



Faithful Fools Street Ministry Leadership Reflections On 2017

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and Hy Carrel

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Section I

Reflections on 2017 from Carmen Barsody

Though Kay and I met in April of 1997, it was not until January 1998 that I moved to the Bay Area from Nicaragua and the two of us began spending our days on the streets, in the UU Church and in neighborhood meetings and Community Advisory Boards of Tom Waddell Clinic and Religious Witness for Homeless People and . . . as we walked, our vision and our mission began to find form in Faithful Fools Street Ministry. And just 20 years later, on Martin Luther King Jr's Day, Kay walked on from these earthly realms. As my mother wrote on a little note in her sympathy card to Faithful Fools, *"Thus I say, she is free and clowning around."*

And yet, I—and so many Fools and friends—will miss her always.

In the years between 1997 and 2018, many Fools have joined together to take on more and more responsibility, giving form to the mission and continually expanding the vision and work of Faithful Fools Street Ministry. The Leadership Circle that carries the primary responsibility for the day-to-day living out of our mission is myself (full-time employee/Resident of Court), Hy Carrel (full-time employee), Sam Dennison (full-time employee/Resident of Court), Nicole Fusco (full-time Mercy Corp Volunteer), Mary Ganz (part-time Fool and part-time with First UU Church of San Francisco) & Jackie Hider (Volunteer).

Jugglers and Leadership:

After Kay and I moved into the Fools' Court in 2000, programs began to evolve, and more people began to be involved on a daily basis. Soon we began meeting as "Jugglers." Kay and I were the full-time leaders and Court Residents, and "Jugglers" was a time to meet with others who were managing the copy shop, doing regular accompaniment, program development and fundraising. In conventional terms, it was a team/staff meeting. After a while, the nature of the group shifted and changed periodically according to the communal and organizational needs, shaped by who showed up. Initially it functioned more like we are functioning today as a leadership circle, sitting together weekly to do a brief check-in and then do necessary planning, reflecting, and communicating. Sometimes the group would get larger and people began to come who weren't necessarily involved in the day-to-day work but they enjoyed the community, and it became more of a reflection circle or social time. When the doorway became too wide, and people came primarily for personal connection with little interest or ability to take on leadership responsibilities, we needed to more clearly define the Jugglers meeting as one for those who were taking explicit leadership for the programs, individual accompaniment, and overall management of the organization. We have come to one of those moments in time when we are clarifying the role of leadership/Jugglers. The current leadership circle functions as did the initial "Jugglers" did in the early days. The communal connection that at times found form in Jugglers or in a monthly gathering of Fools of the Round Table is now happening through the weekly TLVotes. In January of this

year, we let go of having a separate Jugglers meeting following our Leadership meeting as it became redundant. Though we, serving as the Leadership Circle, are essentially the “Jugglers” of the many balls in continuous motion, we will refrain from publicly calling ourselves the Jugglers so as to clarify that it is not a drop-in community meeting. As the song goes, “There is a time for every purpose under heaven . . .”

Healing WELL:

Healing WELL moved on from using the purple building as their primary program site in May of 2017. Their new space was scheduled to be finished in June, but for the well-being of our own planning we found we could not function well with the uncertainty of when the move might happen. After careful consideration, we set a definite ending date rather than let it drift on. That turned out to be a good decision for both Healing WELL and Faithful Fools as their new space did not become available until September. For the three interim months, they held programs at the Kelly Cullen Center on Golden Gate. It ended up being a very fine place as more people became aware of their programs. Their new home is located at Eddy and Hyde so we are neighbors. We are still strong partners as evidenced by the occasional moments when Hy or Nicole will go around the corner to support Healing WELL staff or when they pop over here to make copies or say “hello.” I continue to serve on their Advisory Committee, and I have been meeting on Wednesday mornings with **Kathy Curran** and Sam, together with **Laura Slattery** of Gubbio Project, for a time of reflection together. (Laura Slattery will be leaving her role as Executive Director in March. We will miss her wise and committed presence in our lives and in the neighborhood.)

Fools’ Court:

The mission of Faithful Fools and the purpose of the Fools’ Court was never intended to be a drop-in center. Early on Kay and I were given the good advice to avoid doing the work that others do well, so our lives became focused on building community rather than being a drop-in center or offering specific direct services. The significance of that advice got blurred with the presence of Healing WELL for two years. Because we were open with scheduled programming Monday through Friday, many people became accustomed to dropping in and having someone to engage or a place to hang out for the day. We are still working to clarify for ourselves and others the expectations and need for someone to be present in the building throughout the day. To be an all-day drop-in center limits us in our ability to carry through on other responsibilities inside and outside of the building. Our work of accompanying people to appointments, attending community and city meetings and collaborating with educational institutions requires being free to leave the building or host and focus on groups and meetings at Faithful Fools. We clearly communicate that the doors are open and we have people present and available during scheduled programs, but we do not have a receptionist nor the capability to be open Monday through Sunday from 9 to 5 just to hang out. Returning to our nature and mission has taken awhile as we transition from the cultural shift that happened with the presence of the Healing WELL.

