



The Helping Hand

Father Gene's Help Center Newsletter

Spring 2025

Veteran Building Life After Recovery



"It helps to be able to talk through things with the staff."

Emmitt Groce recently received clothing from FGHC through our connection to the Center for Veterans Issues' Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP). After years of struggling with drug addiction, Emmitt is sober and working on getting back into the labor force.

Emmitt grew up on the east side of Milwaukee with his parents and four siblings. He said the family ate meals together and were a "church going" family. His father worked hard, holding jobs on a chicken farm and as a concrete finisher.

"My Dad was a functioning alcoholic," Emmitt said. "But six months before I was born he stopped drinking and he never took a drink again."

Emmitt enlisted in the military in 1987, becoming a seaman and traveling to Japan where he would serve for several months before receiving an honorable discharge. Upon leaving the military, Emmitt held various jobs in the health care and construction fields.

More than 20 years ago, Emmitt started using drugs recreationally and eventually it became a lifestyle.

"If I was sad, I got high, if I was happy I got high, if I wanted to celebrate I got high," he said, adding, "the drugs masked the pain or emotions."

Earlier this year, after finding out he has major health issues, Emmitt finally had the impetus to get sober. He entered Matt Talbot Recovery Center and completed the treatment program. He has been sober for nearly four months.

He's since moved to the Martin stabilization house. He attends weekly employment meetings at the Center for Veterans Issues. He credits the supportive environment at the center with keeping him on track and focused.

"It helps to be able to talk through things with the staff," he said.

Emmitt received clothing from FGHC that will aid in his job search, including a sport coat and a pair of shoes. He would like to go to school to receive a degree in funeral service. He's also interested in becoming a peer counselor.

Apart from his career aspirations, he hopes to build relationships with his son and daughter and six grandchildren.

"I've been in and out of their lives," he said.

Connect with us:

Website: FatherGenesHelp.org

Facebook: [@fathergeneshelpcenter](https://www.facebook.com/fathergeneshelpcenter)

Instagram: [@fathergeneshelp](https://www.instagram.com/fathergeneshelp)

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FGHC in the Community

Many of you are familiar with our clothing closet where people in need can come to shop for free clothing. However, you may not be aware of some of the other ways that FGHC helps people in the community. The following are recent examples.

Center for Veterans Issues

FGHC provided sport coats and shoes to the Center for Veterans Issues. The items benefitted veterans in the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP). HVRP provides employment training services and supportive services to veterans re-entering the labor force.

(See story on Emmitt Groce in this newsletter)



MPS/School Support

Marquette University donated basketball shoes to FGHC which we in turn donated to Cristo Rey High School. In addition, we donated clothing to a number of MPS schools.



UWM Career Closet

The UWM Career Closet is a resource that provides students with access to free business casual and business professional clothing. FGHC recently donated three carloads of clothing to the UWM Career Closet. We're glad that we were able to provide clothing for the students that they could feel confident in for a job interview, career fair, or new job.



These are just a few instances of FGHC serving the larger community. We partner with more than 30 local agencies, including drug and alcohol treatment facilities and mental health facilities, to provide clothing to their clients. We rely on your support to provide for those in need, whether you are able to support us through the gift of your time or by sharing your financial and in-kind resources. To donate, go to fathergeneshelp.org/support-us.

Critical Needs



- Boy's clothing, esp. size 10-18
- Men's jeans, size 32-36
- Men's pajamas and robes
- Men's sweatpants
- Men's athletic and casual shoes

Volunteer Opportunities



Looking for a rewarding volunteer opportunity where you can directly impact the community? FGHC needs volunteers to sort incoming clothing donations and assist client shoppers. We are in particular need of volunteers during the summer months. To learn more, go to fathergeneshelp.org/volunteer or scan the QR code.



How to Donate

Donations can be dropped off at: **Father Gene's Help Center** | 5919 W. National Ave., West Allis, WI 53214

Hours

Monday-Thursday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. | First Saturday of each month from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Please call the center at (414) 258-4357 with any questions regarding donations.