



Miracles on 32nd Street

2021: Volume II

STAFF PROFILE: RESOURCE CENTER STAFF 1

There are a number of ways that people find their way to West Side Catholic Center: perhaps they come in need, find us through their parish, volunteer with a school, or sometimes folks are working off community service hours and they help us while we help them. Whatever the reason, the outcome is often the same, West Side Catholic Center becomes a part of who they are.

Scott Wissel has a story just like the rest of us. He found his way when his friend Al (You may remember Al from his years of working in the Resource Center) told him this was a place he needed to be to get back on the straight and narrow. He showed up then, and has continued to show up every day since.



Over the years Scott went from a PRN in our Moriah shelter, filling in wherever needed, to now working six days a week as Resource Center Staff 1, an inconspicuous job title that can hardly describe the scope of his work. On any given day you can find Scott passing out meals, checking in customers for the clothing or shower programs, helping a client discreetly find emergency items, running our warming center in the winter, hosting NA meetings, making referrals to other services we offer, lending a listening ear to a person

in crisis, and even dressing up as Santa Claus each Christmas to bring a smile to everyone he meets. Resource Center Manager Barb Taylor describes him as, “The man who will help with and do anything needed to serve the clients and take care of the Center. Gracious, kind, gentle, and so approachable.” She is spot on.

Scott’s humility is a quality that’s easy to recognize and his rapport with the clients is undeniable. “I think they feel

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“Everybody goes through something. People have needs and I like helping people... doing anything possible for them.”

~Scott Wissell



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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is safe to say that we have all changed over the course of the pandemic. For some of us that has taken obvious forms and for others, simply the adjustments in routines and getting used to a “new normal” has been the change.

Our center has been no different, very likely in ways that are obvious to many of our readers – how we do meals, flow through our building, masks, offering clients vaccines, and many other ways. One of the positive byproducts of the pandemic has been the acceptance or better yet the embrace of change. Day to day and week to week, how we do what we do has had to evolve constantly.

This time has also afforded us the ability to step back and take a broader view of what we do and how we do it. Change by reaction has given way to change by contemplation.

These evolutions and broader views are many, but to me, none were clearer than the need to build a better bridge from our successful classroom based workforce development program to our restaurant in the Ohio City Pizzeria. Our model to date had been a “sink or swim” approach; All or nothing. We saw a need to offer an option that taught kitchen skills in a nurturing, educational way without the bustle of a working restaurant. Thus, just recently, the WSCC Culinary Academy was born, utilizing all three busy kitchens on the WSCC campus. We’re so excited to watch the participants and the staff, new and experienced, as they build something new.

While I attribute the embrace of and the intentionality through change to the pandemic, I have to admit that it has always been the WSCC way to evolve as well. Every program at our center was borne out of the need combined with the willingness to combat that need with programs. Our shelter sprung from giving meals and clothing but seeing people needed a home. Zacchaeus sprung from seeing shelter residents needed support as they transitioned to permanent housing. Family Engagement sprung from seeing that our shelter and Zacchaeus families had needs beyond housing. Workforce Development sprung from a need to increase the self sufficiency of our clients. Our pizzeria sprung from a desire to offer that new job on premises with support. I sometimes say that the West Side Catholic Center has grown like a foil ball over its 44 years, with new pieces being added all the time.

Thank you for your part in helping our center navigate change and uncertainty over these many years, and especially recently. I confidently say we couldn’t be here through it all without your support. Thank you and God Bless.



John Litten



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more comfortable with me because I've been in their situation and if I can make it out of it, anybody can make it out of it. And I think that's why they come to me." Our clients are blessed to have someone as authentic as Scott helping them out and never batting an eye. He embodies the mission of West Side Catholic Center through his daily examples of simple hospitality.

If you haven't had the pleasure of meeting Scott, drop by the Resource Center Monday through Saturday and you'll be greeted by a "How ya doin'?" followed by a "Yes sir/ma'am" from Resource Center Staff 1. He'll even remember your name the second time you come around, Scott's good like that.