The Fools' Court continues to be used by community groups and other non-profit organizations. Night Ministry continues offering a meal and Bible study on Tuesday evenings. Resident-based community organization groups hold meets here, and organizations like Coalition on Homelessness and Skywatchers use our space for their staff retreats or community and staff meetings. We continue to be grateful that we own a building and offer it as a resource to the larger community.

Street Retreats:

Our monthly Street Retreats continue, as do retreats scheduled for special college and high school groups. A Street Retreat is a required orientation for service learning students from the University of San Francisco. We no longer have a regularly scheduled monthly "Into The Streets," (a shorter, 3-hour introduction into the neighborhood) but rather schedule them per request by individuals or groups. 826 Valencia schedules an Into the Streets two or three times a year for new staff and volunteers. They have also been scheduled by groups of faculty from Sacred Heart High School and St. Ignatius High School. We continue to lead an annual retreat for Unitarian Universalist Coming of Age youth. We have been more selective in our scheduling of junior high and high school groups as it requires many volunteers for shadowing and that is a challenge during weekdays. We prioritize retreats for immersion groups or with institutions that we have an ongoing relationship.

Accompaniment:

We continue to do one-on-one accompaniment both with our long-term friends and also as new people who come into our lives. We are the primary connections and also payee, trustee or money managers for SA, JV and ET. We also are liaisons with the families of SA and JV, an important relationship as they live at a distance and have great concern for their brothers. A number of people use our address as their mailing address or to have us keep important documents they don't want to lose. As we walk with people it is sobering and challenging to experience how the services are saturated and inadequate for this place and time.

We have gotten a closer view the challenges faced by homeless families as we accompanied the C family, a father with 4 teenage children. When they first arrived at our door (the Sunday before Thanksgiving) we all worked together to get them into shelters, get back into school, pay outstanding fines, get new eyeglasses and necessary clothing and school supplies, get the legal and social service help needed to reapply for Medi-Cal, food stamps and social security benefits; most of all, we served as a safe and caring place for them to be. Despite vital resources and efforts of organizations such as Larkin Street Shelters for Youth, and Hamilton Family Shelter, the demand and needs are great. There is not enough shelter space for the number of homeless families and so rotating them through leads to destabilizing any fragile progress made, such as when the family had to leave the shelter for at least 7 days after 6 weeks of receiving shelter. Forcing them back into the streets for 7-days to qualify for the shelter again had a great cost on the psychological fragility

of each family member as well. The housing subsidy offered is not sufficient for the cost of housing (e.g., \$1700 to house a family of 5 in San Francisco). The father is not allowed to work to subsidize the inadequate subsidy or his Social Security will be docked. The emotional cost is great and counseling services are unable to meet the individual needs of the parent and children. We have sought to be a stable connection for them all, most especially the father. During the 7 days they needed to be out of the family shelter, the kids were able to be at Larkin Street Youth Shelter and the father slept on a mat at Faithful Fools in the Hat Factory. When he is feeling very vulnerable emotionally, he comes and spends time here during the day, sometimes helping with painting or cleaning.

When the door is open for programs, we are also a place for people to stop in for some human connection and/or to use the bathroom. **Nieves Moreno** does a great deal to help people get to appointments, buy and transport food from grocery stores or food bank, clean out storage units or find a room to rent. Nieves together with Rick V, whom we accompanied for years and who now works for the Homeless Outreach Team (HOT team), work together to get people's names on lists for permanent housing.

We are now registered as an organization that can serve for people doing SFMTA Community Service to work off fines. We are not able to provide service time for very many people, but it is another avenue for people to come to know our work.

Volunteering:

We have people regularly inquire about volunteering. Some have come to know us through visiting with a class or hearing about us from friends. Our first invitation to people who want to volunteer is to have them choose a program or two to participate in and come to know people and programs. When people are more connected, it is easier to ask them to accompany an individual or assist with programs or write thank you notes. We get regular inquiries from large groups who want to do a service project for a couple of hours as part of a school or church mission/service trip. We are unable to provide such opportunities, but if their time allows, we invite them to do a Street Retreat instead. This happens most frequently with college alternative break groups. We do appreciate having the monthly community meal at Old First Presbyterian as a more "traditional" volunteer experience as an entry point.

Somatic Experience:

Linda Chrisman continues her work with individuals for trauma resolution and resiliency work. Due to health problems **Mary Scheibel** has had to cease her volunteering once a week. Linda has an open invitation for people to join her in offering Somatic work as the demand is great. It has also been helpful to staff and volunteers at Faithful Fools. We continue to seek resources to expand this valuable resource.

