

Acceptance of UNO School of Social Work's Gandhi Award
April 4, 2008
Omaha, NE

On behalf of the staff, board of directors and the hundreds of volunteers who serve each day at Matt Talbot Kitchen & Outreach I must say how honored we are to receive this award. The Life and philosophy of Gandhi provides daily inspiration for our efforts to convey love and to uplift the working poor and homeless of our community.

Matt Talbot is a faith and community-based hunger relief and outreach program that serves a very diverse population. From homeless individuals who live on the street to working poor families struggling to get by, to the countless volunteers who provide hunger relief each day, and to dedicated staff and board, everyone is being served through our collective efforts.

In addition to providing over 100,000 nutritious meals annually Matt Talbot offers a wide array of Outreach Services that aim to prevent homelessness and address the many complex needs of a much disenfranchised population. By being strong community advocates we have been able to expand services over the years to include housing, case management, health care, access to treatment, education, and assistance with a variety of basic and emergency needs.

But perhaps our greatest strength has been our ability to nurture an environment that models the Gandhian values of nonviolence, community, sacrifice, social justice and unconditional love. These values are universal in many religions and philosophies.

Admittedly we have our challenges. My co-workers, "the Sisters" can attest to that for sure! Working with those in extreme poverty- who have been underrepresented and who have experienced oppression in life takes diligence, empathy and compassion. We constantly strive to understand the deep impact that poverty has over time, and we attempt to combat that with love, with tolerance, and with hope. We must be willing, like Gandhi was, to get intimately engaged in the strife and be a voice for those who are rarely heard.

And while our efforts pale in comparison to the great movement of Gandhi and the countless other movements of love and justice that he inspired, we can say with confidence that at Matt Talbot Kitchen & Outreach we have found a variety of ways to *"be the change we wish to see in the world!"*

Thank you for this wonderful recognition!

Susanne Blue, MSW
Executive Director