PROLOGUE BY GERRY HASENSTAB

A book is finally written about Joe Hubbard. It has been a long time coming. I wish to first thank David Williams for taking on this task and for all those who submitted sections to this endeavor of love. David asked me to write this prologue several months ago. Of course I said yes. Why wouldn’t I do it? It was the least I could do for my dear friend Joe. I had no idea it would be so difficult to do.

"A Quiet Greatness" is a perfect title for this book. Joe has been given numerous awards and accolades and still remains relatively humble. There is a line in an old movie "Inherit the Wind" in which a newspaper reporter is calling in his report and he describes a man as "strutting sitting down." I have seen people like that. I have met several people in positions of "power" who were most proficient at "strutting sitting down." It is very rare that Joe uses his notoriety to gain an advantage but when he does it is for the sake of someone in need, not himself. He is often called a "living saint". I know that people say this as a sign of respect, but after 30 years of hearing it, I am amazed at how Joe maintains his humility. I truly believe that Joe is constantly aware that he can only accomplish what he does because of God working through him.

There is a little known fact about Joe that I think puts his life into perspective. His parents wanted to name him Raymond Lee, but the Irish priest said he should have a good Irish name and declared that he will be Joseph Patrick. In the Bible, God often changed the name of His chosen ones. I think that God changed Joe’s name to claim him for Himself.

In the Catholic Church, we believe that suffering can be a sign of God’s love for us. God started showing Joe His love for his family when Joe was young. Joe’s dad got hurt and could not work when Joe was in high school, and Joe went to work at odd jobs to help support the family. Through his family’s sometimes being in need, Joe was introduced to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and God drew him closer and started showing Joe His path in this life. When Joe would tell me about those times and challenges in his life, he never talked about it as a bad thing but as a way that God prepared him to be more sympathetic toward those whom he would later serve. This path was to lead him to meet, help and bury hundreds and hundreds of God’s people in need.

I met Joe when I was out of work with a one-year-old son. I volunteered to drive Joe around before Christmas in 1976. In January of 1977 I was hired by Bishop William Cosgrove. My job description was very simple, or so I thought. Bishop Cosgrove looked at me and said, "Your job is to keep this man (he pointed to Joe) alive." That sounded simple enough, but those of you who know Joe are aware of what a challenge that turned out to be. Keeping him physically alive was not that hard. But to keep him emotionally together was the great challenge.

Joe takes on the hurts and pains of many of the people whom he serves. Forty years of this absorption takes its toll physically as well as emotionally. How he has not had a breakdown in recent years is a testament to his faith in God as the provider of his strength and stability. Without his deep faith he would have cracked years ago.
Those of us who know Joe personally are blessed. Many of us have learned what forgiveness is. It is not a bunch of words; it is an action. It is a decision to forgive. There are many examples of such forgiveness in his life. People who have hurt him or those he loves need to bury a loved one—Joe helps. One who kills his friend needs a lawyer—Joe helps. Joe has shown to me and others that love is not easy—but definitely worth it.

Enjoy this book that introduces you to a good and simple man. A man of quiet greatness.

PREFACE

Every year when I was a younger, my family would load up the car and journey to the St. Louis area. In the sixties, our destination was East St. Louis, Illinois, and in the early 70’s, our trip concluded in Belleville, Illinois. I was born in Cincinnati, and while we lived there, we would travel back twice a year to see my grandparents and aunt and uncles. Later, when moved to Cumberland, Md. and then Proctorville, Ohio, the vacation became an annual trek. My mother (Doris Williams), my father (Melvin Williams Sr.) and my brothers (Melvin Jr. or “Butch”, as we called him, and Gary) were all born in East St. Louis.

One of the highlights of our vacation was to see my Uncle Joey. Joe Hubbard was the “fun” uncle. He had a bubbly personality and lots of energy. We used to playfully tease each other. I remember when I was about 6 years old, I had a stuffed monkey that I named Jo-Jo in an attempt to aggravate him. I was often disappointed, though, because although we stayed about a week at the house which Joey lived with my Grandma Hubbard and Uncle Johnny, we only saw him a handful of times during the week. As a child, it was hard to understand why Joey was always working. He would often come home after I went to bed and be gone in the morning before I woke up. In later years, as Grandma Hubbard would send us newspaper articles about the good deeds that Uncle Joey was performing, I started to understand. Now, Joey was always a good host and would always take us to fine eating establishments like Riedel’s, Walton’s, The Brown Derby, and Fischer’s. Even then, Joey believed in helping support the “little guy”. Occasionally, we would eat at a chain restaurant like Red Lobster, because it was my mother’s favorite, but usually Joey preferred to frequent the establishments of the small businessman. Joey still enjoys eating in the locally owned restaurants in the Belleville area. It is very rarely that Joey walks through the doors and doesn’t see someone he knows. The conversation and social atmosphere are as important to Joe as the food itself.

Joe Hubbard truly loves people. A person has to in order to do what Joe has done most of his life. Joe Hubbard has devoted his life to helping others. Many times over the years I heard my mother (Doris, Joe’s sister) scold him for putting others over himself. Joe’s pace has slowed some over the years, but the devotion and passion for helping others is still there. As always, Joe still continues to place others over himself.

As I became older in the nineties and took on responsibilities of my own, I did not see Joey for years, as I quit traveling back with my parents. I still talked to him every now and then on the phone, and the newspaper articles kept coming. My mother passed on February 12, 2008. Mourning and loss seem to bond family, and they comfort each other in the time of need. My mother is sadly missed by many. But, her death has one silver lining in the fact that it has bought me closer together with my Uncle Joe, Uncle Johnny, and my brothers, Gary and Butch.

My mother always said I was a lot like Joe. So naturally, I wanted to get to know my uncle, so I could see if that was a compliment or not. Seriously, my mother was very close with Joey. Her passing has been hard on all of us, but the coming together and hours of phone conversations have eased the pain as much as possible.

On a recent trip to visit Joe, I became intrigued by all of the awards and honors that Joe has won. I desired to learn more about the man who has become somewhat of a legend in his hometown. I thought that writing a book was a good way to learn more about my family and was a great excuse to spend more time talking with Joe Hubbard.
CHAPTER 1 - The Humble Hero

"Quiet greatness" describes the character of Joe Hubbard. He is as humble and as modest as a man comes these days. There is not an ounce of arrogance in his body. On the surface, Joe Hubbard appears to be very ordinary. "Joe" would seem to be the right name for him as he looks like "Joe Everyman". Nothing about his appearance or the way he moves screams "greatness." Once you examine his actions and witness his passionate grace, then you will realize that you are in the company of greatness. His essence is quiet but not invisible. As you listen to the man and follow his gospel, you will bear testament to his "quiet greatness."

Joe Hubbard has won many awards. But winning awards was never his goal. He never set out to achieve notoriety or seek personal recognition. But when greatness rises to the surface and becomes so evident, the greatness has a way of becoming legend. Like many great citizens before him, Joe does not see himself as being special. In his view, he is as broken as many of the people he helps.

"We're all broken," Joe says. "We all suffer from something. Whether we be an alcoholic, or drug addict or suffering from loss. We are all broken. We all have a cross we carry. If we all throw our crosses into a pile and then reached back and grabbed a cross, which cross would we grab? We would grab our own cross. You wouldn't want someone else's. Jesus carried a cross, and we all have ours."

Joe believes that it is our duty and nature to help others. Joe states, "When you are created in the image and likeness of God, even those who believe who may not really believe in God, have some type of faith. We all have a common bond of love."

Joe has been called "the epitomy of a modern day good Samaritan" as well as a "miracle worker" and "a living saint." A newspaper article from the mid-1980's stated: "As the head of the Belleville Diocese's Catholic Urban Programs, his vocation as a social worker goes beyond the boundaries of a nine to five job. It is not unusual on any given day for Hubbard to help out at a second-hand clothing store, visit a lonely elderly person at a nursing home, counsel unwed mothers, tell stories to children at a day care center, help find housing for an evicted family, attend a funeral, and then sit up all night counseling someone who is dying. He's been keeping this grueling pace of unlimited personal service to the poor, the underprivileged and the disenfranchised since the early seventies."

Joe's best friend and longtime co-worker, Gerry Hasenstab, had similar comments as far back as 1983, when he was interviewed for a feature story on Joe in Extension magazine:

"Since I started working with him, Joe has never ceased to amaze me," said Hasenstab. "In one day's time, Joe will fill ten food orders, provide bus fare for an unwed mother and find a place to stay for a family who have been burned out or evicted. He will help an elderly person make pre-funeral arrangements, move someone's furniture to a new home and visit a lonely gentleman in a nursing home."

"There seems to be no limit to his desire and ability to help. He does what others consider to be the dirty and menial work, cleaning the mess left by a sick alcoholic and washing the floors for an elderly person who couldn't make it to the bathroom. He will sit
up all night with someone who is dying alone and then talk all day with lawyers to prevent an eviction of a destitute family."

An article in The St. Louis Post-Dispatch on December 27, 1993 entitled "Charity Program's Founder reaps Rewards" by Margaret Gillerman said:

"About 4a.m. one day last week, the telephone rang and Joe Hubbard jumped up to get it. "Someone needed him. A frail, elderly man with no family had to be rushed and admitted to St. Mary's Hospital; and in East St. Louis, the staff at the nursing home and the hospital knew that meant a call to Joe Hubbard."