Annual Memorial:

I took an active role in helping plan the Annual Memorial for People Who Have Died Homeless on the Streets. I worked together with **Lyle Beckman** from Night Ministry, **Maggi Henderson** from Old First Presbyterian Church, **Kelley Cutler** of Coalition on Homelessness and **Michael Mallory**, a past intern of Faithful Fools who leads memorials for people who have died in SROs. It was great to work together on making it a meaningful ritual.

Nicaragua:

I continue to be the primary liaison with the Nicaraguan Faithful Fools. **Heidi Meza** continues leading the school. Faithful Fools and Franciscan Sisters help subsidize teacher salaries and purchase of books and materials. **Mercedes Gonzales** and **Arlen Casco** continue the leadership of the community-based work, most especially working with empowerment of women and also in providing courses and opportunities to receive services in natural medicine and nutrition. This past year Faithful Fools received a \$15,000 grant in 2017 from the Sisters of Charity in Houston, TX to support the school and community work and a \$4000 grant from One World Mission Fund to support repairs and remodeling in the Casa Misionera Franciscana and the Fools' Court.

Section II Reflections on 2017 from Mary Ganz

Bible Study:

Our Faithful Fools' "Conversation of Biblical Proportions" has had its ups and downs this year. It continues reliably to be a place for people of many different religious backgrounds (or none), many different ways of thinking, and many social backgrounds to come together, to focus on an ancient text, and to consider together how to be good people in the world. Leadership and the community itself have shifted some during the year. The group continues to be hosted faithfully by longtime Fool **Melissa Fafarman**, but the rotating leadership has not been as steady. **Fred Rabidoux** and **Merida Wilson** continue to lead as their lives allow; Melissa leads at least once a month and often more, and **Tammy Lundy**, a neighborhood resident, has come forward as a strong leader once a month. **Ade Kroll** and I both are willing substitutes.

The character of the group has also shifted and continues to shift. With the departure of The Healing WELL from Fools' Court, there is no longer the same easy path from their downstairs program to our Bible Study. We are back to having a steady core of eight to ten regulars and other "less regulars" and occasional visitors.

We received word that **Barbara Graves** died this year at the age of 104. Barbara founded this Bible Study at St. Boniface Church more than 20 years ago and moved it to the Faithful Fools when the space at St. Boniface was no longer available.

Writing At Faithful Fools:

This year, WRITE ON! creator **Robert-Harry Rovin** recovered sufficiently from his 2014 fall and head injury that he was able to return fulltime to leading the Thursday afternoon group, focusing on writing in community as a way to discover and share what is true for each participant. It has a stable core of six to eight writers, with one to three newcomers or occasional visitors on most Thursdays.

Robert-Harry's format includes check-in, guided meditation, timed writing in response to prompts, sharing what was written, and supportive feedback from the leader and the group. Like all Fools' programs, it draws from the neighborhood and from the broader community of Fools, so life experiences the members bring to their writing are richly diverse.

Listening Post:

Barbara Meyers, a UU minister who was a Faithful Fools intern in 2003-04 and who now has a successful mental health community ministry in Fremont, approached us this year with a wish to create a "Listening Post" at the Fools, where she and another volunteer would make themselves available to listen to whomever came by and wanted to talk. She and a spiritual direction colleague, **Karolyn Stenlund**, originally hoped to set this program up in the building. We convened a

meeting with neighborhood colleagues, Kathy Curran of The Healing WELL and Greg Moore of the St. Francis Living Room. In the conversation, it became apparent that everyone thought this would be more useful outside than inside a building – that the people who were most in need of a conversation partner might not feel comfortable meeting inside. In addition, though the space was available at the Faithful Fools, we wondered if starting a program like this might encourage people who tend to look at the building as more available for drop-in than it actually is.

Hy suggested that they consider teaming up with “Sidewalk Talks,” which offers structured conversation opportunities outdoors in many locations in this and other cities. As it happened, “Sidewalk Talks” was in operation that very day outside Lava Mae in Civic Center, and it turned out to be exactly the right format. Barbara and Karolyn wrote a grant to the Tenderloin Community Benefit District, and received funds to buy four canvas folding chairs, a cart, and sign-making materials as part of the city’s effort to “activate” the park and make it available to people of all ages during supervised hours. Since mid-September, they have set up their chairs outside the Turk & Hyde mini-park for two hours each Thursday afternoon. Traffic varies with the weather and the time of month, and they are coming to be recognized and welcomed to what can be a very busy corner. They have also built relationships with Safe Passage, another Tenderloin project which is participating in the park activation project.

Interns At The Faithful Fools:

A number of interns worked with us in 2017, bringing many gifts. Often they come to us from California Institute of Integral Studies as work-study students or from Starr King School for the Ministry for Field Education credit.

