

# STREET *Zine*

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## Coping with COVID-19 at The Stewpot

By Nicole Kiser

The week of March 9, 2020 was one of rapid change in Dallas. Within those seven days, organizations across the city began an unprecedented shut down. The First Presbyterian Church of Dallas was no exception. The church shut down its campus for at least two weeks for safety concerns. Across the street, The Stewpot began taking its first public measures against the coronavirus on March 13.

The Stewpot slimmed its offerings to essential services to try to limit contact between individuals. The first thing to go: volunteers. All meals, which were usually served by a crowd of volunteers, began to be served by the staff of FPC and The Stewpot. All food recovery and packaging operations had to be done by employees, and all food deliver-

ies were unpacked by whoever was available. Despite using only its staff to collect, package, and distribute food, The Stewpot has expanded its operations. In addition to providing its usual meals for The Bridge, The Stewpot also offers lunch daily to those currently staying at the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center. In total, The Stewpot provides hundreds of meals every day.

Already dutiful in regular cleanings of high touch surfaces, The Stewpot has further increased sanitation and separation efforts. Surfaces are wiped down more often. Increased spacing is implemented in the day shelter. Inside The Stewpot, gloves are often worn, and masks are required and provided to clients who need them.

Not long after limiting its services, The Stewpot allowed the employees that could to work from home. For the employees that had to work at The Stewpot's campus, a team system was eventually implemented. Each employee was placed on a team that was limited to certain areas and people they

could interact with in-person, limiting employees' contact with each other and ensuring that The Stewpot could remain open even if an employee caught the virus.

As stay-at-home orders put increasing pressure on people's financial situations, The Stewpot's services grew to match demand. Many vendors of

STREETZine used the income from selling the paper to buy groceries or pay rent. In order to help the vendors maintain their residences, some longtime vendors are being provided with access to groceries as compensation for the loss of income from the paper. Despite the federal moratorium, many in Dallas fear eviction if they fall behind on rent payments. The Stewpot has been working to offer rent assistance and support to help those struggling to stay in their homes throughout the Dallas area.

The Stewpot's family stabilization program began handing out pre-made meals to families facing economic hardship. The food recovery and distribution programs grew to meet the increasing demand for food support in the Dallas area, working



**Empty streets outside The Stewpot due to COVID-19**  
 Photo by Douglas McKenzie

with partners such as the North Texas Food Bank, Ben E. Keith Company, restaurants, hotels, and individual donors.

As the different food support programs grew, the loss of the physical presence of volunteers was felt even more. Thankfully, though, those who

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**A social-distancing sign in Main Street Garden Park**  
 Photo by Douglas McKenzie

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# STREET *Zine*

STREET *Zine* is a program of The Stewpot.



The STREET *Zine* is a monthly newspaper published by The Stewpot, a ministry of the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas. The Stewpot provides services and resources for people experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of being homeless. The organization also offers opportunities for a new life.

As part of this ministry, the STREET *Zine* seeks to raise awareness about the issues surrounding homelessness and poverty. At the same time, the monthly publication offers financial opportunity for homeless clients who sell the paper to Dallas residents. Vendors are able to move towards economic self-sufficiency by using the money they receive from selling copies to purchase bus passes, food, and necessary living expenses. Clients also receive stipends for contributing articles to STREET *Zine*.

The content in STREET *Zine* does not necessarily reflect the views or endorsement of its publisher, editors, contributors, sponsors, or advertisers. To learn more about this publication, contact Suzanne Erickson, Director of Educational and Workforce Programs, 1835 Young Street, Dallas, Texas 75201 or SuzanneE@thestewpot.org. And to read more about STREET *Zine*, a member of the International Network of Street Papers, go to [www.thestewpot.org/streetzine](http://www.thestewpot.org/streetzine).

STREET *Zine* is published by  
The Stewpot of First Presbyterian Church.

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## A Letter from the Executive Director

By Brenda Snitzer

In the days since George Floyd's death, The Stewpot leadership has been in prayer for his family and for our country. We are devastated that these tragedies have continued. Loss of life in the African American community, in addition to fear and inequitable systems that perpetuate poverty and mass incarceration, are, tragically, things we see on a daily basis in our work at The Stewpot. They are unacceptable.

Our vision at The Stewpot is to end homelessness by providing support to those in poverty and those experiencing homelessness. We achieve this with programs and resources aimed at lifting up those in need, while creating opportunities for the improvement of their lives. We believe that black lives matter and that all people, regardless of race, religion or socioeconomic background matter. We are a ministry of First Presbyterian Church of Dallas (FPC), founded 45 years ago to help *all* those who are vulnerable and in need of care.

Unfortunately, centuries of racism and systems that perpetuate poverty have placed a disproportionate burden on communities of color. Too many of the people that we serve are struggling to survive in a world shaped by these legacies.

Over the last few weeks, The Stewpot staff has been reflecting on John 13:34: "As I have loved you. Love one another." We strive to live that every day—in the way we treat our clients and neighbors, each other and all who become part of The Stewpot family.

We, along with the FPC leadership, are looking at all the ways we can respond now, and moving forward, to take up the cause for justice for our brothers and sisters of every race. The outrage we feel for the tragic killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and the scores of others that at this moment go unnamed, is overwhelming. But we must respond. We must raise our voices and live our faith through action!

