

A CUP OF COLD WATER SNAPSHOTS & REFLECTIONS – OCTOBER 2014

October 25, 2014 - (Deb Lynch, Hau'oli Tomoso and Nalani Pollock) West Maui, Served: 69, Mileage: 48

Deb's snapshot reminds us how vulnerable and cruel the streets can be:

First stop at rocks we meet with Uncle Abraham and Auntie Clara. They tell us how they gather roadside trash and pack it so the County can dispose of it. Auntie Clara works at the fruit stand in Olowalu, but the pay is meager (\$20 per day. "That's all they can afford," but she smiles.) Uncle Abraham says the nighttime druggies coming to steal are getting worse. "I just call the cops. I can't deal with them."

In Lahaina at Banyan Tree we get swamped, but everyone is patient in a somber line. We see why: a gentle fellow, Rico, approaches quietly. His shirt is covered in blood. His nose is bleeding, obviously broken, and his right eye is completely bruised, purple, swollen tightly shut. We gasp - it looks so painful. John softly asks, "What happened?" "This guy came along - started showing off martial arts kicks and stuff in the air. And then, boom! For some reason he wallops a kick straight into my face! Knocked me unconscious! But I no press charges. I didn't know him." He manages a lopsided smile, "But I'm here today. And you are here (meaning ACCW). And my friends." They stand beside him, nodding.

We give him extra everything - bandages, food, water, kind encouragement.

Next stop Library. A woman, Doreen, near a small group on the lawn cries out and waves to us, "Stop, please!" (We saw the group and would stop anyway).

She runs to the van, "Please help me! I have nothing! They beat me up and stole everything I own!" And she starts to whimper, then tears roll down her cheeks. Her face is bruised, big purple welts. "We will help you," Nalani says in the most gentle voice, and packs foods, clothes, toiletries, water, "What else do you need?" "Would you like us to pray for you?" Deb asks. "Oh yes!" And the small group of her companions all gather around. One kneels. We hold hands and ask for God's protection - He loves all of us - we are His children, and please, please God, help us now. One of them says, "You (meaning ACCW) are unique. You are so loving."

We drive off, silent, each absorbing the pain and suffering we see. It is dangerous living on the streets, and seems to be getting worse.

One last stop - across from the rocks - two women. We added this stop so they don't have to risk crossing the highway. Rico and Doreen are heavy in our hearts as we drive back to GSC. Please Jesus, please guard them and keep them safe. We are all Your children.

Amen

October 21, 2014 - ACCW In-reach Collective (Kit Hart, Paula Baldwin, Deacon Cris South and Mother Linda Decker)

Heard on a run in Wailuku—"I see the van, but you know, I don't want to bother, I don't want to take stuff...I really don't...so today is the first time I came to you...so thanks eh..." young Hawaiian wahine.

If we are to love our neighbors, before doing anything else we must see our neighbors. With our imagination as well as our eyes, that is to say like artists, we must see not just their faces but the life behind and within their faces. Here it is love that is the frame we see them in. Frederick Buechner

Grow us slowly, persistently, and deeply, Lord, to be people who watch without distinction, listen without

interruption, and stay put without inclination to flee. Amen

October 18, 2014 - (Duke Casper, Kit hart and Fr. Bill Albinger)

See Duke's vivid snapshot on this "Hurricane Ana" warning Saturday, and of course with Duke, the Van always returns miraculously "full tank".... extreme generosity while serving with risk-taking outreach.

As Hurricane Ana peacefully waters Wailuku Town ,Kit Hart and I load the van for our Lahaina run. Serve a few customers at Good Shepherd and head for the west side.

Ukumehame is no longer a stop. Aunties Lorna and Vickie have relocated to different spots around the island. (Saw Auntie Lorna at mall last week and she filled me in.) Stone wall before Olowalu we meet two new customers who are visiting with Kim, Mario and August. Romeo,a handsome middle aged Hawaiian, has been living on the streets for ten years. "Love to find one job ,but hard when you stay on da street. Tanks fo da kine,what you guys do."