Julia Harrison came to us last year as a work-study intern from California Institute of Integral Studies; she is working alongside Sam to refashion our website. Joining us early in 2018, also from CIIS, is **Elise Youssoufian**, who is working with Carmen and providing presence for Thursday programs. **Kelley Scrimger** is a Field Education intern from Starr King School and is working with me. Kelley provides presence for Thursday programs, and has been especially supportive of the new Listening Post program.

University of San Francisco interns who were with us for the spring semester of 2016-17 were **Vivienne Pismaro** and **Nina Garcia Heithaus**, who concurrently served as Valedictorian for USF’s College of Arts and Sciences.

In 2017 we concluded our two-year experiment with a chaplain internship co-funded by us and by St. Francis General Hospital; see the 2016 report for a longer discussion of this program. In the second year, **Sara Warfield** provided solid, grounded presence for the Fools community.

Section III

Reflections on 2017 from Jackie Hider

In 2013, I asked if I could work at the Faithful Fools as an intern. Before that, as part of a Buddhist chaplaincy program, I had visited several times, participated in a couple Street Retreats, and did extensive interviews with three of the full-time Fools, Carmen, Kay, and Alex. In October 2016, I committed to a year of full-time volunteering. I came with questions. “What is street chaplaincy? How does one “do” street chaplaincy in the spirit of the Fools’ mission statement? Is there a spiritual component to street chaplaincy as it is practiced at the Faithful Fools?” These are questions I still carry with me.

During 2017, I have done most of the regular activities that every intern is asked to do. I answered the door and participated in certain groups. I accompanied students, friends of the Fools, and other interns. I have worked intensely with immersion groups. I have led activities with the Jugglers and participated in most reflection groups. I have joined many Street Retreats including the Fools’ annual 7-day Street Retreat. I have participated in the leadership group for sixteen months.

Accompaniment:

From October, 2016 – April, 2017, with the guidance of Carmen, I accompanied **John DiDonna** through a hip replacement surgery. John was a member of the UU Church and a friend of the Fools. In Fall 2016, it came to the attention of Carmen that John was having difficulty with his hip. He had become increasingly isolated and only walked with great difficulty. Carmen asked me to meet with him and accompany him to various appointments. John decided several times not to do the surgery and cancelled his appointments. In January 2017, it became obvious that he could no longer negotiate the steps to his apartment and needed to move. We found a senior facility, The Avenue on Van Ness, and helped him move from his apartment of forty years. We completely cleaned out his old apartment. He had also finally agreed that the hip replacement was necessary. From Jan to April 20, 2017, I accompanied John to two major surgeries, visits to the emergency room, and stays in three different rehabilitation facilities. John expressed many times during these months that he was ready to move toward death. In mid-April he decided to stop eating and he passed on April 20. Although John said he was not religious, we talked continually about spiritual matters. We discussed values and what gives meaning to our lives. We described important relationships. We talked about actions we were proud of and ones we wished we could change. When I was with John, I always had to be present and flexible; John ran the show. I grew to love John and am still saying good-bye.

Zendo:

The Zendo has gone through some changes. While the Healing WELL was housed in the Faithful Fools’ building, people attending used meditation in the Zendo as part of their morning activities. Some were “trying meditation out.” After the Healing WELL moved last May, attendance is generally smaller but more regular. There are three

people who consistently attend morning meditation, two who are less regular, and occasional visitors. For about six weeks we had an unstructured meditation on Friday afternoons. These were discontinued because of lack of attendance.

The Zendo got a makeover. We emptied it, cleaned all the walls and repainted it. It now has a lovely dark orange wall where we have the alter. We also have new floor heaters. We emptied shelves, took down pictures, and took away the oil burning lamps and now use candles. It is a comfortable and an aesthetically pleasing place to sit calmly. Meditation is the practice of presence and reflects the intention stated in the first line of our mission statement. "We are called to a ministry of presence that acknowledges each human's incredible worth." For me, the call is to take that practice of presence into my daily activities. I greatly appreciate that the Fools have created a space for our contemplative practice.

Open Cathedral:

I am consistently the Faithful Fools "presence" at the San Francisco Night Ministry's Open Cathedral on Tuesday evenings. This group, led by **Monique Ortiz**, has a diverse group of attendees. Students from USF who work with the Food Recovery program bring several trays of food, which they serve to the other attendees. Students from the Night Ministry's clinical pastoral education (CPE) program also attend. Many people from our Tenderloin community come every week. We start with a check-in, which often takes the whole two hours. In these check-ins, people talk about their spiritual practice. They describe successes and difficulties in their lives. They talk about their worries, and struggles. Most everyone participates including the students. When we finish with check-in, everyone gets a Bible and participates in a reading and discussion. This meeting holds the possibility of directly experiencing our common humanity. By just attending, each one of us is leaning toward connection and seeing light, courage, intelligence and strength in the other people who attend. Yes, it does get rowdy and there are disagreements, but I always come away feeling gratitude and love for my fellow attendees.

