

Midnight Run: About Alberto cont'd . . .

At our last stop, there were more people than anticipated and we were a few food bags short. After we ran out of bags of food, a man came up asking for a bag for an old man in the park across the street, but not for himself. "He can't walk." Somehow Alberto got a bag of food for him, talking someone into giving their bag to someone who needed it more? Trading an extra toiletry kit for a food bag?

Then another man came up, older, tall and gaunt. Alberto seemed to know the man. He seems to know everybody. Alberto quietly came up to me and whispered for me to give him his sandwich, he would give his dinner to the old man. By the time I was able to fetch it, somehow the older man got a food bag. Earlier in the evening Alberto thanked us for coming. "Look at these people," he said, pointing to people eating their sandwiches and cake, "if you didn't come tonight, they would have had nothing to eat tonight."

I'm so often impressed by the kindness shown by the people on the street. At that last stop, as soon as we got out of the cars a young woman came rushing to us asking for a turkey sandwich for Mary Jane. Mary Jane, an old woman, using a shopping cart as a walker, wearing a night gown came up slowly behind her. Mary Jane insisted it be a turkey sandwich, "They always give me peanut butter. I won't eat peanut butter". When she discovered that it was indeed a turkey sandwich, she smiled a crooked, gap toothed smile visible from behind the white cotton mask drooping from her face.

There are instances of thievery too. John, an old man living in a bus stop shelter called the Midnight Run office on a toll-free number reporting that someone had stolen all his clothes. Dale, the manager of the Run contacted me to see if we could supply anything, since the bus shelter was on our route. The Goodwill store on Route 9 had just his size of pants 40/32, staring right at me as I entered the store, and a couple of extra-large shirts. John was grateful, but asked me no to buy khaki colored slacks next time, they don't hide the dirt.

Thank you for your help in making our Midnight Run mission happen. We could not do this without your help.

Ron Sopyla
First Presbyterian Church of Philipstown

PS: A request for our next trip: Many of the homeless sleep on sheets of cardboard laid on the pavement. As we empty the cardboard boxes that hold the provisions we bring, we offer the boxes for sleeping. Alberto taught us to do this. I'm hoping we can do better. If anyone has an old yoga mat, an old air mattress, the kind you might use for camping or in a pool, please feel free to contact me and we will take it down on our next run. Old but clean sheets are welcomed too!