The article later stated, "When Hubbard looks at anyone with his soulful dark brown eyes, no one can doubt that his good works come straight from the heart."

"He states his goal simply: I try to get people together, I try to help them do everything they can to get out of poverty, which is hard today."

The article mentions, "One way he does that is by trying to build up a person's self-esteem and, eventually, self-reliance."

Joe Hubbard works and fights for everyone, regardless of their race or sex. In 2003, Joe was selected to receive the 2003 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Humanitarian award from Southern Illinois University of Edwardsville, held in conjunction with the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration at the university. "The Humanitarian Award recognizes principles and ideals of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and recognizes efforts meant to inspire tolerance, understanding, and sensitivity for persons of color," said Kent Neely, dean of the university's College of Arts and Sciences.

"I believe that Joe Hubbard can be counted among those countless people who have struggled and continue to struggle to make Dr. King's dream of justice and freedom for all a reality," said Wilton Gregory, former Bishop of Belleville, in his letter of nomination for Hubbard. In his letter, Gregory went on to note Hubbard's hands-on approach to managing the Catholic Urban Programs that assists individuals with food, rent, utilities, transportation, medical care and other needs.

"Joe's is not a glamorous ministry," said Richard Mark, vice president of energy delivery at Ameren, in his letter of support for Hubbard. "He sees as his responsibility the need to make life better for everyone. He offers all inclusive, unconditional love and assistance in whatever way possible."

In 1992, a Toast To Joe Hubbard was given by The Board of Trustees and the staff of Catholic Social Service at Fischer's Restaurant in Belleville, Illinois. In the program for the event, the following was written about Joe by an unaccredited author:

Joe Hubbard: A Man Of Mercy

"With all the kings' money and all the presidents' men, social evils still prevail in our society. How they are solved, possibly lies in the hearts of a few; those who each day strive to do justice, love tenderly and walk humbly with their God."

One member of this group is Joe Hubbard, Administrator of Catholic Urban Programs in East St. Louis. This man, with limited resources, has only one simple goal to reach, but struggles everyday with countless barriers that stand in his way.

Taking up the slack of a society which has refused to solve its problems with one simple action - "Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself" - Joe Hubbard has taken on a mission of mercy that grows more serious every year.

In a country with a set of civil laws unmatched by any society in history, Joe Hubbard fights crime with a more religious brand of legislation: Bury the dead; Visit the imprisoned; Welcome the stranger; Feed the hungry; Clothe the naked; Shelter the homeless; Visit the sick.

To many, these laws seem ineffective and meaningless compared to those aimed at protecting the privileged of our society.

We'll halt at a stop sign to avoid damaging our cars, but we won't stop to help a person in need change a flat tire. We won't spit on the sidewalk, but we'll direct vile and disgusting insults in the direction of minorities. We will put much effort into preparing our garbage for recycling, but we fail to provide decent burial to the indigent and forgotten.

The victims of these human crimes suffer injustice as real as the blood, sweat and tears that flow from the broken bodies of people Joe Hubbard comforts everyday. People without the cars we have. Fathers without the means to support that ours lad. Mothers without influence. These people turn to Joe and his staff for food, clothing, shelter and money when other resources are exhausted.

Joe Hubbard is now nearing retirement age. It is hard to imagine Joe ever giving up his job, but if he ever does retire, he is sure to be doing his lifework either volunteering or in some capacity. Serving the community is what keeps Joe going. His body is starting to show signs of aging, and the years of lost sleep, not eating right, and stress are taking their toll on him. He has trouble walking sometimes, and it limits the amount of physical work he can do. But Joey is always active and always helping. It seems he is constantly surrounded by death these days. Dealing with death can be even more stressful than the physical labor he has done all of his life.

In recent months he has deal with death on an almost daily basis. He recently helped a father struggle to deal with the suicide of his son. Joey just listened and was there for the man. In the end, the man thanked him and let Joe know how thankful he was that Joey was there to listen to him.

Joe says, "Sometimes you don't have to do a lot but listen and give of yourself. Sometimes all you really do is love and care and just a kind word."

Joe also recently made sure that a family of four that burned up in a fire had a final resting place. Sometimes in our society, people fall through the cracks. They do not have immediate family or resources and in a way become at the mercy of the hands of society. Joey Hubbard tries to fill in those cracks and tries to make sure that everyone is aware of God’s love and tries to make sure that everyone is treated with love and compassion. Times are hard, and the problems of a weakening economy and the ever presence of drugs
and violence make things tough for people and for those in social work. Joey is not alone. He has a very capable and dedicated staff that is beside him every step of the way, and he has the support of many in the community that help Joey spread his gospel through monetary donations.

Joey has seen the toll that drugs and violence have taken on the community. He has helped to bury an alarming amount of teenagers and youth lately and has helped families search for answers to why their loved ones were taken at such a young age. This type of involvement eats at the body, heart, and soul a lot worse than hard physical work. It has a way of making a man old before his time. But Joey deals with these and never complains or worries about himself.

Death has been in Joey’s life in other ways lately, and it has taken a toll on him. Recently Joey watched the video of the 1992 Toast in his honor. There were many happy memories there, as he saw several people on the video that have since passed. It brought a smile to Joey’s face to see these old friends and family members. At the same time, their loss has weighed heavily on him. Many of his mentors and family members have passed. He has happy memories, but the loss still takes a toll on him. The death of his sister, Doris, in February of 2008 has been very hard for Joe. He feels broken, and he isn’t sure that he will ever truly recover. There was much love between the two, and it will be discussed further in another chapter. But Joey continues looking for answers and doing the best he can to spread God’s word.

The legacy of Joe Hubbard will live on long after he is gone. He brought a much needed quality to a lot of people’s live, and that is the quality of hope. He gave and gives love and it creates hope. The following is from the 1983 article in the Visitor magazine about Joe:

“The list of Joe Hubbard’s services to the needy of St. Louis and the surrounding area sounds like a litany of the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy that he holds dear to his heart: visiting the homebound, starting a soup kitchen and second-hand clothing store, counseling unwed mothers, raising funds to keep special education classes going at a local school - and making sure that the children who need special attention make it to the school - and arranging parties for the elderly to let them know someone still cares and appreciates them.”

The article continues: “On a grand scale, Joe filled St. Patrick’s Church with more than 6,000 Christmas food baskets to distribute to families suffering from disasters of fire, flood, illness, theft, or unemployment. Always sensitive to the individual, he supplied what mattered most to one dying cancer patient - a decent bed for the man to spend his last hours in.”

The list of deeds that Joe has unselfishly performed for others over the years would go on for pages. Joe does not like to talk about his accomplishments, which is evidence of his modesty. He never seeks recognition or reward. Those qualities are what make Joe special and such a jewel. There are social workers all over the country, and while many are very dedicated, it is very rare to find a social worker that has relentlessly given so much of himself for such a period of time.

In the Visitor magazine article, Jerry Hasenstab talks about Joe’s love for people and his passion for his work:

“This is not Joe’s job, it is his life. So when you work with Joe you see the beauty of the people because that’s what Joe sees and talks about. There is no race, religious or age barriers. To Joe, all people deserve the same love, compassion and basic necessities of life. He makes you really want to help and share with others too.”

The article quoted Joe:

“If I didn’t realize the beauty of God and the beauty of other people, I couldn’t keep looking at the burned-out houses, the shootings and poverty day after day. But I know we are doing it for a greater purpose, and it’s only through God’s strength that we continue.”

Joe continues, “It’s not nice to walk into houses and see kids eating garbage, or the father who assaults his daughter, or the house burned down by the neighbors. But the beauty is that Christ is there no matter what happened, and He helps. Christ is the great healer.”

“Many times we are nearest to God with the poor, the elderly and the lonely. You can see in a special way how God works through them because they experience that deep faith in God that we miss.”

“Most of us take everything for granted - from getting up in the morning to having money in the bank to pay our bills. But they depend on Him so much that He is truly present to them. I see it on their faces when I take gifts to them and they say ‘We are so grateful to God. Praise Him!’”

In an interview with The Belleville Messenger, Joe speaks further about his passion and God’s love:

“Society has a dollar or time value for everything. But you just can’t put a price tag on love. As one man who was preparing to meet his Lord told me while I was sitting with him. ‘I really appreciate you being here.’ And that said so much.”

“Many people think that visiting with an elderly person is a waste of time. But to me it exemplifies God’s love when we can reach out and say, ‘We care about you. No matter if you live in a house with ten dogs or lie on a bed soaked with urine, whether you have been in jail or you’re an alcoholic or dope addict, you’re still loved as a beautiful person by God.’”

After forty-six years of serving the needy of the East St. Louis area, Joe still has the passion for helping others and still spreads God’s love.