#### How you can take action today

We are asking you to join us in prayer for our community and our country to end this division. Let us come together for racial equity and justice for the innocent lives that have been taken.

We also ask you for prayers and support for our police officers. At The Stewpot, we work daily with many honorable men and women on the Dallas po-

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lice force and celebrate them for their many acts of courage, kindness and service to those we directly serve and the community as a whole. We continue to pray for the leaders in our city, country and congregations. We also pursue strength daily in the personal leadership of our lives.

We are joining the collective call for listening and better understanding. This has to be an imperative. Join us in having intentional conversations with others who look different from you, or come from different walks of life, and take time to listen. We believe it is the only way to bring about racial equity, justice and peace.

We ask you to join us in speaking out against racism, prejudice and privilege that prevent so many from enjoying everyday freedoms that every man, woman and child has the right to enjoy. Every person deserves to feel safe, protected and respected.

*We are asking everyone who supports The Stewpot to stand for these values as we continue to work for the betterment of those who call on us for help. We will continue to advocate for the most vulnerable in our community, as well as anyone marginalized in our society—folks in poverty and those experiencing homelessness.*

Through faith, peaceful dialogue and action—we believe that *together* we can change things for the better! We stand with all who promote these same truths.

*Brenda Snitzer is executive director of The Stewpot.*

# The Pastor's Letter

By The Rev. Amos Disasa

On the night of Friday, May 29, protesters responding to George Floyd's senseless death in Minneapolis damaged some property in and around the Day School building on the First Presbyterian Church campus. The Dallas Police Department came to inspect the damage, write a report and sweep the entire church building to make sure it was empty.

The door was repaired and additional security was added around-the-clock through the weekend of demonstrations. It goes without me saying that destroying property is not a protest, it's vandalism.

As I returned to the church the next day, a peaceful march passed by the church. I watched it from my office window where I had gone to rewrite my sermon for the next day. Our church is one block east of City Hall and two blocks south of Main Street. By virtue of our address, we will always be proximate to the struggle for justice. And through each Word we proclaim concerning the creator God, we will naturally draw closer to it.

***I stopped trying to protect my son from the bitter reality of being born a black male in America. He's 10 and shouldn't have to worry about anything more than his homework and when he's gonna be tall enough to dunk.***

The peaceful voices we heard outside the church house belonged to people that look like me: Black men and women that want to exist in this country without constantly looking over our shoulder, worried that today we might die from being too black at the wrong time. Racism kills people. Only recently have we been able to gather enough video evidence to make that fact irrefutable.

That same week, I stopped trying to protect my son from the bitter reality of being born a black male in America. He's 10 and shouldn't have to worry about anything more than his homework and when he's gonna be tall enough to dunk.

But that week was too much. It was time for him to hear it from me. He needed to know that at times his body would be perceived as a threat. When we talked about George Floyd, his first question was "Can that happen to me?" I said, "Yes." His second question was "Can that happen to you?" I said, "Yes." In that moment, I recognized the look in his eyes. He would never be the same.

The truth is, as I watched George Floyd die, I lost the strength to pray again. The knee on his neck suddenly made it hard to breathe for anyone that's ever been restrained by bigotry. When I lose the strength to pray, I lean on the most basic knowledge about God I hold: that God weeps with us and can't stand to watch either.

And there is plenty that makes it hard to watch. More than 100,000 Americans are dead because of a ravaging virus, 40 million of us are out of work and millions more in our midst are unable to go anywhere without wondering if they are next.

Meanwhile, the people in the best position to provide adequate testing are standing on the sidelines, watching the markets, worried about when to bring sports back, arguing about whether or not churches should be open or closed and debating whether masks should be on or off and whether the dead should be counted or not.

At the same time, young people are staking their claim; that this is their moment. Enough is enough.

The young people will not let any of us off easy or allow us to scurry back to our shelters and wait for a time such as this to pass. I see their faces each day as I make my way back and forth to the church. What I see resembles an answer to the prayer we've dared to speak each week like Jesus taught us, "...hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come."

We need more room for God, in whom there is no east or west; north or south; up or down; young or old; past, pres-

ent, or future; black bird watcher or white dog walker; citizen or refugee; Democrat or Republican; homeowner or immigrant; male or female.

As a church that has sat in downtown Dallas since before the city was even founded, we wait for a fresh movement of the Spirit to blow through our city, our country, and our hearts.

***The young people will not let any of us off easy or allow us to scurry back to our shelters and wait for a time such as this to pass. I see their faces each day as I make my way back and forth to the church. What I see resembles an answer to the prayer we've dared to speak each week like Jesus taught us, "...hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come."***

But the Spirit says bring me all this and I will make it right for you. May justice and peace come with it.

*The Rev. Amos Disasa is senior pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas.*

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# Piece by Piece: The Story of Nicole

By Poppy Sundeen

Nicole Nash's life is a little like the mosaics she creates. It's the sum total of many parts, some rough and jagged. Together, the pieces become art.

"I loved making art from the time I was little," she says. The creative spark never left, but for many years it was drowned out by darker forces.

"I ran away from home when I was 14 and fell for a guy in Portland who said he'd take me away." Instead, he introduced her to cocaine and prostitution and left her.