Chaplaincy at the Fools:

During the past 14 months, I have received a lot of help and support. Mary helped with wise council on spiritual matters. Carmen answered tough questions about accompaniment. Sam introduced me to issues of advocacy. Hy shared stories of his street ministry and his ability to stay present in some very difficult situations. Nicole's warmth and sense of humor inspires me. Sara Warfield was a good friend and our conversations of spirituality and street chaplaincy were specific and very helpful.

The questions I asked at the beginning of this report are still alive for me. Living in the Tenderloin and participating in many Fools' and community activities has made our ministry of presence alive. In October, I realized that I wanted and needed more training in the spiritual aspects of Chaplaincy, so I enrolled and completed the twelve-week Sojourn Chaplaincy training at San Francisco General Hospital. It was an intense program that included classes, supervision, practical work visiting

patients, and many reflections with other chaplains. With this added training I understand more about what a street chaplaincy looks like. The challenge still is to discern if compassionate action is called for and what that action might look like. Sometimes it is as simple as walking someone down the street. Another time it might mean being present while someone is feeling lost and hopeless and helping him/her find some comfort. It might be accompanying someone to an agency to fill out SSI applications. Sometimes it is about singing with someone or sharing a joke. In truth, it is still a blurry line for me. I can see myself working with my questions and with the Fools for a long stretch into the future.

Section IV

Reflections on 2017 from Nicole Fusco

Mercy Volunteer Corp (MVC):

In August I started my second year as Faithful Fools' Mercy Volunteer. I chose to do a second year to continue to grow not only personally but in the local community as well. Since I began my time at the Fools, my comfort level with the work environment and the Tenderloin community have increased as well as my organizational, interpersonal and leadership skills. Much of this growth has come from the roles given to me at Faithful Fools and those I have taken on for myself. My weekly duties include maintaining the Somatic Experience schedule, being present and available in the building on weekdays, and cooking meals for and participating in Tenderloin Votes. In addition, I regularly assist with Street Retreats, both by being present but also frequently taking a lead in scheduling Shadowers. Early this year I was also welcomed into the weekly Leadership Circle meeting which has contributed to my role as a leader at the Fools and my own confidence in my role. Over time I have grown into a consistent and grounding presence at Fools' Court, especially during and after the catastrophic and disruptive fires in the North Bay.

Accompaniment:

I help where needed in accompaniment. My presence has supported several moves this year, visits with ill members of the community, and I am often the first face encountered when one enters Fools' Court. I also led the accompaniment of ET, when he injured his arm and was unable to continue his responsibility/love of walking Ellie Mae. I temporarily ensured that this large dog would be walked while ET recovered. In addition, late this year I began lending my ear to a weekly conversation with a participant who feels very alone.

Immersion:

This year my position has changed in that I have taken on more of a leadership role in student immersion trips and co-leading a number of Into the Streets. From accompanying students to service sites such as the food bank, Safe Passage, and Glide to sitting with them at dinner or walking around the TL giving a local tour, my duties range far and wide. Most of my role has remained unchanged, except for my increased involvement in the planning process of the immersion groups' schedules.

Section V Reflections on 2017 from Hy Carrel

Street Ministry:

If walking with us on a Street Retreat is an opening act, then street ministry encompasses several of the later scenes. The walls of Fools' Court are permeable barriers that help create spaces where we can be together, can live, and can get things done. Within but also very much beyond these walls, we encounter people where they are. In 2017, we have paid attention to many connections with people we meet outside. For example, on our block we have strengthened our relationships with the men who staff a city-provided portable restroom (1pm-8pm) and Sam and I supported a neighbor in strengthening his immigration status.

As I walk in the TL, on Market Street, and in the Castro, I greet new faces and check in with familiar ones. Typically, conversations take place with any of a dozen or so homeless youth (ages 30 and younger) as well as a number of older unsheltered neighbors. Through this practice I am becoming a reliable trusted friend and confidant to many. Sometimes the older people I interact with accept invitations to Faithful Fools' programming (e.g., WRITE ON! and Community Dinners) and sometimes people accept invitations for more formal accompaniment (e.g., visits in the hospital). Often, youth just want to be heard without judgment and want someone to listen to their plans and to help keep themselves accountable when following through.

Street Retreats:

In 2017, several active and long-time Fools experienced their first Street Retreat, including Tammy Lundy, Dee Kylie, Dorian Dorey, and Jesse Johnson. Carmen led most of the retreats, but Mary also led many. Sam led *Into the Streets* in the Spring, and in the Fall Nicole and I led several, including one that became an important part of a leadership academy organized by Fool **Fyodor Ovchinnikov**. In April, **Isabelle Laure** and **Forest Gilmore** joined Carmen, Mary, Nicole, Jackie, and me on our 7-Day Street Retreat. The tone of the 7-day overall was introspective for participants while walking and also welcoming for the 5 to 10 other Fools who joined on any given day for reflections.

WRITE ON!