“God draws straight with crooked lines,” Joe says. “As you get older you realize that when one door closes, three more open. I helped take care of my mother for years, giving her baths and feeding her, and then suddenly she was gone. There was a type of emptiness, but then Gerry and I started going over and helping a gentleman without any legs. We went over every night and put him to bed.”
Joe reflects back on what his forty-six years doing God's work has meant to him. "It's great to look back and see how people have touched me over the years. Everyone says I touch others, but they touch me in return. Their visions, their missions, and their dreams mean so much to me. It's wonderful that they share those with me. There was one lady that was going through tough times. We gave her five hundred dollars to get her back on her feet. When things turned around for her, she sent the money back so we could help someone else. It's very rewarding when that happens or when you are in the emergency room and you run into someone that says without our help they wouldn't have had Christmas for years. And it's great when those people say they are doing well and we helped them survive that tough period in their lives. It just shows us that people are the arms and legs of Christ. It lets us know that we all need people and that we all help each other. We all go through the potholes of life, we all have ups and downs. It's important that we help each other. I may be there for people, but they are there for me as well. It's all part of God's plan for us. Sure, there are a lot of people out there without money, but there are also people that have lots of money but are very lonely because they don't have anyone to love and no one to love them. We all need people."

In a 1995 interview for A Steward's Review, Joe was asked what he finds most rewarding in his ministry. The following was his answer:

"I have always tried to believe that something good comes out of something bad. This is a difficult perspective to maintain when you see abuse, death from the AIDS virus, death from cancer, and so forth. But I have seen beauty even in things that many people think are bad.

"God opens doors, nurtures people, puts people in contact with each other and works in many mysterious ways through our Church. I am blessed to be able to see God's love flow through people.

"It is a rewarding experience to be a tool of God... to help to open doors and challenge people to work to change their situation and themselves. Challenging people is a hard thing to do, because people do not like being challenged - even the poor. Sometimes God's love is a tough love and it is hard to offer such love to those who are not receptive. But I would not trade my life for the world. It is truly a privilege to work with the poor and to look for God's presence in each person we serve."

God has carried Joe through hard times. One of Joe's favorite pieces of literature is "Footprints". God has carried Joe on many occasions. Joe has not led a glamorous, glorious life. He grew up in a home that bordered on poverty after his father was injured. His father died at a young age. Even though Joe has accomplished a lot and helped many people, he knows there are many he cannot help. He has witnessed things that men shouldn't have to see. He has seen hunger, death, and the effects of crime. It has not been an easy life for Joe, but you will not hear him complain. He continues to walk the journey he must face and carry the cross he must carry. He has faith, and he is well aware that he does not walk alone. Most important, he looks for the glory of God. He knows that God is all around him. He knows that God will lend him a hand to pull him out of the hard times.

CHAPTER 2 - Family Values

Joe's father, Edward B. Hubbard, was born on August 2, 1895. He was the son of Charles Hubbard and Mary Elizabeth Martin.

Joe's mother was born Olga Edna Greaser. She was born on January 8, 1909. Edward and Olga Hubbard had four children - Edward B. Jr. (1/26), Charles John (12/27), Doris Jean (11/3/31) and Joe (1/8/45).

Edward Hubbard was a hardworking family man. He started as a stenographer and became a boilermaker. When Joe was in the fifth grade, Edward suffered a horrible accident on the job. He was tightening a boom on a crane. The driver of the crane was intoxicated and fell asleep. The boom started swinging and hit Edward in the head. Edward Hubbard suffered a horrible injury. He saw twenty or thirty doctors, and they were all unsuccessful in easing his pain. Holes were even drilled into Edward's skull to help alleviate the pain. He suffered from the head injury for eight years. Leukemia set in from the high powered drugs. Leukemia was listed as his cause of death.

Edward Hubbard was a family man. Even as he suffered from great pain, he loved his family. Doris was very fond of her father and missed him greatly the rest of her life. She was truly "a daddy's girl." Edward helped his son-in-law, Melvin, Doris's husband, get a job on the B&O Railroad. Edward called his friend, Sammy Davis, and told him about Melvin. Sammy was impressed with Melvin and helped him get a start with the railroad. Melvin stayed with the railroad for forty years and advanced high into the ranks of CSX, which grew from the B&O Railroad.

Everyone who came in touch with Olga Hubbard thought she was a great lady. She was a talented cook and took excellent care of her family.

Joey lived with his mother his whole life, until her death in 1997. He was beside her all the way through her illness as he bathed her, fed her, and did everything possible to make her comfortable. Everyone is well aware of Joe's love for his mother. She often accompanied Joe on many outings. Joey's love for his mother runs very, very deep. As a young boy, Joe would perform errands and odd jobs around the neighborhood so he and his mother could take a bus to the zoo or other areas.

Olga had a strong role in implanting firm values into young Joey. It isn't any accident that Joey turned out to be the caring person that he is today. It was Olga Hubbard's influence that helped formed the morals that are the defining point of Joe's personality. She took great care of Joey. She was not only a mother to Joe but a great friend. She provided a strong ethical and moral environment for Joey to grow into the person he now is. No matter what time of the night that Joey would come rolling in after a long day of social work, Olga would be waiting with a meal. She worried about Joe roaming the dangerous streets of East St. Louis, but she understood what a special son she had, and she was proud that he was doing God's work.

Joey's devotion to his mom never wavered. Joey and his mother were always there for each other, but in her final years Joey was beside her as much as possible. There were many sleepless nights for Joe as he would work all day and then come home and care for
his ailing mother. It was not a sacrifice, responsibility, or inconvenience to Joe. It was who he was and is. His mother had been responsible for creating the person that Joe had become. It was not that Joe was paying her back for the love and care she gave him, but he truly wanted to be by her side. It was love, not obligation that drove Joe.

Joe says lovingly about his mother: "She was a great lady and took care of me for many years. When she got sick it was my turn to take care of her."

Joey has lived with his brother Johnny his whole life as well. They still reside at the home they have owned since the early seventies. Johnny and Joey are frequent visitors at many locally owned restaurants in the Belleville area. It is not unusual to see them at Raymond's Place, Tim and Joey's, or Fischer's. There is a strong bond between them. Johnny is 80 and has had a few health scares but still gets around quite well.

Johnny and Joey's brother, Edward, passed away in 2006. Johnny always watched over Edward and was there for him until his death. Edie sold papers in his younger years. He went away when he was young to study to be a Brother. But, it was too lonely for him so he went back home. He loved his mother very much and wanted to be close to her.

Joe had one sister, Doris. Doris was eleven years older than Joe but Joey tagged along with her everywhere in her youth. Joe tells lovingly that Doris worked at the Hollywood Dress Shop and would buy Joe orange slices and chocolate candy whenever she could and bring them home to him.

Joe tried to follow Doris everywhere. He even went on many of her dates. One time Joe was riding on the back of her bicycle and he fell out of the basket and hit the ground hard, but they continued on.

Doris dated Melvin Williams, whom she eventually married. Melvin always had great love and respect for his automobiles. He always took the best care possible of his cars and took great pride in keeping them clean and in top shape. Joey did not like to be left at home when Doris went out. One time, young Joey became so enraged that he did not get to go along with Doris and Mel that he stood in the driveway and threw rocks at Mel's new car as they drove away.

Johnny Hubbard remembers little Joey's tantrums at not being allowed to follow Doris: "Joe would holler and carry on if he didn't get to go along."

Even after Doris and her family moved away, Joey kept in touch vigilantly. Up until the time of her death, Joey would call her on a regular basis. Doris was very proud of her brother but worried about him. She would complain that he cared too much about others and that he needed to worry more about himself. She encouraged him to take better care of himself and worried about the stress he suffered worrying about others. Doris was very good-hearted and a Good Samaritan herself, helping out at church regularly and working as a volunteer at The Jeffrey George House. The Jeffrey George House is a facility in Huntington, WV that provides temporary lodging for relatives and supporting friends of seriously ill adult patients and qualified adult outpatients. Doris helped out every week by doing cooking and cleaning chores on a volunteer basis. She was proud that her brother accomplished so much in his career, but she was worried that he was ruining his health and wanted what was best for her brother.

Although he never married or had children of his own, strong family values lie at the core of Joe Hubbard. He has been very close with Gerry Hasenstab and his family over the years and has actually been like one of the family. He went on family outings and spent holidays with them. Gerry has been more of a brother to Joe than co-worker or friend. He has always been there for Joe. Recently, he made a very hard trip accompanying Joe to his sister's funeral in Proctorville, Ohio. It was hard for Gerry because he was a good friend of Doris's as well. But he made Joey as comfortable as possible on the long trip and consoling Joe as much as possible, for this, without a doubt, was Joey's sudden trip.

Joey has always been very proud of what Gerry's children have achieved. He takes great pride in the fine adults that they have become. No one really knows if Joey ever had any regrets about not having children, but is certain that by being able to be a part of Gerry and Barbara's family, that Joey did indeed get to be a part of a family and did get to experience the love and warmth of a family.

The deaths of his mother, sister, and brother in the last decade, have weighed very heavily on Joe. Joe has spent his life watching his mentors die, comforting friends, and even strangers in their final moments, and helping others deal with the loss of loved ones. It is very hard for more mortals to handle death. It is something that everyone has to deal with in his or her journey, but it is also the most stressful events that a human being must endure. Joey's life, in a way, has become about dealing with loss, in both helping others accept loss and in enduring the losses he has had to face in the last few years. Just as Joe has accompanied others in death's shadow, God has walked with Joe and has carried him in his time of need. It has not been easy for Joe. Joe had many mentors that helped him become the outstanding citizen that he has become. It has been hard for Joe to watch the people who influenced him and guided him pass away.