## Returning home in the wake of a family tragedy

As Nicole tried to overcome her problems in Oregon, her grandfather faced his own in her hometown of Dallas. Sinking deeper and deeper into depression, his downward spiral culminated in a failed suicide attempt that left him badly injured.

Nicole came home to be with him. "He had bipolar disorder and depression," she explained, "just like my mother and just like me."

## High achievements and low points

Nicole is an expert in the mental health challenges that run in her family. She earned a bachelor's in psychology and certification as a licensed chemical dependency counselor. "I spent six years in college and was a caseworker for the state."

But understanding mental health problems and addiction doesn't make you immune to them. It's a truth Nicole knows well after years of bipolar ups and downs, punctuated by struggles with addiction.

"I was just out of rehab when I first went to the Stewpot. They helped me with ID, so I could get some dental work."

## Rediscovering her love of art

The artistic spark that inspired Nicole as a child was rekindled by the gift of jewelry-making supplies from her aunt. "I started making jewelry obsessively," Nicole laughs. "I'd turn out 12 or 15 necklaces a day."

She began selling her work on the streets of Dallas. "I poked holes in a manila folder and mounted my earrings to make a portfolio. One day, I took it to the Stewpot and asked if anyone wanted to buy

some jewelry." That's how Nicole was introduced with the Stewpot art program.

When a one-year jail sentence put an end to her jewelry-making, the inventory she'd amassed proved to be a blessing. Cynthia Brannum, director of the Stewpot art program at that time, included Nicole's work in art shows where it drew enthusiastic buyers. "The sales of my jewelry paid for my commissary and storage expenses."

## Beauty in the cracks

In addition to jewelry-making, Nicole creates mosaic art. "I made one of the leaves on the big mosaic at The Bridge. That's how I learned how."

She went on to help teach classes as well as to make a collection of her own mosaic art. Some of her pieces are made from shards. "I made a rooster out of broken dishes," referencing a work that sold to a delighted buyer.

An art instructor told Nicole about Kintsugi, a technique that uses gold to repair broken ceramics, so the cracks are not hidden but shine brightly and add beauty to the piece. "My teacher told me that about myself. I was so touched."

## Sheltering at home

As a homebody, Nicole finds it relatively easy to comply with COVID-19 restrictions. "I was very anxious as first, but I've let go."



Nicole Nash poses with sunflowers

She lives in an apartment she loves, where she tends to her trio of pets and her flower garden. "I've been making frames out of the dried flowers," she says. "It's just something God put in my head."

Nicole can continue to create right where she is. Some of the Stewpot artists aren't as lucky, and with the studio currently closed due to the pandemic, many don't have a place to work on their art. Stewpot Art Program Director Betty Heckman stays in contact with Nicole and many of the other artists offering supplies and encouragement in the interim.

## Finding joy in life

Nicole delights in her three daughters, all of whom live in North Texas. "I'm so proud of them," she says. One is a charge nurse, one a photographer and the other manages a bodybuilding business. She also dotes on her four-year old grandson. This winter, there'll be even more to love, with the birth of a second grandson.

Like a mosaic, the pieces of Nicole's life have come together into a beautiful whole.

*Poppy Sundeen is a writer in Dallas and member of The STREETZine editorial advisory board.*



Nicole Nash used broken dishes to form a mosaic of a rooster

# The Power of the Sign: A Conversation with Willie Baronet

By Bill McKenzie

*In 1993, then-Dallas advertising executive Willie Baronet began buying signs from people on the streets of his hometown. Twenty-seven years later, the Louisiana native is still buying signs, although his effort has blossomed into the nationally-known We are All Homeless project, art exhibits displaying the signs around the nation, and a Signs of Humanity documentary. Now a Southern Methodist University fine arts professor, Baronet spoke in late April with STREETZine editorial board members Suzanne Erickson, Nicole Kiser, Poppy Sundeen, and Bill McKenzie about the origins of his project, its impact on people experiencing homelessness as well as those who are not, and the meaning of home.*

**Tell us how and why you started this project.**

I bought my first sign in 1993. I remember that was about the time I first noticed people on

the streets holding signs. I found ways to avert my eyes, probably like many people. And I wasn't pleased with that. So I started buying signs. That transformed the conversation and the way I related to people on the street.

I kept on buying signs, and it wasn't until I was in graduate school about 15 years later that I came up with the title, *We are All Homeless*. That is when I started seriously working on this as an art project and doing exhibits.

**How much do signs go for?**

Generally, I try to get them to set the price, but 99 percent of the time it is between \$10 and \$20. I have paid as much as \$50.

I tend to have cash with me for when I see someone. One time in Austin, a friend and I went around buying signs for two days. And in 2014, three filmmakers and I went on a 31-day tour from Seattle to New York shooting a documentary. We bought close to 300 signs during that month.

**What kind of reaction do you get when you ask to buy someone's sign?**

Mostly, people are eager to sell the sign. Curiosity is another common reaction. They want to know why I want their sign. Occasionally, they are suspicious, but the suspicion goes away when I tell them it is for this art project. I have bought signs from some people in Dallas four or five times.

**What kinds of signs stand out the most?**

A big sign grabs my attention. But so do signs with unique messages that reflect the times. For instance, I bought a sign around the time of 9/11 that was covered with American flag stickers. It was of the time. And I remember buying a couple of signs when [Barack] Obama was running for President, saying something like "Obama wants change. I could use some, too." I also have signs for almost every holiday. Since the pandemic started, I have bought a COVID-19 sign—at a safe distance. And I have had people send me photos of them from L.A. and elsewhere.