Kimberly, nicely groomed and attired, looks out of place here. "I'm visiting my brothers. "She says "Came down from Lahaina to talk with them. Have to get upcountry to see if my horse is o. k. Hurricane on its way. "

At the shelter above the aquatic center we are greeted with smiles from a number of our regulars. "Walking Robert " can't believe we made the run today with a hurricane in progress. I see Robert all week long in my travels, purposefully walking the highways and byways of Lahaina town. It seems most of the homeless spend a good part of their days aimlessly wandering the streets. Perhaps to stay out of trouble. Auntie Gloria is next in line. She is capable of covering long distances with her walker. "I have bad knees and need to get around. My husband died a few years ago. He had a nice car-- he would take me to town in. It's hard now. " A young haole girl with her mom come to the van. Beautiful Wynter, strawberry blond with Aqua marine eyes, gratefully accepts some snacks and a Doctor Seuss book. "Green Eggs and Ham " is my favorite. " she shyly tells me. Simone, beautifully quaffed hair and exotically dressed, tells us we helped her when she was living out of her car in Kahului. "You guys really made a difference. I'm from the Big Island. Had to leave an abusive relationship. "Women helping Women " has helped me tremendously. I'm headed home soon. I really miss my daughter. A few more days at the shelter and I'm headed back. "

Downtown Lahaina crew all buzzing with talk of Zane (who has been a subject in our write ups numerous times over the past year). We have helplessly witnessed he and his girlfriend's decline in health and well being). At tennis courts two of the regulars say he's been murdered. A vague tale of moped theft and a deadly beating. By the time we get to Banyan Tree, the story becomes more consistent. Zane stole a local's moped. The owner, with friends, caught up with him at Puamana Beach park. After a severe beating, he ends up in the hospital with reports of brain damage and a visiting father who is spoon feeding his son. No sympathy from his street buddies. Zane has been out of control lately. Random unprovoked attacks and stealing to support his bad habits, he's angered them all. "He sticks everything and anything he can in his arm. He deserves what he got," says one unsympathetic local.

At the library we are greeted by a soggy group who are surprised and happy to see us. A new woman, Reenie, shakily approaches the van. Frail and thin, an oversize cast on her arm, accepts our offerings in silence. Story goes she "got into it " with one of the other woman. Dorrie, who is recently back from rehab and who apparently failed the program, has been a bad girl lately. During a scrap with Rennie, after a knife poke to her leg, she breaks Rennie's arm. Swift street justice.

Father Bill a big help today. He and Auntie Kit kept things moving nicely. Lots of smiles on a blessed rainy day. Peace and God Bless us all. Duke.

A big P. S. to today's run. After parking the van, I drove back into town for a Subway Veggie. Wailuku town streets really deserted today cause of the storm. Very few people on the streets. Driving out I spot a homeless looking man walking towards my truck. It's ZANE. I pull to the curb jump out and call his name. He turns, smiles and we greet one another. His face is bruised pretty good and he looks very tired, but a lot better than I expected him to look. His speech is slurred, but his eyes are clear and he seems relatively coherent. He relates the tale of his theft of the moped, consequent beating ,time in the hospital, some brain damage, and his father 's visit. "I'm leaving Maui, but I want to visit Hana before I go. " I ask him where he's headed now. "Hitching down to Safeway to buy a bottle of vodka and some food. Tasha's waiting for me over there." (He points to one of the office building parking shelters.) "I really need to see Hana before I go. I've wanted to for so long." You cannot make things like this up. Duke.

October 12, 2014 - 1st Anniversary run!!! (Mark Sitts, Paula Baldwin & Joan Villa) Served: 30-40 estimated

Mark Sitts led the team on our first anniversary and gets the Van to Trinity for some worship and team pick-ups! We made it! Hallelujah! See Paula Baldwin's snap shot below:

Mark, Joan and Paula worshipped together at Trinity and left with prayers and 1st anniversary blessings.

We saw 2 men in the area behind Azeka, we knew one man, but the area was new. Both appreciated our cold water and had some tales to tell. We didn't stick around, thought we might read about them in the paper sometime. We silently sent prayers.

Good news—the library man looked us in the eye and talked to us. He returned a pair of pants that didn't fit and suggested we were wasting money buying the cheap slippas as they don't last more than 2 days. It was so wonderful to hear and see him interact with us, even offer advice. (Note: Keku, this is a miracle in itself!!!)