I have been a frequent presence in WRITE ON! ever since Bianca Huerta's waves of enthusiasm washed me toward Robert-Harry back in 2015. This program amplifies my joy and pride in writing as well as sharing with others. **Robert-Harry Rovin** arrives early nearly every week, but when his transportation service is occasionally unreliable, **Ed Bowers** steps in to start or lead the workshop. Regular participants include John Duke, Sheppard Kominars, Darryl, Ed Bowers, JJ Rush, Lotus Miller, Meg Whitaker-Greene, and myself. Until the end of the year, Todd Ditto, Bara Belle-Diamond and Ray Valdez were also regular participants.

Community Dinners at Old First:

In the spring, **Pastor Maggi Henderson** from Old First Presbyterian Church approached Carmen about resuming the role of coordinating Community Dinners on the 4th Saturday of each month, a position she and Alex Darr had filled several years ago. These meals provide opportunities for local (mostly faith-based) groups to prepare a meal and share it with about 150 members of our community, most of whom are homeless or live in SROs. Carmen and I accepted the responsibility which included volunteer coordination and ensuring the meals go smoothly. We chose to accept because this offered an opportunity to deepen our relationship with Old First and provide a straightforward option for those who ask to volunteer with us. In our foolish way, the primary volunteer opportunity consists of sitting at a table with guests and simply sharing a conversation over a meal. Our intention is to promote a welcoming environment with minimal differences between the roles of guest and volunteer. These dinners are opportunities to connect with hundreds of people, including many Fools such as Dorian Dorey, Jesse Johnson, Ruben Velasquez, Bobby, Billy, Abel “Guario” Silva, Carolyn Sha, Steven, Carmen, myself and others. We view our role as stewards of a strong community of regular volunteers, many of whom are currently living in shelters themselves.

Accompaniment:

Accompaniment is an act of presence. In the Spring, my phone calls and visits at SFGH helped a man I’ve accompanied for years to stay in the hospital long enough for SF HOT to connect him with temporary housing for the first time in three years. More hands can often facilitate accompaniment: this summer, Jackie assisted by Nicole, Jesse Johnson, and me facilitated a couple DR & DR move from a squalid North Beach SRO into a studio across from Fools’ Court. Less than a week later we were able to walk with DS through a similar move. Our assistance with DR’s move was not contingent on anything, but it has been a pleasure to see her health improve in the new space and receive her ongoing presence as an active volunteer and reliable member of our community. As Carmen worked with MA to make her home more livable, Nieves, Nicole and I stepped in to share time with MA and bring her and her cat to Fools’ Court while work was done on her apartment.

I find myself gently and respectfully stepping into relationship with long-time friends of the Fools, honoring our past and finding a role for myself in the present. I use our current accompaniments as a guide, as I ponder with other Fools questions of when and how deep do we dive into newer accompaniments. We respond to people who walk through our door with an immediate need and to people we are just getting to know as they express deeper needs. The choice to triage (i.e., what can we accomplish together in 30 minutes or to whom may we introduce you?) often feels right for immediate needs, but how do we discern when a more involved accompaniment is appropriate? Usually, more involved accompaniments arise from mutual communication and empathy, and feeling that we are moving together in the journey. Those accompaniments may be exhausting, but are rarely draining.

Volunteers:

Consistent and significant efforts by volunteers enable the programs, advocacy, and accompaniment on which we build our Faithful Fools life. Many volunteers are highlighted through the individual reports. Here we try to emphasize many of the others. **Jackie Hider** is a super volunteer, who provides support and presence wherever needed. Throughout 2017, she was a committed member of the leadership circle, actively accompanying individuals, participating in immersions, and anchoring morning meditation in the Zendo with Dee Kylie and Ed Bowers. **Ed Bowers** works full-time at The Gubbio Project and also ensures there is always a presence at meditation, and frequently attends (and sometimes leads) WRITE ON! **Dee Kylie** has been a long-time Fool, and has been taking on more responsibility this year, meditating daily, greeting people at the door when things are busy, and participating in the new program A TL Think Tank. **Brian Darr** is a long time volunteer who continues to organize our monthly movie night with thought-provoking films, engaged discussions afterwards, and compelling write-ups in our monthly E-News. **Martha Boesing** worked to schedule a play writing class this Fall. **Lotus Miller** has been a regular participant in WRITE ON! and Jugglers, is always ready to perform at Fools' events, and we share in her joy that she has found stable housing just down the street. **Jon Sadrgilany** and **Emily Basnight** are consistently among our Shadowers for youth on Street Retreats and the Coming of Age program led by **Alex Darr**.

Ade Kroll keeps us well-stocked with incredible soup, cookies, and immense smiles. She led creation of an enormous loaf of bread for Oscar's Feast themed on Bread and Roses. A devoted team made Oscar's Feast engaging, including performance by **Esmé Rodriguez** and by our grounded emcee/song-leader **Isoke Feme**.