**How do people react to the signs you display in art exhibits? And do the people whose signs you have bought ever come to the exhibits?**

In some cases, I am like a fly on the wall and witness people reading them, pointing at certain ones. I believe over 300,000 people went through a Grand Rapids exhibit. Some people came up to me in tears when they realized this was my exhibit. At one in Anchorage, the largest exhibit I have done, I was talking to other people when I felt a tug on my arm. I turned around and a young woman started sobbing. All she could get out was, "thank you."

**What I make from this is that people often don't see the signs when they're on the street. But when they see so many in one place, they start to realize there was a human being behind each sign. And there is a unique human story behind each one.**

What I make from this is that people often don't see the signs when they're on the street. But when they see so many in one place, they start to realize there was a human being behind each sign. And there is a unique human story behind each one. They not only see what the signs say, but the handwriting, the sweat stains in the cardboard, and the little drawings. The stories shine through.

To my knowledge, only two people have actually seen their signs in an exhibit. Two years after buying one from a man named Eddie, he contacted me because he had seen a picture of me on Facebook talking about this project. His sign was projected on the screen behind my head.

We began communicating, and I found out that he was a heroin addict when I bought that sign from him. But [the time he contacted me], he had been sober for almost two years. He had a job outside of Philadelphia, had reconnected with his son and daughter, and had a brand new grandson. He and I have now done several events together. We even did a TEDx Talk about our relationship.

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## Getting By: Homeless During a Pandemic in Oklahoma City

By Nathan Poppe

*These are confusing times. That doesn't change the fact that people experiencing homelessness need assistance. Each conversation started with the same question: How are you getting by today? Necessities like showers and fresh food aren't as simple to access. You might even expect a lot of social services to be completely closed, but many workers are finding alternative ways to still safely help.*

### Jim

Jim's sleeping bag is among his handful of possessions. He's wrapped himself in it — like a giant blanket — to fight the freezing temperature and bitter winds. You don't need to be a meteorologist to know it was awful outside. Jim says his options for shelter are limited. Leaving his spot might mean losing his sleeping bag. That's a big risk. Without money, he has nowhere to go and no means to travel. He's been experiencing homelessness for five years. His days aren't dramatically different in the face of COVID-19, but it has removed something valuable. A bed.



**Jim kept warm under a sleeping bag on a freezing cold April 2 morning. He rarely leaves his camp and has been struggling with not being able to secure a bed at night.**

“It gets cold out here. Especially in the rain,” he said. “I'd normally spend the night inside the Salvation Army. They haven't been open overnight with extra beds. It sucks staying out in this. It really does.”

While the Salvation Army's emergency shelter remained open during the pandemic, their beds often fill to capacity every night. Under normal circumstances, they open overflow beds when temperatures drop below freezing as one of the shelters participating in the community's cold weather contingency plan. This cold weather contingency plan allows for the shelter to sleep an additional 90 individuals on top of their 109-person limit. Not today though. COVID-19 has interrupted the emergency process. When the pandemic broke, the City of OKC Homeless Services recommended pausing the program due to increased risk of exposing shelter residents to COVID-19 by trying to exceed current shelter capacities.

Still, Jim is grateful for having a meal delivered. Several organizations stepped up their street outreach efforts during the pandemic by delivering meals, supplies and information about current news.

“It makes things a lot easier,” Jim said. “It makes a difference. It does.”

### Colton

The downtown library offers so much more than books. For Colton, it's four stories of warmth, internet access and a safe place to charge his phone. Metropolitan Library System buildings will remain closed—even as curbside pickup for books begins May 4—and that's a loss to countless individuals and families who rely on the library. Computer access was essential to Colton's library visits. The *Curbside* vendor is on a job hunt during a particularly difficult time in addition to experiencing street homelessness.

“Even with COVID-19, places are still hiring,” Colton said. “Not having that resource hurts. I could easily check my email. Now, I'm in a dead zone. All those applications I put in, I'm afraid I might be missing out. ... I miss the library.”

Local churches and volunteer organizations stopped by Colton's tent as the pandemic progressed, but those visits have slowed down due to shelter-in-place restrictions. He's thankful for meals delivered daily by The Homeless Alliance and others. He normally gets dinner at Jesus House. He said it was surreal when they closed their gates and started handing out meals through the fence.

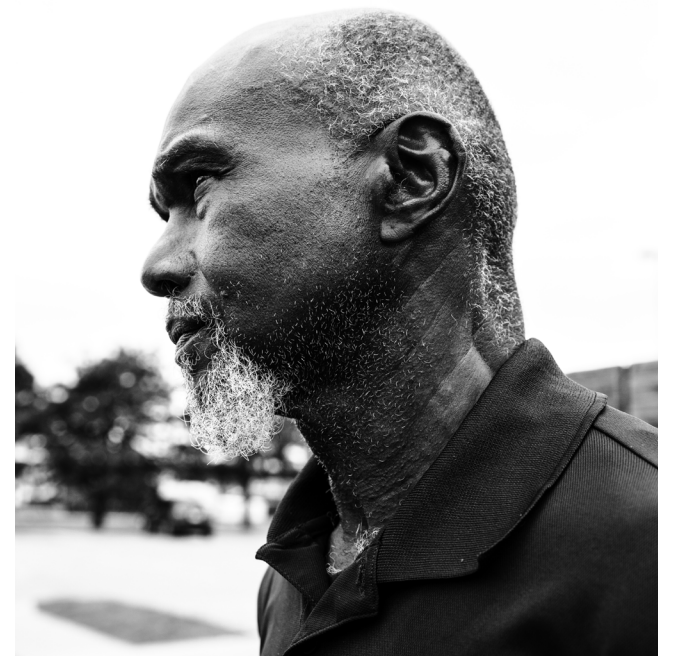
Still, a meal makes it easier to get to tomorrow in the face of ever-changing weather and losing ac-