Smacked at Kalama Park, over 30, 2 women regulars and men of all ages. Very specific needs—razors, soap, tee shirts, and of course cold water. Regular lady on bike had fallen and was grateful for extra band aids. We ended by serving water to the musicians who were arriving for the church service.

Ended run with prayers of gratitude and prayers of intercession for the people we had met.

October 11, 2014 - (Keku Akana, Chuck Spence, Shirley Falcon & Rheena Campbell) West Maui, Served: 54, Mileage: 48

Our faithful supporter and Maui Sunseeker Hotel General Manager from Trinity by the Sea, Chuck Spence, joins us to to experience the run along with Rheena (GSC) seeking out young ones for the job core program (no luck today) and our New Hope Chapel outreach worker Shirley Falcon. We start our day out serving several in front of GSC back parking lot. A big Hawaiian (6'3 plus) steps out of his car (women with baby inside) and kindly asks " you guys get blankets?" ... We pass him two nice blankets that recently came into the supply from one of our churches! The client is very happy. ACCW: "Where you live?" Client; "We stay river mouth, no more Hale (house, shelter)....just the car". He gets supplies, food, diapers and is one big thankful guy. We also pass out keiki kokua referral info and aid for young mothers.

A former wheel chair bound client that use to hang around Longs Drugs Lahaina. " Hi, I'm doing better now, tell Duke (Casper) I said hello and thanks for everything. (ACCW passes him a chilled bottle of water at the bus stop). "You folks better go now, I have to catch a bus, I am better now, thanks for helping." (client's name is Rich who pled and cried for help and was in total despair when Larry Brown's team found him 10 months ago and Duke Casper has been "monitoring him".

Female ethnic Hawaiian, white rocks, Ukumehame: " I no can go home, i just came out of prison, I stabbed someone. My family no like me home, I no get along with my mother so I am here. " (She is a Molokai girl, 40s)

Client after getting food, water, clothing and first aid paks--"Bless the lord oh my soul and all that is within me.... bless his holy name." ACCW worker... "That's Psalm 103..... client smiles walks and keeps singing-- (Lahaina library park).

An older lady, smelling of 1970's incense, bandaged at the hand and wrist come up to the van, and says thank you 10 times as she gets her meager supplies. The ACCW team ponders how the elderly survive these conditions much less the babies, young, mothers?

We have a steady run and serve 50+. Shirley and Rheena handle the distribution with ease and love. Chuck and Keku greet. Steady numbers at the Banyan tree. As we ride, plenty of talk story....family, marriage, personal experiences, our different walks in life, some struggles. We drive pass the Pali lookout area on Honoapiilani Hwy headed back to Wailuku at a crawl and see a mangled rail, cops, crime scene photographers and realize a vehicle has plunged over the cliff so we all go quiet and are thankful for life....and silent prayer for the person or persons. (It ended up to be a solo death in a vehicle.) Peace and thank you Shirley, Rheena & Chuck..... Keku

October 8, 2014 - ACCW In-reach Collective (Kit Hart, Paula Baldwin, Deacon Cris South and Mother Linda Decker)

I learned that people love. People love to love. It's in our DNA. They look for opportunities to give, but reciprocity requires that there is a receiver for that love to flow. So I learned how to receive love. Cancer Survivor

Most of know that we receive a great deal on our ACCW runs, from the friends we serve and from each other. We come back smiling.

In the first line of the Servant Song:... "pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too." Love flows both ways.

(Deb Lynch, Wendy Seki, Sean Foley) Central Maui, Served: 46, Mileage: 20

Loading the van, we get approached by a few hungry fellows and we gently ask them to hang out in the GSC parking lot until we are fully loaded - and they will be our first clients! Then on our way to Waiehu golf course - no one. Then Rivermouth - no one there either - and no one at the family encampment (we left a bag of food and a sack of dog food). Where is everybody?

On to the rocky beach near the Kahului Harbor - yes! Two clients. They are happy to see us, thankful for water. The heat is rising (today turned out to be a record breaker heat day). We stop at Canoe Hale and pre pack some food sacks, anticipating many at Kanaha. We weren't disappointed - moms, dads, aunties,

uncles, keki's - all wanting extra water - the keki's splashing in the showers to keep cool. Lots of towels go out.