Jesse Johnson moves with grace through resident organizing groups in the TL, is a founder and a leader of TLVotes, and is becoming a regular presence at Fools' Court and City Hall. **Dorian Dorey** is our digital assistant, participating actively in TLVotes and A TL Think Tank as a member, secretary, and now helping plan and send reminders. Whether watching the door, Shadowing on a Street Retreat, or opening people's eyes about poverty, Dorian brings deep and uplifting presence. **Carolyn Sha** brings thought and enthusiasm to TLVotes and Community Dinners. **Kasey Asberry** continues her dedicated work with Demonstration Gardens (and seeking its next home) also with monthly Art-in-the-Park music/poetry, and began activating the Turk & Hyde mini-park to opens its availability to adults a few hours per day. Kasey is an extraordinary connector devoted to making the Tenderloin more verdant ("The Garden District") and accessible to all residents. **Nieves Moreno** juggles balls with great love, whether giving rides to appointments, providing patient and consistent accompaniment, or helping fill out the housing application and doing the subsequent move-in, we depend on Nieves.

Section VI Reflections on 2017 from Sam Dennison

General Thoughts:

I am reminded of a poem that Kay and I used to recite together:

*And the days are not full enough
And the nights are not full enough
And life passes by like a field mouse
Not shaking the grass*

Ezra Pound wrote this poem a little over a century ago. And it remains true in all the ways that poetry remains true over time. We have a sense that life is passing by but we or it (life) are never quite enough, never quite enough. And perhaps always a little too much as well.

This last year has surely been full enough with normalizing new political realities and the ripening of other realities from the slow shifting movements of displacement to the tectonic movements of life and death. We can also say that it has **not** been full enough: If it were, we would feel more content with what has been accomplished or how we have addressed the realities of those devastating new political realities and the slowly growing distress as displacement wrests person after person out of neighborhood.

Institute for Street Level Learning:

Over the last four years, (three of them generously supported by CHI) we have nurtured the educational part of our work. We have especially grown our work with the University of San Francisco and with our immersion programs. We are also growing more adept at attracting and working with interns and work-study students. Year by year, the educational part of what we do is generating more income while deepening our thoughtfulness as learning partners.

University of San Francisco

Women, Poverty, and Catholic Social Thought with Dr. Erin Brigham continues to be one of our most significant learning programs. Through that class, we are able to closely connect our work with the ethical and social values that students are learning. This year we designed the first few days to be an intentional process of invitation, meeting with the students on campus and walking or riding the bus with them to the Fools. This gave them the experience of being welcomed into the neighborhood and changed the way they engaged notions of poverty and life on the street. We engaged more of our colleagues and neighbors as guest speakers than in previous years which made the academic concepts all the richer. For a second year, we created a book together commemorating

what we'd studied and learned. This year's book is an especially rich artifact of thoughtful reflection.

Service-Learning

We have slowed some of our service learning activities in order to offer fewer students more intensive experiences (as opposed to serving many students with less rich experiences). So rather than hosting 15 to 20 students per semester from 2 to 4 classes, we are hosting only 5 to 7 each semester from 1 class. This allows us to get to know faculty better and to pay more attention to each student.

Congratulations

We have big (dare we say almost goofy) grins on our faces. Why? Because our dear friend **Brandi Lawless** was granted tenure last fall. We can attest, from first-hand experience, that she deserves tenure and more for all her hard work and the great generosity of her heart.

We also have to congratulate our own **Fernando Enciso-Márquez**. He is the 2018 recipient of the California Campus Compact Cone Award for Emerging Leadership. This award (for which we wrote the nomination letter) honors people whose professional promise is dedicated to pioneering practices in community engaged learning. We couldn't be more proud.

Immersion

This year we again hosted St. Benedict's/St. John's, St. Ignatius High School and Santa Clara University. With each group, we learn more about how to focus service and reflection in order create resonance between what the students are seeking to learn and what they experience here. For example, with the national examination of sexual harassment and assault, we organized discussion and **Jiwon Chung** facilitated a Theater of the Oppressed experience around those topics for the Santa Clara students. As they were all women, with women faculty and student leaders, it gave them a chance to deeply consider how street level harassment is connected to harassment in the workplace and other forms of gender oppression.

It is highly likely that we will have more immersions or special term classes. This spring we will have another high school group in April and we are getting more inquiries quite regularly.

Our Growing Reputation

We are on the verge of being published with our colleagues Dr. Erin Brigham and Dr. Brandi Lawless.

See, Judge, Act is Dr. Brigham's nationally known and used service learning text book for teaching Catholic Social Thought. The book is being issued in its second edition and Dr. Brigham asked me to co-write a section of the forward in relationship to the role of community partners in service learning.

Street Retreat Research

Dr. Lawless, who has just been awarded tenure at USF, is writing up the research data we collected on Street Retreats as a learning engagement tool. She and I will soon be preparing that data for one or two co-written articles.