cess to comforts that were once within reach. It's all frustrating, he said. But he understands where it's all coming from and is looking forward to securing housing when the pandemic blows over.

### Bruce

Oklahoma City is a ghost town. That's how Bruce sees it when he's walking through normally populated entertainment districts like Bricktown and Midtown. He's used to seeing crowds. Now, it feels like an empty town in a Western movie, he said.

“You have to do a lot of walking when you're homeless. It's hard to come by much of anything,” Bruce said. “People aren't wanting you to use their restroom. People would rather not talk to you. ... It's not that they think you got it. They



**Bruce stands outside the Oklahoma City Day Shelter. He relies on the shelter for lunch on weekdays.**

COVID-19 isn't the first emergency Bruce has faced. In 2005, he was displaced by Hurricane Katrina and found a home in Oklahoma City. Bruce is 64. Nearly 50 of those years were spent cooking and baking. He has experienced street homelessness for the past two years. He'd been working on housing, but that's on pause. Life on the street is a struggle, he said.

“I don't spend a lot of time in shelters because it gives me flashbacks of being locked up,” he said. “It's rough knowing that a virus is going around. Things will be normal again. They will. They always have and they always will. There's always something negative in the world that scares mankind, you know what I'm saying?”

### Wes

Hygiene isn't easy in the face of a pandemic. As

*Continued on page 7*

# View from the Street

## An Artist in a Pandemic

By Sarah Disasa

Many of us have certainly been frustrated, anxious and lonely during this unusual time of social distancing. Yet if we dig deeply enough, we will find, or may have already found, some silver linings. Charles William, a friend of The Stewpot, shared some of his thoughts about the pandemic, social distancing and where he is finding hope, or rather, joy in all of this.

The California native moved to Texas when he was 12-years old. For the past 30 years, Charles has lived in Dallas, moving around a good bit and making his home in apartments, houses, shelters and on the streets. Most recently, he moved from the streets back in with his mother when the pandemic became real.

An aunt introduced Charles to art when he was only three. He has been painting ever since. Today, he uses oils, acrylics and watercolors.

As I got further into my conversation with Charles, I wanted to learn more about how this pandemic is affecting people who are experiencing homelessness. Charles explained that the circumstance of social distancing is very similar to the feeling of homelessness.

**The one desire that we all need is that human contact. That touch. Someone to talk to.**

“For one, you know, I’ve noticed, now you can almost feel what it’s like to be homeless,” he ex-

plained over the telephone. “Especially when you have to distance yourself from people. A lot of times people who see you as homeless, they will go around the other way to avoid you. They distance themselves from you. They don’t talk to you.”

The same things that many Americans have felt during this time of social distancing—frustration, anxiety, loneliness—are things that someone experiencing homelessness endures regularly, not only during a pandemic. As Charles went on to say, “The one desire that we all need is that human contact. That touch. Someone to talk to.”

Someone to talk to is exactly the gift Charles unexpectedly received. Through former classmates of his mother, Charles’ father contacted him in March. Charles had not seen his father since he was five-years old, even though they had both looked for each other for years. This pandemic has given Charles and his father the gift of time to reconnect, to share their life stories and to see themselves in each other. Their roles have changed somewhat since the last time they were together, as now Charles is the caretaker.

When asked about hope: “Hope? That’s funny that you ask that. I don’t believe in hope. Hope, to me is a ‘worry word.’” Charles explained that hoping for something causes him to stress and worry. So, he calls it a “worry word.” “The best thing you can do is pray for things to get better,” he emphasized. “But not hope for things to get better.”



*A painting by Charles William*

When I reworded the question to ask where Charles is finding joy, he replied, “Joy is here. Right now it’s with my dad. That’s where my joy is. I have a dad.”

For some, during this pandemic and time of social distancing, joy has replaced frustration; peace has replaced anxiety; and a father has replaced loneliness.

*Sarah Disasa is a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas and The STREETZine Editorial Advisory Board.*

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much as Wes would love to take a shower at the Oklahoma City Day Shelter, he can’t. The amenity is a popular resource at the day shelter and the only means for many people to get access to a shower. Wes misses it. Many of the people who stay in his campsite rely on the day shelter to stay clean. Deodorant and hygiene kits only help so much.

“I think about the FEMA shower trailers I’ve seen on the news during disasters,” Wes said. “If one of those could come to the camp, that’d be amazing.”

Wes is used to living outside and using a tent as shelter. When he hears the advice to bunker down and stay inside, it’s not too different from waiting out bad weather. He’s also used to staying close

to his camp. So are his neighbors. It’s communal, he said. Oftentimes, everyone pools their food together to share a large dinner.