But despite the pain that death has dealt him, Joe continues on and comforts those in the shadow of death. He continues to comfort those dying and their loved ones. In doing so, Joe absorbs more pain and heartbreak: He has spent many hours in the last year with his good friend, Julie Llanes, and her sister, who is suffering from cancer. Joe visits with her regularly and sits by her bedside. Julie and her family have been very good friends of Joe's for a long time and just as Joe cares and tries to comfort Julie and her family, they have done the same for Joe in his time of need: Joe may not have achieved riches, fame, or had children, but he has made many friends. Friends are Joe's legacy. Joe has experienced more love through his friends than many people have gotten through children, grandchildren; and even great-grandchildren. Death is a tough force to face, but Joe will endure anything for a friend. Though Joe's life has been darkened by death, his life has been about friends and the love that friendship brings.

When one talks with Joe, it is evident that that loss is a part of Joe. He has suffered the loss of family, the loss of mentors, and the loss of friends. But one loss Joe Hubbard will never face is the loss of faith. Joe Hubbard always keeps the faith. It is in that faith that he finds the strength to keep walking on and helping others. Though Joe has helped feed and clothe others, his gift of passing along the faith has been how he has helped others the most. He makes sure others are aware of God's love. He helps people find that love inside themselves. Joe knows the dangers and pain of low self-esteem. Low self-esteem is Joey's sworn enemy. When Joe recognizes low self-esteem in someone, he
works tirelessly to repair that esteem. Joe is all too familiar with the trappings of self-doubt and low self-worth. He knows that the best way to help others is to help them help themselves. There is no better way to help someone who has been bitten by life's obstacles than by passing faith on to them. Faith heals, restores, and gives people the strength they need to continue on in the face of adversity. Though Joe may not be a psychologist, he is very familiar with how the human mind can make or break a person. To help people be strong, they have to first believe in themselves. Without faith, there is not vision. Joe Hubbard works with broken people and realizes that faith is the key to helping them become whole again. But without a healthy level of self-esteem, it is hard to have faith.

Joe believes in the power of hard work and was always a hard worker. Joe's oldest nephew, Melvin (Butch), is just eight years younger than Joe. They often were together growing up. Mel remembers how hard Joey worked in his teen years:

"Joe did a lot of odd jobs that I went with him and helped on. He cut grass for people, mostly elderly. He cleaned the local barber shop. After the barber shop was closed he and I (and many times his mother) would go in and sweep, mop, and do various other cleaning chores. He also did the same type of chores at a small confectionery store across from my school, Jefferson. We also hung around and helped out at a little news standiosk that was directly in front of Jefferson. It was run by a crippled boy named Junior who drove a three wheel Cushman scooter that I thought was neat. Junior also sold Christmas trees at Christmas. Uncle Edward was also there most of the time. This was before newspaper machines and many people would just pull up in their cars and we would run the paper to them.

Even at this young age Joe was kind to people and a hard worker. He knew many people and was well liked. About four houses down from the Hubbard household was an area known as the Lagoons. It was a sunken area that sometimes contained water. It was later developed into a housing project for the elderly. Joe and I went to the Lagoons and one time we built a lean-to but from discarded Christmas' trees.

As a youth Joe took great pride in being a Boy Scout. It was scouting activities that helped Joe develop a love for nature that still burns passionately in him today.

"When I was a kid, I walked the Lincoln Trail in Indiana, Kentucky, and Illinois. I used to go on camping trips when I was a scott. I've always loved camping and being in the outdoors. Nature is a wonderful creation of God." When discussing the love of nature that grew in him when he was a Boy Scout, Joe mentions how that love he built as a youngster has stayed with him over the years and in a sense, helped shaped his values. "Some of my best memories are of simple things usually done outside. I remember going with Gerry and his family to parks and going swimming. Just enjoying being outside in God's nature. I was never one to do things like traveling to foreign lands. I was always happy just being outside and being one with nature.

"I've always liked flowers and being outside working in the yard. There's a lot of peacefulness about flowers. Experience is when you touch earth and feel its peacefulness. There's a healing quality about the Earth. There's a different feeling like you are with God. With plants, you plant it and God's creation blooms and becomes something beautiful."
because giving and helping is not just his vocation, but his life. Joe started out doing what he believed in and doing what he thought was right, and it became his job. So it is very hard to separate the person from the job at times because he believes so much in what he does. More than just his job, it is his gospel. Joe’s mantra is “Keep the faith.”

CHAPTER 3 - East St. Louis

East St. Louis was on a major decline when Joe Hubbard started his crusade to help the needy. Joe came along at the right time to help fill a need. East St. Louis had been sliding downward since the 1960's. It was an All-American City when Joe graduated in 1961. There were an abundance of jobs up until the sixties. In fact, Joe remembers, “If you couldn’t find a job in East St. Louis, you couldn’t find a job.”

East St. Louis was the nation’s second largest rail center. Stockyards and packinghouses built up around East St. Louis to take advantage of the transportation system. Signs proclaimed East St. Louis as “Igog Capital of The Nation.” Immigrants and black families from the South moved to East St. Louis to find work. In 1959, the population peaked to around 83,000 residents. According to Bill Nunnas in his 1995 book “Coming of Age In 40’s and 50’s East St. Louis”:

In its heyday, East St. Louis was a bustling metropolis with all of the trappings of a blue collar industrial town. It was the fourth largest city in the state, ranked behind Chicago, Peoria, and Joliet. Huge steel and concrete factories rose from the earth like monuments built by natives to pay tribute to the gods of commerce.

Nunnas continued:

“East St. Louis began shipping a multitude of manufactured items, coal, and processed meat products to the Atlantic seaboard. The city was in an advantageous spot, and the political structure made the key decisions necessary to ensure that continuing growth needs were met. At one point in time, twenty-seven railroads radiated from East St. Louis. Local residents claimed it had more trunk lines than any other town its size in America. In addition to low cost rail and water transportation, the site attracted heavy industry because of low taxes, cheap land, and access to the coal (underneath two-thirds of the state in Southern Illinois). There were over three hundred mines in nearby towns.”

East St. Louis was soon to face several problems which contributed to its quick demise. A demise which led the city into poverty. East St. Louis has been unable to raise itself above its problems. These hard times have made social workers and support agencies a necessity and created an urgent situation for the residents.

www.wikipedia.com offers this account of the troubles East St. Louis faced:

As a number of local factories began to close and jobs declined, financial conditions deteriorated. Elected in 1951, Mayor Alvin Fields resorted to ill-judged funding procedures to try to buy the city out of its financial morass. The scheme increased the city's bonded indebtedness and the property tax rate. More businesses closed as whites left the area. Crime increased as a result of young African Americans joining gangs. Street gangs such as the War Lords, Black Egyptians, 29th Street Stampers and Hustlers appeared in some neighborhoods.

Like other failing cities in the 1960's, East St. Louis suffered riots in the latter part of the decade. In September of 1967, rioting occurred in the city's South End. Also, in the Summer of 1968, a still-unsolved series of sniping occurred. These events contributed to residential mistrust and adversely affected the downtown retail base and the city's income.

Urban Sprawl and the construction of freeways, contributed to East St. Louis' decline as well. The freeways cut through existing neighborhoods and broke them up. The freeway also made it easier for residents to commute back and forth from suburban homes. Degeneration led to East St. Louis adopting a number of new programs in an attempt to reverse decline — the Model Cities program, the Concentrated Employment Program and Operation Breakthrough. The programs did little to prevent decline. The noted architect Buckminster Fuller suggested putting the entire city under a geodesic dome.

According to www.stlouisfed.org the site for The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis:

Between 1960 and 1970, the city lost nearly 70 percent of its businesses. Unemployment soared. Residents moved out of town. The population declined continued for years. Between 1970 and 2000, the city lost 55 percent of its population.

During all this time, inaction by an ineffective city government compounded the problems. East St. Louis slipped into a downward spiral that has been tough to stop. As businesses left and the local government struggled, the tax base shrank. As the tax base shrank, the local government struggled more.

The city eventually had to eliminate all but basic city services, and even those were cut. The city couldn’t pay its light bill or pay for its garbage collection. Street lights and stoplights were turned off, and abandoned lots became dumping grounds for trash. Police and fire protection was spotty, at best. Buildings began falling down. Crime and unemployment rose. East St. Louis and devastation became synonymous.

In the book “East St. Louis: Made in the USA” by Andrew S. Theising, the author wrote on pages 146-147:

Poverty struck the city by 1970. Hunger was a stark reality. 'The need is so great here that it is indescribable,' noted Wil McGaughy, head of Metro-East Health Services. An Illinois Public Health Poverty Division consultant concurred: 'We had children come to us who were gut-aching hungry because they simply had no food. And we had old people come for the very same reason.'