A Gathering of Colleagues, Lewis University

In February, we shared our work with the faculty, staff, students, and community partners of Lewis University in Romeoville, IL. The Service-Learning office of Lewis invited us to spend two days talking and sharing our work in both formal and informal settings. It was highly productive and we all learned a great deal from one another.

Advocacy and Community Engagement:

The best way for me to describe the nature of last year's advocacy work is to say that I found myself coming into 2018 with the desire to be more a Citizen-philosopher than a Citizen-activist. Faithful Fools has been supporting and working with our activist neighbors through Market Street for the Masses and TLVotes for quite some time now. The activism of the last number of years has been productive and the work that our neighbors do is inspiring. At the same time, we also pay attention to Kay's admonition that "Action must be as deep as Reflection—and vice versa."

I can't write about our advocacy work without also noting that activism in the larger world, on all sides of the political spectrum from far right to far left, has become toxic with hostility, reactivity, and personal attack. This is particularly disturbing within progressive politics which has begun to be somewhat less thoughtful for the sake of forcefully resisting racism, nationalism, and other threats to social justice. For all the right reasons, progressives feel called to take to the streets, raise up our voices, and take up our places in the public discourse so that it is clear that we will not lightly give up the civil rights and social justice progress that has been made in the 50 years since Martin Luther King, Jr's assassination. However, if we do not want to become the very thing we are resisting, it is essential that we not only reflect on what we are called to do, but we must engage in rigorous and thoughtful reflection in public.

Hannah Arendt, a 20th Century philosopher, understood better than most that we become our best and most human selves in public, in the place where we are held accountable by our fellow Citizens, by our neighbors. She wrote extensively about the nature of violence, genocide, and totalitarianism. In essence (but with rich complexity), Arendt teaches us that not only do we have to be vigilant in order to preserve democracy and social justice, but we must be thoughtful in doing so. If we focus only on defending against the onslaught, we risk the kind of thoughtlessness that produces the very things we are against: violence, injustice, and tyranny.

Through our involvement in Market Street for the Masses and the Mid-Market Citizen's Advisory Committee, we have engaged at many public meetings and participated in addressing many proposals for legislation, policy implementation, and other public issues. We have worked to negotiate with developers and Twitter Tax companies to mitigate the impact of displacement as income inequality steadily gets worse and worse. There have been wins and losses and a large number draws in this work. But what there hasn't been is a shift of a scale or caliber that can even slow the growing divide between the rich and the poor. (And let us not think this is new, for we are caught in the grip of historical trends that have been gaining momentum for at least 40 years, if not more).

So over the course of 2017, we have been turning our attention towards building communities of citizens. The most obvious example of this happens every Thursday evening. Those are the evening you will find TLVotes which has been meeting weekly for more than a year. Rare is the evening when there are fewer than 20 or 25 people in the room; even rarer is the occasion when the conversation does not directly address what it means to be a citizen and how we can each fulfill that roll. Beyond discussions, we go to hearings, attend and/or host educational events related to harm reduction, homeless services and policies, development, displacement, and other significant topics which of course include how to register voters and the content of ballot measures.

Through Market Street for the Masses, we worked closely with the Development Without Displacement Committee to host several workshops for mapping and analyzing displacement within the Tenderloin. We also developed a closer relationship with Tidewater, a market-rate developer, with whom we are investigating creative ways to buy and rehab existing affordable housing.

The Mid-Market Citizen's Advisory Committee has suffered a number of near-death experiences, and somehow in the midst of that it survived and I became its chair, marshaling through legislation that has breathed life back into it. It continues to suffer from waning interest from community and membership alike, but still we can count \$40,000 of privately raised funds for the 3 TL public schools among the achievements of a committee that rarely makes quorum and has little legislative power.

We can point to these accomplishments and feel good about the work that we do. Yet better still is taking the time to ask: What needs lie below the surface? How might we do things a little differently so that not only is affordable housing preserved but the values of social justice are made more tangible through the work itself? How do we address the forces which continue to push people out of the neighborhood, the City, and the Bay Area itself?

We are asking ourselves, “How can we do this differently? How do we advocate without seeking to dominate the conversation? How do we undermine profit as a motive while calling one another to our better selves?” By definition these questions cannot be answered in isolation. So we recently started calling together A TL Think Tank. Every other Wednesday, we invite people from the city, from organizations around the neighborhood, and those living nearby to engage critical questions. We have been asking about quality of life, about what the neighborhood needs, about how to address living conditions even if we can’t change economic status, and so on.

I would anticipate that we will continue our commitment to these four groups—TLVotes, Market Street for the Masses, the Mid-Market Citizens’ Advisory Committee, and A TL Think Tank. For myself, I would also add that how I engage will be resonant with the notion that 2018 is a year for thoughtfulness and reflection. Even though there will continue to be many proposals and events urging us to be reactive, my own hope is to engage with deliberation.