JOIN US IN PERSON OR ONLINE FOR OUR PREMIER ANNUAL EVENT!



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19TH, 2021

@ THE MARRIOTT | 7PM
DOWNTOWN AT KEY TOWER | 6PM VIP

EVENT DETAILS AT WWW.WSCCENTER.ORG/WARMHEARTS

INTRODUCING WSCC'S CULINARY ACADEMY



On Monday, October 4 WSCC fulfilled the vision it had when it purchased Ohio City Pizzeria by implementing its Culinary Academy and welcoming the inaugural class.

Culinary trainees have access to all of the current program offerings through the Workforce Development Program. They can start in the Workforce Development Certificate classes, or enter directly into the four-week commercial kitchen training program. With days divided between classroom instruction and hands-on instruction, trainees will utilize both the Resource Center and Moriah House kitchens, which feed over 200 people daily. Trainees will earn the ServSafe Food Protection Manager certification. ServSafe is a food and beverage safety training and certificate program administered by

the U.S. National Restaurant Association. The program is accredited by ANSI and the Conference for Food Protection. In Ohio one kitchen staff at all times must be ServSafe certified.

A four-week restaurant apprenticeship at Ohio City Pizzeria follows the commercial kitchen training. Kitchen apprentices are introduced to a working restaurant environment with a full menu while supported by a job coach, the general manager and other employees. Upon graduation, apprentices have an opportunity for employment within Ohio City Pizzeria, partner restaurants, or elsewhere.

WSCC's Workforce Development Program was formed in 2011 when a case manager in Zacchaeus Housing Solutions felt our clients would be better served in their job searches if they had access to soft skills training, resume assistance, and interview preparation. At this same time, providing "a path to self-sufficiency" was added to WSCC's mission statement.

The Workforce Development Program consistently serves the most vulnerable in society; the typical client faces multiple barriers. In 2020, 48% of clients had a history of mental illness, 35% had a history of substance abuse, 44% had a felony, 17% faced challenges with childcare, and 89% needed help with transportation. 100% of the clients are experiencing poverty, with half experiencing homelessness. 73% of clients are minorities. 53% of program participants are female.

Given the barriers to employment most of our clients face, program staff soon dreamed of an employment

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opportunity in-house which could serve as a stepping stone to other employment opportunities. The vision was that clients would have a focused, tangible goal of what a job might look like that would be more comfortable for clients since it would still be connected to the support of WSCC.

Ohio City Pizzeria was the natural fit for this vision, as the business shares a wall with the Workforce Development Program building and is contiguous with the rest of WSCC's program spaces. WSCC looked into purchasing the building in 2008, and again in 2015, but the owner changed her mind both times. The building and business went up for sale again in 2018. WSCC was able to purchase both in March of 2018, and then embarked on a discernment process that would take the remainder of 2018. A committee of staff and board members explored options including leasing the business, selling the business, and running the business in an effort to determine which option would further WSCC's mission and make the best use of space and financial resources. On the recommendation of the committee, WSCC's board approved moving forward with operating Ohio City Pizzeria ourselves, with the assistance of a consultant.

On July 19, 2019, the WSCC re-opened Ohio City Pizzeria as a social enterprise to benefit the organization and its clients. This project was the culmination of years of dreaming, months of discernment and hard work, and opportunities taken. The three main goals for Ohio City Pizzeria are:

- To provide employment opportunities to the people served by WSCC;
- To grow awareness of WSCC and our mission;
- To provide an additional revenue stream to support the operations of WSCC.

These goals have been included in press releases about the opening and are incorporated into Ohio City Pizzeria's website and menu. The three stars in the Ohio City Pizzeria logo represent these goals, as does its slogan "Great food. Great Cause."

In its first year, Ohio City Pizzeria fulfilled 34,620 orders, welcomed over 20,567 guests, supported \$188,000 of salaries and benefits, weathered appliance failures and emergencies, garnered multiple community awards, and remained open

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DONOR GRATITUDE

You can make donations to WSCC to celebrate a special occasion, to ask "in lieu of gifts" or to honor someone special. WSCC expresses gratitude for the recent donations made in memory of the following:

IN MEMORIAM:

Diana Barhyte
Rose Mae Brunetti
Walter Chapman
Jennifer Cook
Bridget Corrigan
Elizabeth Ehrbar
Bill Hinton, Sr.