Theising continued:

"The dwindling population and increasing poverty produced ripple effects throughout the community. They caused small businesses to close and crime to rise, which meant that East St. Louis was no longer a draw for entertainment and gambling. Looting of vacant buildings or unattended rail cars became common. Sacred Heart Catholic Church was one of the many old buildings that was to be demolished to make room for the interstate highway system in the 1960's. The pastor turned the keys over to the Illinois Highway Patrol at 5 PM one afternoon. By 8 AM the next morning, anything of potential scrap value had been stolen from the building. Railroad cars that stopped in East St. Louis for warehouse deliveries and pickups were looted and products sold on the black market.
Highway construction workers brought weapons to work for personal protocol. Armed guards patrolled some work cities.*

According to the East St. Louis Action Research Project at www.eslarp.uic.edu, thousands of jobs were lost in the area:

“1961-1967 4,659 jobs were lost as some major industries closed: Armour Packing House, Alcoa, and Emerson Electric.
1967-1973 1600 jobs were lost due to Swift and Co. closing.
1973-1979 1500 jobs were lost due to Ober-Nester Glass Co. closing.
1975-1980 700 jobs were lost due to the closing of Hunter Packing Co.
1980-1980 13000 industrial jobs were lost as company after company abandoned the East St. Louis Area. American Brake Co., Key Boiler Co., Eagle-Picher Lead Co., American Asphalt Co., Excelsior Tool and Machine Co., and American Steel Industries were a few that left the area.”

The disastrous condition of East St. Louis was discussed in a Time magazine article on June 12, 1989. The article “East St. Louis, Illinois” was written by Lee Griggs. In the opening paragraph of the article, Mr. Griggs described East St. Louis:

“In the seamy Mississippi River city of East St. Louis, Ill., the grim local joke is that the crime rate is finally starting to level off because there’s not much left to steal. Block after block is boarded up or burned out. Many buildings have been reduced to rubble as thieves cart away everything of value: bricks, aluminum siding, copper wire, even heavy cast-iron manhole covers from the potholed streets to be sold for scrap. The housing authority complains that aluminum downspouts are swiped from its buildings within hours of installation. Trash-strewn vacant lots along the river stand in stark contrast to the gleaming Gateway Arch of St. Louis, in plain sight less than a mile away across the river.”

Conditions in East St. Louis continued to worsen. Many were starving as the unemployment and welfare rates continued to rise. East St. Louis was a city in trouble. Crime was rampant and many citizens were victims of poverty. More than ever, East St. Louis needed a caring hand. East St. Louis was a perfect place for a young social worker to begin his legacy.

Many people enter into the social work field for a variety of reasons. Getting rich isn’t usually the goal of someone entering the social work field, since the financial rewards are not extremely high. Some, though, do enter to rise up through politics and to start a career in local government. Sometimes people enter the field to try to help better their community.

It is tireless and sometimes thankless work. The situations these workers face can sometimes result in never-ending nightmares. They see victims of beatings and neglect. They see young children living in squalor. They view firsthand the devastation of alcohol and drugs on families and communities. They witness families being evicted and watch helplessly as once proud citizens become homeless and are forced to live on the streets. Good people’s misfortunes become their business. They deal everyday with the side of life that no one wants to see. They venture daily into areas that other people warn you not to go into and areas that appear daily in countless police reports. Many workers get burned out very easily and quickly leave the field. Some accomplish enough that they are able to move onto other positions and away from the depressing activities of helping the disadvantaged.

It certainly wasn’t easy for Joe Hubbard to have a front-row view of the city he loved quickly waste away in front of his eyes. Joe Hubbard didn’t even have a driver’s license the first twenty years of his community service. He often walked the streets of what many called “jungles” and rode buses at all times of the day and night into what were battlefields for gangs and a hotbed of crime. He was warned by many to be careful. But to Joe, it was still his city, still a part of who he was; and his city and his neighbors needed him. It was more than a job. It was his passion, his mission from God. Joe didn’t envision it as a paycheque. He was doing God’s work. He was doing more than helping the needy and serving the poor. He was spreading God’s word. Joe combined social work and spreading God’s gospel. To many, he was Reverend Hubbard or Brother Joe. He was never ordained as a reverend, minister, or priest, but there was never any doubt that Joe Hubbard was truly a man of God. Joe Hubbard had the purest of intentions. Everyone knew that Joe did not carry any hidden agendas. The reason why Joe was able to help accomplish so much was that everyone saw his inner goodness and wanted to be a part of God’s team. Joe could not do it all on his own, and he certainly did not. He had plenty of help from other workers and donors who saw that Joe genuinely cared for people and believed in what he was doing. When others saw the unselfishness that Joe displayed and his Christian values, they wanted to help Joe help others. They wanted to help Joe’s fellowship become successful.

In an article in The St. Louis Post-Dispatch’s December 27, 1993 edition called “Charity Program’s Founder Reaps Rewards”, Joe discussed East St. Louis:

“I love East St. Louis. I love the people. They do neighborly kinds of things for each other. I always hope deep down somehow East St. Louis will change back to a community that’s prosperous and able to provide adequately for its people. You see such good people who struggle so hard and have such a deep faith - they’re the people who keep you going.”

The article continued, “The only thing that gets to me today is the violence. When I was younger, it didn’t pull me down. But when you see good young kids getting blown away and hurt, it wipes you out for a while.”

As this book is being written in the Summer of 2008, it seems another dark cloud is hanging over East St. Louis. The economy is worsening under the weight of the energy crisis. As gas prices hit over $4 a gallon, new challenges will test East St. Louis and the agencies that try to help. Heating costs will be extra high this winter and it will be a challenge to keep everyone warm. As gas prices rise, milk and bread and other food companies will find it necessary to raise their prices to offset the high cost of fueling up their delivery trucks. Not only is gas around four dollars a gallon, but milk is too. There is not a part of our economy that will not be affected by the rising fuel prices. Many may have to choose between driving their automobiles, heating their homes, or eating proper meals. Midnight is quickly approaching in not only East St. Louis but in much of our country.

In a newspaper article entitled “Paychecks Don’t Keep Up; Families Feel The
Squeeze" written by Jennifer A. Bowen in the Belleville News Democrat’s April 17 edition, Joe was interviewed:

“...this is the worst I’ve seen it. The worst,” said Joe Hubbard, coordinator of Catholic Urban Programs in East St. Louis. Hubbard has worked with the organization for nearly 50 years. “I see it here every day. People are desperate, and they are willing to do anything. There is a helplessness that everyone is feeling. The borderline middle class and the poor are really feeling it, and for them, we are in a recession. Many of them have hit rock bottom. I guess those who have more money don’t feel it as much, but for someone who is on a limited income, or a single mother making minimum wage trying to support her kids, this is really, really rough on them,” Hubbard said.

According to the article:

“The 2008 Report on Illinois Poverty released by the Illinois Poverty Summit showed the cost of fuel has gone up 92.7 percent in six years, the cost of energy rose 60 percent during the same time, and the cost of food is up 15.4 percent, but wages, on average, have fallen $1,547 annually when adjusted for inflation.”

As the economy threatens to spin out of control, times look to get even harder for East St. Louis and other Illinois areas as well as the country in whole. This will only make organizations like CUP more imperative to help people survive the imminent tough times ahead. It will also make their roles tougher to accomplish. As times get harder, people have less money to donate to charities. In the toughest of times, agencies and charities, like consumers, find they have fewer dollars to spend in a time when they need it the most.

CHAPTER 4 - Teamwork

There is no doubt that Joe Hubbard possesses quiet greatness. There are many types of greatness. Some great people radiate excellence when they walk into a room. It is evident in everything they do. It is different with Joe. He is very modest and humble, and the greatness inside him is not always immediately noticeable. Joe has the kind of greatness that inspires others and is inspired by others. Joe is a team player. Joe realizes that each person is capable of greatness and by combining his greatness with other’s greatness; he can make great things happen and reach great goals.

When it comes to helping others, one person can make a difference. It is the little everyday things that a person does that help to change the world. A person can make a small donation, perform an errand for a sick neighbor, or visit a lonely person. Little by little, these deeds result in making the world a better place. This is a type of silent greatness. Many people do this daily by spreading God’s gospel and by not attempting to draw praise or attention to themselves. Joe Hubbard and his allies do this every day. Joe Hubbard has won acclaim in the last few years for the service he has performed for the needy in the East St. Louis and Belleville areas. But Joe will tell you that without his friends and co-workers he couldn’t have accomplished nearly as much as he has.

Joe has been blessed to work with individuals with their own quiet greatness.

Together, they have strived to make their home a better place for everyone. Joe has inspired his co-workers and allies, but they have inspired him just the same. They keep him going when faith is hard to come by; they give him inspiration and ideas to improve people’s lives; and they have been right by his side over the years in helping improve the quality of living for those in need. Social work can be a tireless, thankless action that leaves many of its workers burned out and feeling that they are helpless in fighting a bureaucratic system that sometimes just doesn’t care. Social workers have their own personal problems that sometimes make it difficult to concentrate on other people’s problems. Sometimes, it’s easy for social workers to question their own faith when they have to witness society’s problems firsthand. They see the horror stories that most of us will never know. Together, they often form their own support group of friends and co-workers. It is through this network that teamwork helps produce results. This is how silent greatness comes together and produces sometimes loud results. Co-workers and friends inspiring each other to help those who have fallen in between the cracks of our society. The dedicated helping the forgotten. Joe Hubbard and his friends and co-workers have forged a relationship that works to help those who need support, food, money, companionship, or even more important - self-confidence. They develop self-confidence in others so those people can help themselves and perhaps pass their own brand of silent greatness onto other people. Sometimes, silent greatness needs a voice. Joe Hubbard and his gang’s silent greatness helps give others a voice so they can find that part in themselves that is capable of greatness and pass it on to others.