And on to the cat lady and the kind veteran who limps. He loves the little kitties. A new litter is just ready to find homes - but wait! One little orange fluff ball is in the van! And purring into Wendy's neck, "Mom - my new Mom!" Our little stow away steals the show! Every stop after that the "oohs", "ahhs" and "Can I pet him/her?" outweigh the food, hygiene, and water request by miles. God's little fluff creation brings happy smiles to many.

At Family Life Center we park in some empty spaces on the street, but then a volunteer comes out and very, very nicely asks us not to park near the FLC building (even on the street) on Weds between 10:00 - 12:00 noon. (Away around the corner and near the Library is ok). Apparently FLC is doing something with Maui Food Bank food donations at that time, and are trying to avoid congested crowds. Sean gives a great reply, with a great smile, "Isn't it wonderful we are all working for God?"

But everyone wants to see the kitten. Around the corner to the Library we serve a few more clients. And more kitten petting. Back at the supply room, we stock up, give prayers of thanks, hug each other. It has been a day with more smiles than heart breaks, a day to remember we are all God's children, and give thanks for His blessings (and making cute kittens!). Aloha, Deb

October 5, 2014 - (Larry Brown, Cora Brown, Lani Scott), Served: 30, Mileage : 31

Larry, Cora and Lani Scott enjoy a steady south Maui run together as they remember their days on Lanai. (They all lived on Lanai at the same time years back.) Cora reports "many thankful people" along the mission run route.

Notes are made for more Men's T shirts (Large to XXL large), Men's shorts 34-44 (swim or board shorts) socks, towels. Also a suggestion is made requesting that donated pants/shorts be tagged with the size and gender ("M-38") (visible tag or writing of some sort). Makes it easier and less cumbersome to find the right size for the client while we are serving on the streets.

October 4, 2014 - (Duke Casper, Maria Lanakila, Wendi Seki, Soot Bredhoff) West Maui, Served: 54, Mileage: 53, Duke's reflections:

First run today with Uncle Soot, a Hawaiian Treasure, and young Wendy from Pukalani. We prep van and serve a couple of folks in front of Good Shepherd. Terry, a middle-aged haole woman who would have shopped all day long but for Wendy gracefully moving her along and a familiar face from Lahaina side -- Mike--"Had to leave Lahaina for awhile. Got in some trouble over there. Staying in Wailuku with my Uncle till things cool down."

At shelter above the aquatic center in Lahaina we service a number of young families and meet an interesting young man named Dennis from Santa Barbara. Dressed neatly and sporting interesting hairdo and ear jewelry, he briefly tells a tale of recent stroke, 35 lb. weight loss and optimism for the future. " I lost everything on the mainland. My home, super job, and stressed out to the max, my health went. All my priorities were wrong. I'm back on track now. Hope to be out of here (the shelter) and back to work-- restaurant business, front end. Thanks ,so much, for what you guys do. "

Makamae, young Hawaiian mom with her keiki, come up to van. Talk story. Her father 's grandfather, Ka Lei Opu'u, built Maria Lanakila church in Lahaina. Wow!! Her beautiful keiki thank us for the snacks.

Banyan Tree with a medium turnout today. While serving , a tourist couple on their way to the airport, pull up to the van and ask, "is Uncle in the park today ? " I kind of chuckle, and tell him I'm uncle, you're uncle, all us guys are uncle. We laugh. He donates clothes and goodies left over from their vacation, and it all goes immediately to our park customers.

Weslie, a new customer, wobbles up to the van. Pale complexion, bone thin, peering at us thru beautiful Aqua marine eyes, tells an upsetting tale of being robbed in the night of his wallet and meds. "I'm an epileptic, I don't bother anyone--why would they pick on me? I reported it to the police, but they didn't believe me cause I was a little drunk. "

Chanelle, a beautiful young Hawaiian woman (42, but looked late 20's) greets us with a huge smile. Intelligent, articulate, she tells me her dad would not let them speak pidgin while growing up. Raised and now living in Honokohau Valley, she is working on a documentary. Trying to explain the nature of her project, she veers off into " inter-galactic wanderings. " I feign understanding and hop back into the van.