Francis A. Kelley
Lois Kilbane
Andrew Lamb
Donald Malone
The Honorable Nancy R. McDonnell
Mary Ann Pattison
Most Rev. Anthony Pilla

Edward Ptacek
Sr. Alice Rooney
Josephine Soeder
Edward Strike

To learn more about planned giving contact the Advancement Department at info@wsccenter.org or ext. 132.
www.wsccenter.org/legacy-giving



and thriving in the midst of a global pandemic. 73% of the wages and benefits supported formerly incarcerated individuals.

At the end of 2020, WSCC joined the Catalyst Kitchens Network and engaged their consultants to assist with the design, curriculum, and evaluation of the culinary training program. Catalyst Kitchen is one of the few national and evidenced based models that exists for social-enterprises. In particular WSCC is looking to Catalyst Kitchens' expertise to ensure that the classroom part of our program provides the preparation that leads to increased job retention.

Over this summer, WSCC has welcomed Ellen Saracina as Job Coach, Patrick McCune as Culinary Instructor, and Mary Knapp as Ohio City Pizzeria General Manager.

WSCC is indebted to the Cleveland Foundation and Reuter Foundation for supporting us with funding to join Catalyst Kitchens, hire new staff, and properly plan the implementation of the Culinary Academy.

WSCC is thrilled to announce a \$50,000 grant from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development through the Economic Development grant program. This national program supports "initiatives that significantly include the voice of the poor and marginalized people in developing new businesses that create social benefits, offer good jobs and/or develop assets that will be owned and enjoyed by local communities". The funding will support living wages at Ohio City Pizzeria.

These funders join the PNC Foundation, Thomas H. White Foundation, and M.F. Cachat Charitable Foundation Fund in generously enabling our Workforce Development Program.

HOW TO HELP



DONATE ITEMS

Last day for *used* item donations in 2021:
Friday, November 12th

Until December 10 we will be collecting for our **SPRIT OF CHRISTMAS** distribution which serves 600 clients during the holiday season.

Be a blessing for our clients this Christmas with a donation of full sized hygiene products and new warm winter wear.

FOR A FULL WISHLIST PLEASE VISIT
bit.ly/WishListWSCC

FOR ALL DONATION INFO PLEASE VISIT
wsccenter.org/inkinddonations

BUY RAFFLE TICKETS

Win a trip for four to NYC, see a show, and meet cast members...all while supporting WSCC!

Only 300 entries for this raffle will be sold, making your odds incredible!

ONLINE FORM AND TRIP DETAILS AT
wsccenter.org/broadwayraffle



BE OUR BILLBOARD



Purchase our annual Pancake Run/Sips & Swigs event shirt for \$25. Designed and produced by CLE Clothing Co., this shirt is as comfortable as it is stylish. Wear it proudly knowing you are spreading awareness of WSCC and supporting our mission.

While supplies last, purchase your shirt at
wsccenter.org/shirt

MAKE A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

The programs and services provided at the West Side Catholic Center are free of charge to all clients. We are able to operate under this model due to the incredible dedication of our staff and volunteers, and the generosity of our support community. Your gift is 100% tax deductible, and ensures the continuation of our mission.

Give Online at
wsccenter.org/donate

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OUR MISSION :

GROUNDING IN FAITH, HOPE,
LOVE AND RESPECT FOR THOSE
WE SERVE THE WEST SIDE
CATHOLIC CENTER ASSISTS
ALL WHO COME IN NEED OF
FOOD, CLOTHING, SHELTER,
ADVOCACY AND A PATH TO
SELF-SUFFICIENCY.

OHIO CITY PIZZERIA
great food. great cause.

- ★ **DINE IN**
- ★ **CARRY OUT**
- ★ **CATERING**

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