Tuckered out
By Rev. Rick Reynolds

My friend Theophilus once said to me “If you don’t roll with the Spirit, you’re going to get tuckered out.”

Even in the Spirit, a body gets weary. We see it every night, when homeless people have been shuffling from one place to another, finding work, getting a meal, applying for help. When you have to carry your belongings, and are on your feet all day, you will get “tuckered out.” You may renew your strength, but you will still hit a wall.

Then I was reminded of the greater burdens some of our homeless friends carry. A friend asked if I knew what happened on April 19. He knew full well – the Oklahoma City bombing. He worked on a rescue team, one of the first responders that day. He saw unspeakable horrors, things no one should have to witness.

I listened to his story and thanked him for his service. “But I wasn’t in the military,” he said. “There’s more than one kind of service,” I told him. “Then, thank you too,” he said.

Lord, grant rest to all those weary folks who have served and will serve again.
Bring relief to our homeless friends.

Tested and grateful
By Liz Fenn, Dispatch Manager

Recently I had one of those days in the Dispatch Center, the kind where nothing seemed to go right.

Lead cooks from two of our volunteer kitchen groups called in to cancel on back-to-back days due to illness. A key broke off in the lock of the toilet paper spindle in the men’s restroom. The exhaust fan in the staff bathroom emitted a burning smell. The washing machine drain overflowed with water and soap onto the floor creating standing water around the dryer. One of our ovens was not heating to temperature and we completely ran out of toothpaste and deodorant to give to our clients.

I had to laugh because it all seemed so surreal. Then I was reminded about something I read recently;

When someone goes hungry, another is dividing his portion.
When someone goes thirsty, another is digging a well.

I have come to realize if we never have challenges, we will never know the joy of overcoming them.

Update: the City has provided temporary solutions to Nightwatch’s 75-bed shelter space crisis, for which we are most thankful. For further updates, follow us on Facebook.
Cleaning toilets
By Ann Sakaguchi

We have a lot of toilets at Nightwatch. We have some for our homeless friends to use in the Dispatch Center. We have others upstairs for our senior tenants to use. On most days, it’s someone’s job to keep the place clean, including cleaning the toilets.

Recently, I’ve been finding myself frequently rolling up my sleeves, putting on gloves and going in to clean toilets. Maybe our custodian got sick that day, or maybe there was an accident that needed urgent clean up. Whenever I do this, I ask myself “Is this the best use of my time right now?” The answer has always been “Yes. Because it has to be done right now. And there is no one else here to do it.”

For most people, cleaning toilets is probably not a favorite thing to do. I’m one of these people, but my perspective is changing. After getting past the “yuck” factor, cleaning a toilet is, in some ways, very satisfying. The white porcelain is gleaming, after it’s cleaned. Drips and spills are gone. The pristine, raised toilet seat almost seems inviting. The residual aroma of Pine Sol confirms the job is done.

At Nightwatch, a cleaned toilet stays clean for, oh, maybe 15 minutes. Once it’s used, it’s a dirty toilet again. And it needs to be cleaned. Again. And so it goes.

Yes, we help people with food, shelter, housing and hope. But right now, you may be wondering, “Why write about toilets?”

Because toilets, among a number of other boring or yucky things at Nightwatch, never get talked about. Because keeping the toilets clean at Nightwatch is important.

Thank you for your support. Your gifts help to keep the toilets clean.