At Mala wharf we are greeted by two beautiful haole children. Freckle faced and dimpled, they can't believe we are there to give them goodies. Wendy lovingly fits them with girly sandals, and bags full of treats. They thank us and skip back to a beat up dodge van in the parking lot. Dad sitting inside gives us a sheepish smile and waves.

Meanwhile , Uncle Soot is in enthusiastic conversation with a Mala regular, Michael Takanaga. Sports is the topic and it turns out they know a lot of the same players on O'ahu. He spots a fancy golf hat in the van which launches him into a story about his grandfather and golfing at Waiehu golf course. "As a kid, I would caddy for my Tutu man. He had me diving for errand balls on the 6, 7, and 8th holes. Cokes was my reward at the end of the round. Ice cold from the cooler, dripping down my shirt. Good fun. My pops loved the golf. Never like stop play. Come make (died) one day on the 6th hole."

In the Safeway lot we come across Terry and Richard. Happy to see us they wave us down. While talking story, Richard wonders if we knew his girlfriend, Tabettha, who died a few months back. I tell him I'd known her for years and that 4 days before she died we (Shirley Falcon, Keku, and Fr. Bill) spent quite a bit of time with her at Banyan tree. She was getting ready to visit her mom in Massachusetts, her home. She needed some new clothes for her trip. Shirley patiently went thru all the stuff in the van and came up with a pretty outfit for her. The night of her passing was a sort of mystery to her street friends. Rumors and bizarre tales were legion. Richard tells us no one knew they were a couple and that she had been staying with him for quite some time. "She was in terrible shape that night. I didn't know what to do." Now sobbing, he continues. "She died in my arms." She never made the trip home to her mom.

Our tour ended with a comical character riding up to the van while we were serving Bible Thumper Stanley. Roland, aka the cat whisperer , regaled us nonstop with tales of his life adventures and skills with stray cats thrown in with inter-planetary travels. Never know who we will meet next! Peace and God bless us all. Duke

October 1, 2014 - Keku Akana, Juanita Kauhaahaa, Paula Baldwin) Central maui, Served: 57, Mileage: 24

The Kauhaahaa's have a box load of fresh banana's for the folks today. We serve 6 at Good Shepherd

Church's parking lot before we roll. Today I run with two Women of wisdom, wit and spiritual strength. We serve and enjoy the day. A steady and consistent run with several families and a few folks already intoxicated and yes, a few families with children, infants on the street.

Some of the comments:

5 year old girl behind our supply room "Today is my birthday!" We surprise her with a few toys that were just loaded on the Van and donated by St. Joseph's Catholic. There are enough toys for her and her two brothers! Younger brother- "Yeah army men!"

"Wow, I can have that Hawaii Football hat?"..... (yes you can...)

Lady with a large tent at River mouth is given a brand new 6 foot by 6 foot rolled carpet (very nice one): "Ooooh wow, now i can decorate my house!"

ACCW worker to homeless addicted female, "What do you when you get sick?" "I don't get sick." (Note: we have seen her sick on prior runs)

"We lost our job, so I couldn't pay rent and my landlord wasn't very helpful, so now we are here."

A young man carrying a 1 year old infant runs to the van as we exit Hoaloha park flagging us down: "Do you have any diapers, just one diaper? (Yes we do and you need more than one.)

Stop at Kanaha Beach Park: Two kids (3-5 ish) come up to the Van as Juanita distributes food and supplies, Paula helps two kid's from the van open up a few toys. It appears the mother is pregnant again. Silent thoughts and prayer. The tough part of the job...driving off leaving those kids in the parking lot, in their condition, living in a vehicle, in paradise.

"We love the way you folks operate, you don't ask questions, you don't make us do anything (paperwork etc).... you just come and say 'What do you need?'"

"Do you have band aids and stuff?" Client looks down at his feet full of slowly healing sores and open wounds...(he is also given a new pair of rubber slippers)

Blessed are the poor for yours is the Kingdom of Heaven
Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled.....

"I'm afraid that going to church puts many of us to sleep, we become so pleased with ourselves... our own virtue...by attending mass, we forget about how others are living, who don't have the kind of lives we have." Dorothy Day (Catholic worker movement)

Peace, Keku