



Vegas Vibes

by Esmeralda Padilla-Gould

A brief history of one man's timeless contributions to society

It's amazing how doing charity work has led me to learn about a few less known facets of Las Vegas. Beyond its modern facade and relatively clean, and safe lifestyle most all of us enjoy, lies a segment of less fortunate individuals who have no place of their own to call home.

Through one of many dedicated Filipino volunteers, Angelo Bardolasa, I had recently discovered a popular weekly gathering of cheerful givers from all walks of life feeding the homeless and hungry every Monday at seven pm on the corner of G Street and McWilliams Avenue, adjacent to the I-15 freeway. Many would quickly site this block as an undesirable, unsafe location, perhaps rightfully so; however, I have come to know this place to be quite to the contrary, at least on early Monday evenings.

This charitable event started back in 2000 when a Catholic Priest, Father John McShane, learned that dehydration claimed the lives of two of God's children.

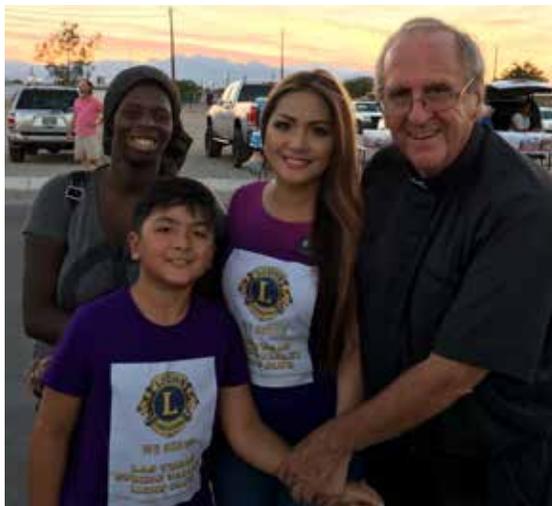
Father McShane began to hand out bottles of water to all those thirsty nearby. His act of goodwill quickly blossomed into an event with dedicated volunteers who share the common goal of giving and helping others in need. It has been inspiring to know that even though he was transferred in 2013 to Ely, Nevada, he selflessly drives over four hours each way to Las Vegas, rain or shine to continue his passion. A priest whose advocacy is giving aid and spreading hope to the poor and the homeless.

I was fortunate enough to be able to volunteer along with my husband Jeffrey, nine-year-old son Kenneth, and Las Vegas Spring Valley Lions Club members and officers. This humbling experience has made me appreciate life a bit more. Hearing from my son on how blessed he feels for having many good things in life, a roof over his head and a mom and dad around make this an enlightening occurrence for his young mind to experience.



Father McShane soon decided to hold mass on the first Monday of every month right there on the street corner, single-handedly making a difference in that very community. In addition to his monthly sermon, Father McShane arrives every Monday to distribute food, water, toiletries, and anything deemed valuable in making more than 250 less fortunate lives a little better.

“In my personal experiences, having the opportunity to give is the best feeling! It gives me a perspective of not just being fortunate in my life but the necessity of helping others in need. One of the best things that give me gratification is enabling to empower someone. To be able to give an opportunity where one can lift themselves up. It’s just how I feel in being productive in society. To contribute.” - Gene Benavides



My feeding the homeless experience has allowed me to meet everyday people who share the motivation and joy from giving and helping others. I’ve been moved by the volunteers’ overflowing display of altruism, and I thank our Almighty Father for all the blessings he continues to shower my family and me.

“Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love.” - St. Mother Teresa