“We can still stay inside our tents,” he said. “We’re not going into stores. We’re not going where there’s a higher susceptibility for COVID-19.”

### **Nathan**

Nathan was new to the Oklahoma City Day Shelter. He was in need of a shower and a decent meal. Unfortunately, the showers were closed, but the provided lunch was helpful. The Oklahoma City native was thankful for any relief. He’d lost his shelter behind a gas station, and it weighed heavy on his mental and physical health.

“Even with COVID-19, it’s important to get a meal and have a place where nobody can hassle me,” Nathan said. “If you wanna go get a dollar burger at McDonald’s, you have to have a car. I didn’t even try because they won’t take someone walking up to the window.”

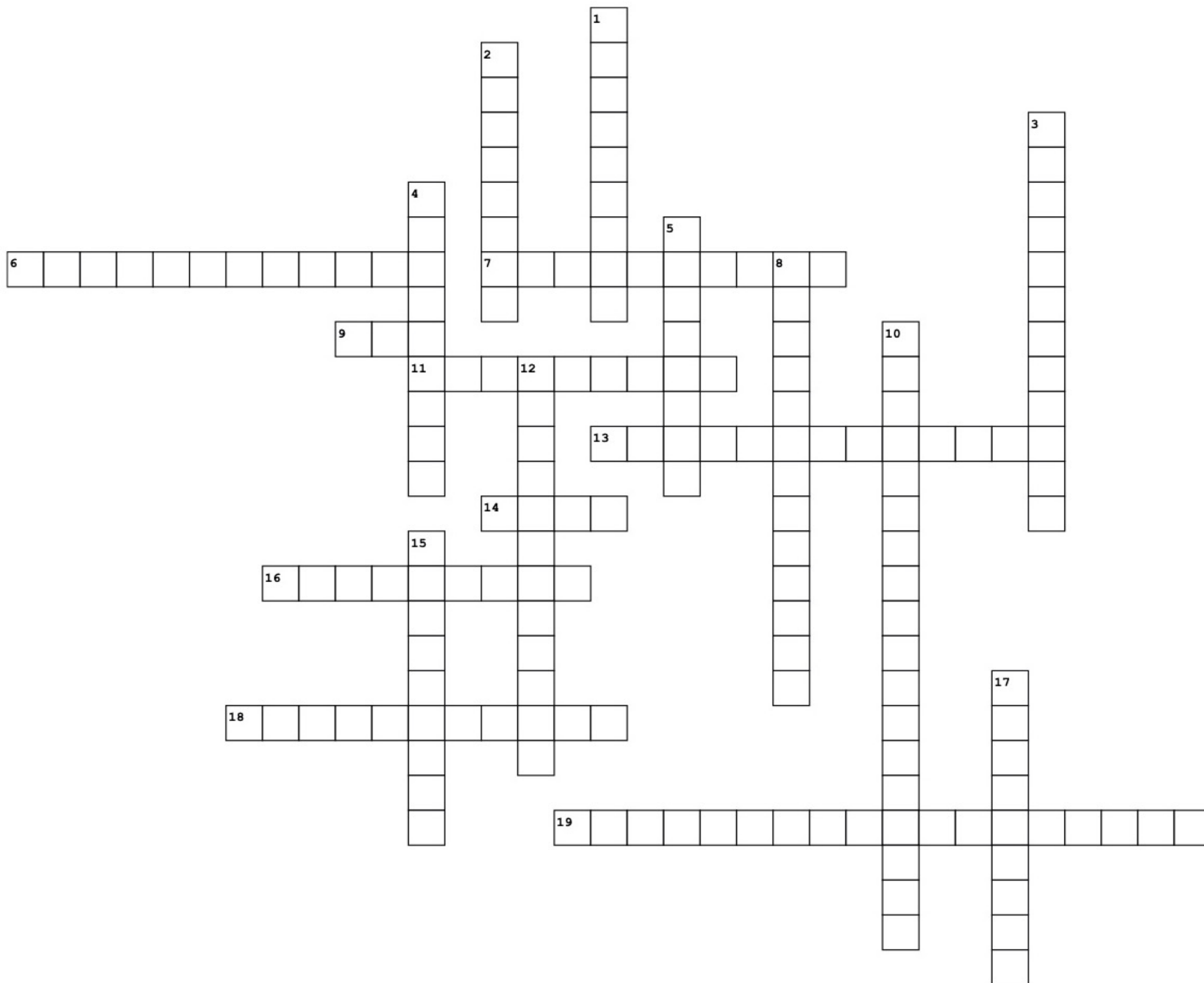
Nathan’s just riding things out as best as he can. His goal is to become sober. That’s especially difficult because he’s been unsuccessful in finding a rehab facility that’s open and performing intake for new clients. Nathan is prone to panic attacks. The faster COVID-19 ends, the faster he can find help.

“That’s what I hope,” he said. “We ride it out.”

