

Lake Oswego Interact Club at Night Strike

Activity Report of 2/14/2016 by Ted Ricks

One of the most anticipated activities of the year was helping feed and clothe the homeless in downtown Portland...at night from 7:00 to 10:00 under the Burnside bridge.

Nick Fernandez recommended this activity that was enthusiastically confirmed by the LO Interact club. But, I was a bit hesitant to confirm it as a LO Interact activity until I had a chance to “check it out” with Nick. And, that we did on a Thursday in December.



Night Strike is a 15-year old mission organized and managed by the Bridgetown Ministries in Portland at 214 W Burnside Street, Portland, OR 97209 to administer basic needs to the homeless men, women, and families of the downtown area: Food (hot and cold), coffee/water, clothes, sleeping bags, blankets, haircuts, free books, and manicures/nail painting from 7:00 to 10:00 every Thursday night. There is a dental-free service van there as well.

12 years old is the minimum age for this service and orientation at 6:45 is required. The object is to humanize the homeless experience – yes, you are encouraged to talk with these people; the organizers say that you are probably the first person to look them in the eye that day.

Nick and I checked out the orientation and experience and found it perfectly safe, well-lit, well-managed and supervised. I saw no conflicts, outbursts, or alcoholic behavior and there must have been 100-200 people there. They stood in orderly lines for food and clothing, and milled around socializing in a courteous manner.



On Thursday, February 17th, Rotarian Josh Tomeoni and I escorted Samantha Hoevet, Francesca Morz, Radhika Subrahmanyam, and Rachel Wingham downtown to the Burnside Street offices. They were looking for donations of blankets, sleeping bags, men’s underwear, shampoo, and toothpaste, with a special request, for bulk coffee to brew and serve. Our club donated \$100 worth of underwear, as well as, shampoo, toothpaste, and coffee and brought two garbage bags full of blankets, coats, wool hats, gloves, and sleeping bags.

Rachel and Radhika sorted and handed out women’s clothes; Samantha and Francesca manicured and painted ladies/girls nails; and, Josh and I both gave out books, as well as, walked around keeping an eye on everything, particularly our Interactors. It was fun...exhilarating and gratifying to do this community service.

Afterward, I walked to Zombie Donuts and had a nice, big glazed one for the ride home...