One such person that Joe has forged a bond with is Gerry Hasenstab. Joe has won many awards, but without Gerry’s support and assistance, Joe would not have been able to accomplish nearly as much. Together, they have combined their silent greatness to enrich the lives of others. They are co-coordinators of Catholic Urban Programs. They have been the dynamic duo of social work for the East St. Louis area since the mid-seventies. More than that, they have been close friends. Joe gave Gerry a job when he needed it, but Gerry has been there for Joe over the years. He was there to help Joe get through the loss of his mother. He accompanied Joe to his brother-in-law Melvin’s funeral almost 500 miles away. Gerry was there by Joe’s side for Joe’s sister Doris’s funeral. He drove Joey to Proctorville, Ohio, for the service and has been there by Joe’s side to help him over the loss. It was hard for Gerry because he knew Doris and Joe’s mother as well. Joe and Gerry have been part of each other’s family.

Joe never had children, and in a way, almost missed out on the type of family activities that Joe loves. Joe has always been a family man, and it’s hard to be any closer with one’s siblings and mother than Joe has been with his. But Joe really hasn’t missed out on the activities that make families special and display strong family moral values, because Joe has been a part of Gerry’s family. Joe has experienced the benefits and love that families provide for each other, because he has experienced them with Gerry’s wife and children. He has spent many holidays and participated in family outings to parks and other places with them.

Gerry was out of work in 1976 when Joe got a call from an Oblate priest who wanted to know if CUP could use another volunteer during the always hectic Christmas holidays. Gerry did an excellent job. When he was still unemployed in January and February, he decided to hire Gerry and add him to the payroll. Jokingly, Bishop Congrove said that Gerry’s job description was to “keep Joe alive.” A job that Gerry has performed excellently for over 30 years.
Joe works with outside organizations as well as with other members of CUP. Joe has worked closely with Bill Kreeb for over 30 years. Bill is Director of Leslie Bates Davis Neighborhood House. The two became acquainted while Bill was starting out and doing practicum at Leslie Bates. At first, they had two different philosophies. Joe believed in helping people find money and helping with direct services. Bill leaned more toward being a community organizer and believed in helping people help themselves. He believed the best way to help people was to teach them how to better manage their lives and provide for themselves.

Bill used to tell Joe: “You are doing Band-aid work and not helping them turn their lives around.” Bill said, “We have to organize them to do things for themselves.” Bill and Joe had great respect for each other but still believed in their own way of doing things. Joe used to tease Bill and say, “You and your uppity social work.”

Over a short period of time, each began to see what the other one was saying. Bill admired the way Joe was an advocate in speaking out for people who didn’t have a voice. Bill realized Joe was always speaking up for people. He was going beyond the same old same old. He was thinking outside the box in trying to do things bigger and better for people.

The two have tremendous respect and understanding for each other’s philosophy and strengths and they work together on several projects. Bill realizes that both of their views are actually the same. Bill now understands that what Joe has always been trying to say was that because people are so broken we have to support them at first and help them meet their basic needs in order for them to have the energy in being effective and organizing. It’s hard for them to concentrate on learning when their children are going hungry.

While they work equally on many projects, a person can easily understand how their teamwork and different views merge to help make broken people whole again. The Band-aid work helps hold the people together and fulfills their basic needs, like food, clothing, shelter, and paying utility bills. Then, the community organizing skills help teach people to develop skills to better provide for themselves and build self-esteem. While the pair may not tackle every project in that manner, it is easy to see how each of their strengths working together as a team is very effective in making people strong, self-supportive, and helps spread the fellowship that is so important to both Joe and Bill.

Joe is a spokesperson for the Catholic Church. His fellowship has helped our causes in many ways. It is very beneficial in helping with statewide legislation. He helps with getting letters written. He helps get priests and churches behind his grassroots’ campaigns in providing the people that are struggling. So he could relate to the struggle that other people have gone through. It’s given him a point of view of what challenges others face and he knows how to live it himself. It’s given him that passion that he didn’t want people to go to bed hungry and not to have heat because he has gone through it himself and knows how bad it feels.

From the beginning of CUP, there have been many people who have helped make the program successful. The main problem with listing those responsible is that somewhere down the line, a deserving person’s name always somehow gets left out of the list by mistake. So many people have banded together to make CUP successful. Without teamwork and contributions from many people, many people’s lives would not have been changed as they have been. As a testament to the success of CUP, it is not only the immediate area of East St. Louis and Belleville that comes to CUP for assistance, but now citizens in need from all over Illinois have heard about CUP’s crusade and come to CUP for assistance.

Joe credits Joe Weigers, Bill Williams, and Joe Pazderka for getting him started in helping others. It was Joe Pazderka who inspired young Joe by picking him up at home and taking him to church after Joe’s dad had died. Along with Bill Williams and Joe Weigers, they inspired Joe to become a member of St. Vincent de Paul and to pass on to others what they had done for him and his family.

Joe became friends of Joe Weigers’ sisters, Teresa and Bertha. They used to take young Joey Hubbard on calls for the church to complete census calls or to talk people about upcoming church activities. At the time, young Joey was so shy, they often had to literally drag him onto the doorsteps to talk to people.

Joe was fortunate enough to make many good friends over the years. Helping others causes volunteers and co-workers to form a bond, and spreading God’s word forges people together. Joe’s life has been very rich in the blessings of the friendships that he has made, with the special group of people that he has had the honor to spread God’s blessing through and work side by side with in the face of adversity for years. Social work is a stressful occupation, and spreading God’s gospel may at times seem to be frustrating in a world that has many problems. Likewise, the field of social work does not pay the handsome, extravagant salaries that someone may reap if he put the time and effort that Joe and his associates have put into their crusade into other fields of business. But the friendships and relationships that Joe has made over the years and the satisfaction of helping to perform God’s work have made the effort very worthwhile to Joe Hubbard.

Early in his twenties, Joe started doing work collecting items for Christmas baskets at St. Vincent de Paul. Taverns including Gaffens in East St. Louis raised money and donated the items to St. Vincent de Paul so they could prepare Christmas baskets for the needy and distribute them in East St. Louis and Belleville. Ernie Touchette was a local grocer who worked very hard to help raise the money, which often was around three thousand dollars.

Sister Paulette and Sister Ann have also played great roles in helping CUP be successful over the years. Sister Paulette was an original member of CUP whose creativity was very inspirational in forming the program and helping it to grow and prosper. Sister Ann has helped in many different ways over the years by answering phones, preparing food and clothing orders, and by just doing anything she can to help.

Nick Leone was a store manager for St. Vincent de Paul and a close friend to many in CUP. Nick died of pancreatic cancer. It was in his honor that the Soup Bus was started. It was originally named after him, but the name later changed.
Joe also serves as Director at Mt. Carmel Cemetery. Estelle Barnes ran John Barnes Funeral Home, and she and Joe would often confer about different cases. She was Joe’s main support system when Joe’s mother was sick. Estelle was involved with The Cancer Society and she would often refer people who needed help to Joe. Estelle Barnes has passed away, but her daughter Deseree works with Joe at Mt. Carmel.

It is not easy to follow a rigorous schedule every day like Joe has to endure. It makes it easier when you have a great support system like Joe does. He is fortunate to have many friends and associates who are on his side. He does not fight poverty alone. Joe is certainly not alone in his bid to spread God’s gospel and to ease suffering in Southern Illinois. Joe does not walk alone, for his associates and friends walk beside him. God walks beside all of them.

CHAPTER 5 - Organizations Working Together

It’s been midnight in East St. Louis for some time now. There’s a bad moon rising in other parts of Illinois and other parts of the country as well. Social programs and charitable organizations are needed more than ever, but the organizations are having a tough time as well.

Unemployment is high, and even people with jobs are having a tough time making ends meet. Donors who gave to charitable organizations in years past may find themselves in need now. Higher prices mean that people have less money left over to donate to charities. Charities are even finding that there is more competition now for donations. Millions of dollars was given to national disasters like Hurricane Katrina and even international disasters like tsunamis, earthquakes, and cyclones. While these are definitely worthwhile causes, the amount of publicity given to these disasters takes the money that people usually donated on a local level, and it means less for some charities. In addition, federal programs have been cut as money has been used for the war in Iraq. While all these are urgent situations, it shifts the focus off the problems Americans are having at home. Organizations and charities are finding it hard to care for the needy in their areas.

But donations are not always about money. Time and care are other commodities that organizations can always use. HELP is always needed in soup kitchens or in helping with the sick and elderly. America needs heroes right now more than ever. Sometimes the most heroic deeds are the little things that people take for granted. Helping an elderly person perform chores in her home or sitting with someone that is lonely or sick can be very heroic deeds. These are the type of deeds that have always made America great. In tough times, America sticks together and helps each other.

