urging me onward. I am now a graduate student at Harvard, and when I come across an on-campus café or event serving Haley House baked goods, I make sure people know that I was (and still am) a part of this legacy.

Remembering John McKenna, 1944-2015

by Julia MacLaughlin

October is a beautiful month in New England; even tree-lined city streets partake of the majestic color displays. Behind the awe is a belief that new green leaves will come again, a hope that springs eternal that the circle will be unbroken. On one of these tree-lined streets, inside 54 Montgomery St., very early in the morning of October 17th, after years of struggling with multiple illnesses, John McKenna died peacefully in the midst of his beloved family and friends.

The house was filled with sobs and silent tears and John stories that caused loud, loving laughter, more tears, and then silence, very loud and palpable. John McKenna, husband, father, grandfather, teacher, judge, grave digger, sports lover, and co-founder of Haley House of Hospitality, to whom many of us had looked up for guidance on how to live a life of goodness, love, and kindness, had left his body in the bed and his spirit took wings and we grieved. The beauty of this Catholic Irishman from Roxbury, schooled at Holy Cross and blocked from medical school due to a lack of funds, was his conviction to leave behind his dream of medical school, and lay down another road to walk on, where his kindness, love and compassion would be shared with anyone who had need. Whether he was the caretaker of homeless men seeking shelter or a judge delivering respect and fairness in a court of law, an MBTA policeman struggling with the thieves, or a husband, a father, a teacher, a friend; the beauty of John McKenna remains with us, woven in our memories of his ethics of being.

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remains with us, woven in our
memories of his ethics of being.**

At 2 pm on October 17th, Haley House was preparing for its first Harvest Festival celebration. Outside 54 Montgomery Street, games were being assembled, and food prepared, and there was Catherine O'Byrne preparing for another celebration for families and neighbors. Within the hour, children would be jumping, singing, chalking up the streets, and learning how to make cider from the old-fashioned cider press. The day was sunny, off and on, and the breeze was cool and blowing. Presently, the door of 54 Montgomery St. opened and the body of John McKenna was

carried past his grieving family and down John's favorite stoop, past the few workers preparing the Fest and into a hearse. Quietly and quickly the hearse pulled away and the pace of the Fest quickened and all the workers continued with their tasks to complete their work.

We all joked that day that the most love we could show to John was to complete our work that we had slated for that Saturday, October 17th, and not use his passing as a reason not to complete our work. This above all was an anthem that anyone who knew and loved him would know, and be able to tell a story about John and his work ethic. Never complaining and always carrying at least two jobs; a legend for his competency on 0-3 hours of sleep a night. On October 17th, we all did work in honor of John's dedication to doing the best job that one can do. Our reward was a job well done and the song and the play of children on Montgomery Street on October 17th; 8 of them were John's grandchildren who loved him dearly and yet could sing and dance and eat in the sunshine with all of us who also loved him. John McKenna would have liked this moving of his body between his home with his beloved family and Haley House, where there was going to be a "re-rag in red" kind of celebration. The fact that a good, kind Irish kindred soul like Catherine, noting John's body passing, dropped both her head and a tear as she continued to cook the food for the festival, would have John smiling and telling us that her bowed head with a tear in her eyes was much better than a bagpipe to him.

Will the circle be unbroken, by and by, Lord, by and by. Every day that we repeat, deliver, and emulate what we love about John McKenna, ensures that the circle will be unbroken and the goodness will go on in all of us, out to all of those with whom we share this space.

Anyone who would like to share a memory of John, please send an email to maclaughlinj@comcast.net.





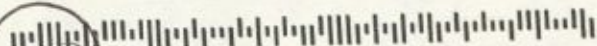
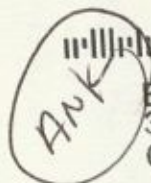
HALEY HOUSE

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SAVE THE DATE: Haley House 50th Anniversary
December 2-4, 2016

For more details and other 50th anniversary events
see inside or visit haleyhouse.org/50years

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