*Courtesy of The Curbside Chronicle / INSP.ngo*

# Sports Crossword

By Douglas McKenzie



**Across**

- 6. Who is the head coach of the Dallas Mavericks?
- 7. What future Rookie of the Year did the Atlanta Hawks trade to the Mavs on draft night in 2018?
- 9. How many NBA titles do the Dallas Mavericks have?
- 11. In what player's honor did the Texas Rangers retire the number 34?
- 13. Which superstar did the Rangers trade for Alfonso Soriano?
- 14. How many Super Bowl championships have the Cowboys won?
- 16. What animal inspired DT Leon Lett's

nickname?

- 18. Who was the first player for the Rangers franchise to hit 40 or more homeruns in a season?
- 19. The Texas Rangers came into existence in 1972. What team relocated to Arlington, Texas to become the Texas Rangers?

**Down**

- 1. What Dallas businessman owned the Mavericks in 2002-2003?
- 2. Which TCU athlete was the first player selected by the Dallas Cowboys in an NFL Draft?
- 3. Which Mavericks' player had a career high 46 points in Game 1 of the first-round

vs. Portland in 2002-03?

- 4. Which Dallas Mavericks guard was from South Africa?
- 5. Which Dallas Cowboys wide receiver was nicknamed "Bullet"?
- 8. What was Pudge Rodríguez's real name?
- 10. Who were the Mav's Big Three in 2002-03?
- 12. What is the Cowboys' nickname?
- 15. Who did the Mavs defeat in the 2011 finals?
- 17. Which pitcher recorded his 300th win, 7th no-hitter, and his 5,000th strikeout while wearing a Ranger's uniform?



# Around The Stewpot

By Nicole Kiser

When the stay-at-home orders were issued, many of us questioned how we were going to maintain our sanity stuck in isolation with our families. The Stewpot and others who provide essential services to those experiencing homelessness in Dallas had a different question: How do you stay at home, when you don't have a house?

Shelters quickly had to adapt to social distancing guidelines, limiting street outreach, eliminating beds and spreading out chairs in order to maintain six-foot distances between individuals. The Bridge Homeless Recovery Center lost a number of beds overnight. Service providers worked with the City of Dallas to compensate for lost space. The city has temporarily stopped encampment sweeps, reducing some of the pressure on shelters, and has established an emergency shelter at the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center. Despite housing over 300 clients nightly since its opening, the convention center has been reported to have had to turn away people. As a result, Dallas has started housing some of its homeless population in hotels and

is working with nonprofits to locate rental properties for clients ready for housing.

The City of Dallas began offering day services in April

at the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center. Through partnerships with other nonprofits, including Highland Park United Methodist Church, The Stewpot has been able to offer over 150 lunches daily to the guests at the convention center. The Stewpot receives donations, works with partners like North Texas Food Bank and Ben E. Keith Company, and recovers food from restaurants and hotels in order to provide food to the clients at The Bridge and the convention center as well as provide weekly take-home meals to families in need through their family stabilization program. Though The Stewpot, like other service providers, has not been able to make use of volunteers in order to reduce clients' exposure, The Stewpot worked with another organization, AmeriCorps through Equal Heart nonprofit, to add two new members to its Meal Services team.

The coronavirus pandemic has created a new kind of normal. Service providers are working even more with each other and the city in an intricate dance to keep vulnerable populations provided for. The Dallas Connector, for example, is a transportation service for those experiencing homelessness or economically disadvantaged provided by the City of Dallas in partnership with CitySquare, Austin Street Center, OurCalling, The Stewpot, First Presbyterian Church of Dallas and The Salvation Army. The Dallas Connector typically provides transportation between essential services, including shelters like Austin Street Center as well as locations such as the Parkland and Veterans Affairs hospital. When the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center became an emergency shelter,

win were forced to find other shelter. Some were taken in by family, sometimes moving across the country. Many returned to the street. Some individuals who were previously housed by family members have been kicked out by those who fear overcrowding during a pandemic.

Even those lucky enough to be housed in shelters or the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center face higher risks than they do typically. In April, at least 38 people tested positive for COVID-19 at Dallas Life before those staying at the shelter were taken to quarantine at a nearby hotel. Due to the close quarters, clients housed in shelters face an increased risk of catching COVID-19, even



**Playground of Main Street Garden Park taped off due to COVID-19**  
*Photos by Douglas McKenzie*

as well as when stops such as the library and Social Security office closed due to safety measures, the Dallas Connector had to work with its various partners to adjust its route and schedule to fit its clients' needs and ensure their access to essential services.

The way different organizations have adapted has been admirable. There has even been a little room for creativity in the new and crazy world that the pandemic brings to service providers and their clients. Originally scheduled to open on March 15, We Are ARTISTS: The Stewpot Art Program is the first exhibition hosted by the Dallas Museum of Art of works by Stewpot Art Program participants. The Stewpot Art Program often partners with the Dallas Museum of Art by providing participants with visits to the museum in addition to art classes and supplies. In the spirit of social distancing, the Dallas Museum of Art adapted We Are ARTISTS: The Stewpot Art Program into a virtual gallery experience, available for viewing at [virtual.dma.org/stewpot-art-program/](https://virtual.dma.org/stewpot-art-program/).

*Nicole Kiser is managing editor of STREETZine.*



**Marquee praising first responders during the COVID-19 pandemic**

*Continued from page 1*

usually volunteered showed their support for The Stewpot in other ways, such as donations or public support. When The Stewpot held a "thank-a-thon" and called all of its recent donors, many were called more than once for their repeated donations.