Joe’s sister, Doris Williams, always helped out at her local church, St. Ann’s Catholic Church in Chesapeake, Ohio. A couple of years before her death, she started donating one day a week to the Jeffrey George Comfort House in Huntington, WV. The mission of the house is to provide temporary lodging for relatives and supporting friends of seriously ill adult patients, or qualified adult outpatients. All of them live beyond 50 miles of the Huntington area, and are receiving treatment at one of the six area hospitals. Doris would clean rooms, make beds, and prepare meals. In addition to helping others, Doris also made many friends and raised her self-esteem with the knowledge that she was helping others. At 76 years old, the service made her feel useful and vibrant and that she was helping and doing her part.

There are several organizations that Joe Hubbard works with that can always use contributions of time or money. The following are some of the organizations that Joe works closely with to help make his hometown a better place for everyone. (Some of the following information, but not all, was taken from The Southern Illinois Charities website at http://www.cscl.org/charities/cup.asp)

Cosgrove’s Soup Kitchen - Opened in 1981, Cosgrove’s Kitchen serves a hot meal to anyone who is hungry, six days a week. Currently some 200 meals are served each day. Volunteers are always needed.

The St. Vincent de Paul Mobile Kitchen - The “Soup Bus” was the brainchild of Gerry Hanenstab. It travels through East St. Louis four nights a week and two Sundays a month. It serves 75-100 meals a day. It was created because it was apparent that the soup kitchen needed to be expanded but that task was too expensive. After the South End flooded in 1988, Gerry and Joe saw people standing in the rain and the Red Cross were there handing out food from buses. Gerry got the idea that they can serve the people in housing projects and inner-city neighborhoods that could not make it to the kitchen. Gerry often drives the bus himself. The residents come aboard the bus and eat at tables that are located inside the bus.

The Joe Hubbard House - The Joe Hubbard House is an old convent that has been changed to host college students who come to work as volunteers at the thrift store, kitchen, street patrol, or other programs to help the needy.

Catholic Urban Programs - Catholic Urban Programs, in close association with the St. Vincent de Paul Society, was established in 1973 to help alleviate the suffering of the poor, the elderly, and the homeless in East St. Louis, IL. CUP provides emergency food, funds and shelter, and advocates for people on the fringe of society. Over the decades, as the economic conditions in the area have worsened, as drug problems and derelict buildings have grown, and as both industry and the resident population has fled, the services offered in charity by Catholic Urban Programs has grown.

The St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store - The St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store provides clothing, household goods, and necessities to the Illinois Metro East area. Volunteers assist with sorting donated items, arranging the displays, helping clients, and other duties.

The Neighborhood Law Office - The Neighborhood Law Office, an outreach of Catholic Urban Programs in East St. Louis, opened in September 1996. The office charges no fees for its services. The mission of the Neighborhood Law Office is to help families in the Metro East St. Louis area create a healthy, safe and clean environment, which will foster neighborhood renewal by:

- Demolishing unsafe, vacant, derelict structures;
- Prompt and universal property code enforcement;
- Reducing hazards from industrial chemical pollution; and
- Protecting and enhancing natural resources.
The Holy Angels Homeless Shelter - Holy Angels Shelter, located on the grounds of the former Holy Angels Parish in East Saint Louis, is a 24-hour transitional shelter for women, women with children, and intact families. Single men, especially elderly men, can be housed in the finished basement rooms. The shelter was opened by Catholic Urban Programs of the Diocese of Belleville in 1985 due to the increase of homeless families in St. Clair County.

Holy Angels was the first shelter in East St. Louis to have a social worker and to network with other care providers to help acquire the health, emotional and psychological care needed to stabilize a homeless family.

When a family has lost its income, it is devastated. There are so many ways that a family can become homeless. Fire, loss of income, drug abuse and mental illness all can play a part in family becoming homeless. When this happens, a family can turn to Holy Angels Shelter. The home currently serves an average of 200 people per year.

In a 1995 interview with A Steward's Review, Joe Hubbard said the following about Holy Angels:

Holy Angels is an emergency shelter located in East St. Louis that provides for women and children. They come to us because of domestic problems, job loss, loss of utilities, and loss of their homes.

Through our shelter we network with other agencies to place these clients in educational and job training programs. We try to relocate them to decent housing once they have secured a source of income. We encourage them to participate in an appropriate support group so, if they develop a problem once they return to their homes, they have some interpersonal support. We try to follow up with these clients to confirm that they continue to do better after leaving Holy Angels.

Homelessness often times develops when people have lost their jobs, suffer from domestic abuse or lost self-confidence. This struggle with self-confidence becomes critical to their making decisions and actions to improve their lives. So, we focus upon the self-esteem and self-worth of our clients.

The Family Center - The Family Center of Catholic Urban Programs and the Diocese of Belleville is a social service agency that provides a comprehensive support system for low income families residing in East St. Louis. Programs are individualized to meet family needs and include education, personal development, and assistance with housing, employment, medical needs and other life essentials.

Rooted by the conviction that the world can be changed one family, one individual at a time, the mission of the Family Center is to model and to provide a system of support to families and individuals based on nurturing relationships that reflect positive regard for their innate goodness, strengths, diversity and dignity. Its goal is to have a significant and measurable impact on how families and individuals function and claim responsibility for themselves and their community through support systems.

Programs and Services Offered by the Family Center

Family Program
The Family Center supports and empowers families to act on behalf of themselves, their children and their community by becoming a part of a support system for themselves and for other member families. The core program consists of:

- Goal setting
- Support group meetings
- Family and adult meetings
- Programs for children

Alternative Education
The Family Center offers children opportunities to attend alternative educational programs by providing financial resources and transportation. This program strives to achieve academic success, improved self-esteem, self-motivation and increased accountability and responsibility for the participants.

The Griffin Center - The Griffin center helps children in the poverty-stricken, violent public housing projects realize their potential by providing after-school recreation, after-school educational support, summer day camps, violence prevention programs, advocacy for individual children and families in the school system, public aid system, and specialized housing, and social and health systems.

Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House - The mission of the Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House is to provide quality social and human services, social action and advocacy programs and housing and economic development programs, which help to improve the quality of life for all persons of all ages in East St. Louis and the surrounding communities. Neighborhood House seeks to provide direct services and social action models that empower and strengthen individuals and families to meet their own needs, individually and collectively. Neighborhood House seeks to provide quality child care, crisis intervention and prevention services, family support services, home health care, employment and community organizing services to meet the identified needs of the children and families in the East St. Louis community.

According to the organization's website at http://www.gbgm.org/lessiebates/programs.htm, the programs offered by the Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House are:

- Children And Family - Needs of families with young children are many. Neighborhood House provides day care services in nurturing environment where they improve their cognitive, social, and physical abilities. There are programs for new and young parents aimed at reducing risk factors. Services are provided in the home and at the Center.

- Youth - Neighborhood House provides organized youth activities at our facility as well as some area schools. Recreation and organized sports are popular and are supported with many programs to address the academic and social needs of youth in the East St. Louis community and their families.
Support Services - Emergency payments for utility, rent, medical, clothing and shelter insuring basic life necessities. Home services: personal care, cooking and cleaning for elderly residents. Retired Volunteer and Senior Programs offer seniors opportunities to help at day care, church or office setting, depending on their talents and interests.

Jobs And Housing - Local organizations formed a faith-based housing program that recently saw four new homes built in the community. TANF assists parents find meaningful employment by training and placement services to achieve goals. Assistance in addressing causes of poor housing, high unemployment and welfare effects of reform.

Catholic Day Care - Catholic Day Care is an outreach of the Cordi-Marian Missionary Sisters, in cooperation with the Diocese of Belleville. Its mission is to serve families of the local area by nurturing the intellectual, physical, social and moral development of their children of preschool age in a warm, safe and caring environment.

Urban League Of Metro St. Louis - This is the Urban League’s mission statement from their website at http://www.ulsll.org/:

To empower African Americans and others throughout the region in securing economic self-reliance, social equality and civil rights. The Urban League will be the catalyst for this change through advocacy, coalition building, program services, and by promoting communication and understanding among different races and cultures.

The Continuum Of Life Center - From their website at www.continuumoflife.org: The Continuum Of Life Care Center, Inc. is a faith based service agency, which embraces the homeless, and the near homeless in the greater East St. Louis area. The agency encompasses three programs:

- Metro East Weather Crisis Task Force
- Extended Outreach
- Comprehensive After-Care

Catholic Social Service - From their website at http://www.cssll.org/:

Our Mission: Catholic Social Services of Southern Illinois, an agency of the Catholic Diocese of Belleville, seeks to be a visible expression of God’s love by responding to the human needs of people of Southern Illinois by promoting a just and caring community for men, women, and children from all backgrounds.

Our Services: Catholic Social Services (CSS) provides comprehensive adoption services, regular, treatment, and specialized foster care, the Don Bosco Children’s Center, individual, family and school counseling, senior employment services, senior assisted living management, and referral services throughout Southern Illinois.