Even with all these measures to help those in need, people experiencing homelessness are facing an even harder time than usual. In order to follow social distancing protocols, shelters had to remove beds. Those that had previously been housed at these shelters often had to participate in lotteries to see who would be staying; those that did not

with social distancing put in place. The Stewpot works diligently to lower the risk of anyone on the campus contracting COVID-19. But the reality is that the coronavirus is only highlighting the affordable housing crisis that has been plaguing Dallas for years.

Over its 45-year history, The Stewpot has faced many challenges. Though the COVID-19 pandemic feels unprecedented, The Stewpot continues to do what it has done since its establishment in 1975: responding to the unmet and emerging needs of Dallas.

*Nicole Kiser is managing editor of STREETZine.*

## The Great Outdoors

By Dorothy L. Burch

When I look at our world, our land, and our earth

I see it like an hour-glass turned upside down,

But instead of sand, dirt.

I feel we're running out of time, at least it seems.

And we need more help to keep our world clean.

Our ground is white, hard and mean,

When it should be cool, soft and green.

I wonder if we can fix up what's been torn up,

And mend what's been cut up.

I look all over and try to search,

What can we do to save our Earth.

Do we stay in and walk in fear,

Wiping our faces with every tear,

Do we stay up walking the floors,

Or do we learn from the past and

Embrace the future's core and burst

Outside to the "Great Outdoors!"

*Dorothy L. Burch participated in The Stewpot's  
26th Annual Talent Show.*



### Answer Key to April/May Crossword

#### Across

2. White Rock Lake
5. Dallas City Hall
6. Bush Presidential Library
7. Perot Museum
11. Dallas Museum of Art
13. First Presbyterian Church
17. Love Field Airport
20. Bishop Arts
21. Deep Ellum
22. Reunion Tower

#### Down

2. Cowboys
3. Klyde Warren Park
4. Southern Methodist University
8. Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge
9. Nasher Sculpture Center
10. DFW International Airport
12. American Airlines Center
14. Serious Pizza
16. Dealey Plaza
18. Emporium Pies
19. Rangers



*Downtown Dallas during the COVID-19 pandemic  
Photos by Douglas McKenzie*

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*Continued from page 5*

**You have talked about hoping this project will change the conversation about homelessness. How do you see that happening or not happening?**

Before I started buying signs, I did think that there was something different about people experiencing homelessness. I saw them as “other.” What has shifted for me over the course of this project, and the many hundreds of conversations I’ve had with people experiencing homelessness, is that I believe that we are all individuals. We have our own stories, our own strengths and our own weaknesses. The only difference is that some people whose signs I buy don’t have the same safety net that I had when trouble arose.

In the TEDx Talk I did with Eddie, we focused on the idea that it’s not “us” and “them”; it is just us. Some people who have seen the documentary, or the heartfelt messages in signs, say they are not going to look at homeless people the same way again.

Art can get us to slow down and reframe and rethink. That’s the power of the sign.

Art also changes the context of how we see something. These signs create a new context about the way people see homelessness.

For many people, seeing someone holding a sign on the street causes them to want to avert their eyes and walk away. But when it is in the context of an art exhibit, and there is no one there to make them feel uncomfortable, people tend to experience it differently than they did on the street.

Seeing more than one sign, maybe even hundreds of them, also changes the context. You think, oh, my God, there are so many people out there. This only represents a tiny fraction of people with signs. It can be overwhelming

to see so many signs together, start reading them, and then internalizing and processing them one at a time.

So, you are right. Context is very important.

**Art can get us to slow down and reframe and rethink. That’s the power of the sign.**

**Have you been able to follow up with people after they have seen one of your exhibits to see how it might have changed their perspective?**

Not in any formal way, but I have a folder with probably thousands of comments and messages from people. I have had people send me a sign in the mail with a note attached about the experience of buying the sign. And people have written to me, saying they bought their first sign and had their first conversation with Tom, and let me tell you all about Tom. I get those kinds of anecdotal responses.

I also was shocked that I was mentioned in a tweet from a high school in the U.K. about two hours away from London. Their art teacher posted they were doing a project on art and homelessness, and their three greatest influences were Henry Moore, Leonardo da Vinci, and me.

**Wow.**

They had found *We are All Homeless* online. I laughed out loud. That was the only time I have been mentioned in a tweet along with Leonardo da Vinci!

It’s a long story, but I also was mentioned in an Instagram post out of Russia that received 450,000 views. These examples represent to me that people are struggling to know how to help. They resonate with this topic.

**In one article, you were quoted as saying this project has led you to “questions about the nature of home, compassion and what it means to truly see each other.” What have you found among the people you have interviewed about the definition of home? And how do you define “home?”**

Their answers are varied. They associate home with a feeling, smell or sound from perhaps childhood. But others might associate it with where they sleep at night, wherever that might be.

For me, my mom, her voice and the smell of her cooking are wrapped up in my notions of home. So are my friends as I hear them laugh and feel connected with them. Feeling comfortable in my own skin is part of my definition, no matter where I live.

**What do you think will be the ultimate impact of your work?**

I will probably never know in a broad way. But anecdotal answers suggest there is a lot of individual change. I think that a lot of classes and students will be impacted, like the one in England. I have enough evidence to know this is worth my time.

*Bill McKenzie is a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas and The STREET-Zine Editorial Advisory Board.*

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