Responding to the needs of the people from all faiths and income levels for sixty years, Catholic Social Services serves the people of the 28 southern-most counties of Illinois. Offices are located in Belleville, Carbondale, Mt. Vernon, Mt. Carmel, and Olney.

Call For Help - The mission for Call For Help was taken from their website at http://callforhelpil.org/:

The mission of Call For Help is to provide 24 hour crisis intervention and support services to assist people in our community in the strengthening of their coping skills, thereby improving their state of emotional well being and quality of life.

Also from their website:

Call For Help is a not-for-profit community service agency created in 1970 to provide a listening ear and a concerned advocate for those facing a crisis or other problem in their lives.

Because people need help at all hours of the day, most of our services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We serve troubled youth, victims of sexual assault, the mentally ill, the homeless, those contemplating suicide, and anyone who reaches out to us in need of support and assistance.

Our philosophy is to promote positive mental health, to build coping skills, and to help individuals recognize alternatives and options open to them. We serve those in need without regard to age, race, religion, or gender. We believe all persons should be treated with respect and dignity.

“Our services have grown and expanded to meet community needs.”

There are many organizations working together in the Southern Illinois area to combat poverty and ease suffering. There are many good-hearted people helping to spread God’s gospel. There are also many good-hearted people who donate to help make it possible for Joe and people like him to help others. It takes donations, with grants to help beat the odds. Every organization is working on a strict budget these days, which only makes their task of helping others more difficult and stressful. But hopefully, as word of their effort spreads, their forces will become larger and stronger. Hopefully, more people will aid in the battle against poverty. That is Joe Hubbard’s hope. And Joe Hubbard has faith. With faith, anything is possible, even against overwhelming odds.

CHAPTER 6 - Stories of Joe

Joe Hubbard has touched many people. This chapter is a collection of stories and fond memories from people who know Joe very well.

DAVID WILLIAMS - Joe’s youngest nephew and author of this book.

When I was gathering information for this book, I visited Joe on Memorial Day weekend in 2008. As soon as I got into town, I met Joe, Joe’s friend Julie, and Uncle Johnny at Raymond’s Place for dinner. We left there and went to West End Creamery for ice cream. Joey was in his car and we were wondering where he was. He stayed behind and called Raymond’s Place and let them know about something that was going on in the parking lot that could lead to trouble. He is always looking out for his friends and wanted to make sure that nothing happened that would cause Raymond to get in trouble.
Then, later we went home to work on Joe’s flower beds. Joe hasn’t been feeling well and I’m twenty years younger and in good shape. I assured Joe that I could do all of the work, but he insisted on being right there and helping. No matter what I did, I’d turn and he’d be right there working on planting the flowers, too. Joe’s always trying to help.

The next day we drove through the cemetery that he manages to make sure it looked its best for Memorial Day. Joe takes a lot of pride in the cemetery’s appearance. He kept getting out of the car to fix broken flags, cut weeds, and plant more flags so his workers would not have to work late on Saturday afternoon.

On Sunday, we went to a cookout at Julie’s niece’s house. We had a very nice time. Everyone was either outside playing washers, inside eating, or in the garage talking. I looked around for Joe for a while and could not find him. He was in the house in the living room next to Julie’s terminally ill sister who is in the last stages of her battle with cancer. She was asleep but Joe stayed in there for a long time trying to comfort her and to be company for her while everyone else was having fun. Joe just naturally always thinks of others. It is a natural instinct for him to think of other people.

MELVIN WILLIAMS JR. - Joe’s oldest nephew, son of Doris Williams

In the 90’s when I lived in Cumberland, Maryland, I talked to a friend who said her sister had run away with a shady character and he had beaten her up and threw her out of his vehicle in East St. Louis. She had no money. She had never been out of the little town of Cumberland in her life. She had called the East St. Louis police and they hung up on her. She was surviving by drinking water out of garden hoses. The sister in Cumberland was getting ready to travel to East St. Louis to get her sister. This sister was no traveler and had no idea where East St. Louis was. I told her I would see if I could contact Joe and see if he was able to help. I called my mother who called Joe. Joe then talked to the sister in Cumberland and got a location on the woman. He then went out to the area and found her. It was an area full of prostitutes and drug addicts. Joe found her staying with truck drivers at a sleazy motel. He explained who he was and that her family was worried about her. She said she wouldn’t leave with him unless he bought her a drink. So Joe bought her a drink and left with her and he took her to a safe place to stay. He then contacted the family in Cumberland and told them he would put her on a bus to Cumberland. The family expressed the fear that if she was put on a bus to Cumberland that she would get off the bus for alcohol and then be lost again. So Joe put her on a jet to Pittsburgh where the family met her. The family was very grateful to Joe. Joe also identified her as having a very bad alcohol problem. The alcohol problem soon became apparent to others as the woman started having severe health problems related to alcohol at the age of thirty.

JULIE LLAMAS

I first met Joe in 1977. We both belonged to Holy Angels Church in East St. Louis, and we would say “Hi” to each other as we came out of church. Joe was very quiet and shy back then.

When I went to work at a nursing home, Joe had some clients who were patients in the home, so we got to know each other better and we became very good friends.

Joe is a very caring and loyal person. He truly does care about people. When I had my knee replacement done, he called me every night. Now, Joe works long hours every day, so it usually was about midnight when he called. My sister nick-named him “the Midnight Caller.”

Joe and I have become good friends over the last thirty years. He helped me when my mother died. He was there for me when my three sisters, a brother, and a nephew died. He gave me the strength and courage to go on.

Joe is the kind of person who would give you the shirt off of his back and has many times. Many times he buried people who didn’t have decent clothes, so he would bury them in one of his suits and shirt.

I have watched Joe as he slowly overcame his shyness. In our younger days, we went to dances and he learned to dance. We had some good times then. Now we don’t dance anymore but we still do enjoy the music.

Joe has taught me to accept the good and bad things in life and to trust God. Joe is a “Guardian Angel” to many people. My life is definitely blessed to know and love Joe.

CEOLA DAVIS

The first time that I met Joe Hubbard was about 45 years ago at a rally at St. Mary’s Hospital East St. Louis. At this time there was danger of the hospital closing and as a result of this rally, a march to Springfield was planned. Ceola walked on this march to Springfield and during this march she got a blister on her foot, causing her to limp. Joe noticed this and told her to go to a store in one of the small towns where she got tennis shoes which Joe paid for. The march was a success and the hospital continued. That Joe had noticed her sore foot made an impression on Ceola and when they returned to East St. Louis, she began working at Leslie Bates Davis Neighborhood House. During the first years of Joe’s working in East St. Louis, he did not drive, so he walked or took the bus.

Joe was responsible along with Gerry Hasenstab for getting an old bus and setting up the soup bus which goes out into the neighborhoods and provides food for the many hungry people including many children. The children love the bus and call it the “All You Can Eat Bus.” Some of the food that is served on the bus are sandwiches, chili, cookies, and a drink.

Although Catholic Urban Programs is sponsored by the Belleville Diocese, there is no “selling” of religion in connection with the help that is given to people who come in need.

Another area in which Joe helps is burials. Often when a poor person dies, there is no money for the burial, and Joe helps many families and often he will even buy a flower.

Joe has a special gift of remembering faces. Often when people come asking for help, he remembers that they have been there before and that they have been helped.

Joe also visits people in nursing homes in the area, especially folks who do not have family to visit them. He also helps organize and run the bishop’s Christmas Party for the elderly who live alone and the summer senior picnic. He has been active in many “cleanup” projects in East St. Louis. One example of this happened a couple of years ago.
when there was raw sewage coming up in one of the housing projects. With Sister Julia, D.C. they got this cleaned up.

Joe also is responsible for holiday projects such as turning the soup bus into a Santa Bus where Santa goes out into the neighborhoods with little gifts for the neighborhood children. Before Easter, Sister Ann, one of Joe’s helpers, dresses as the Easter Bunny and goes out with little Easter baskets for the children. Before school begins there are many school bags of school supplies which are prepared and given to needy children.

Joe is well known in the area, both in the high places and the low places. Whenever there is a need, Joe makes every effort to lend a helping hand.

DAN HASENSTAB

Joe is impossible to sum up in a letter, or (forgive me, David), even a book. Each person whose life Joe has touched could write his own book describing how he experienced Christ’s love through Joe.

My personal book would discuss Joe’s relationship with my dad and our family. I would say Joe is like an uncle to me and my siblings, but that isn’t a fair comparison. Joe has been closer to us than an uncle. Joe was, and always will be, a member of our immediate family. I still refer to the spare bedroom in my parents house in Fairmont City as “Joe’s room,” from the days when Joe and my dad would put in late nights at St. Pat’s, and Joe would be too worn out to drive back to his home in Belleville.

Joe has been right there through all the major events in our lives – birthdays, baptisms, First Communions, graduations, weddings, funerals. Joe was there for the “minor” events in our lives as well, such as holidays and summer barbecues. In fact, a barbecue at the Hasenstab house wasn’t really a barbecue unless Joe and his mom were there (or later, after “Mother Hubbard” passed away, Joe and his brother, Johnnie).

My book would include a chapter on the financial assistance Joe provided to me and my family – helping secure aid for me to attend Catholic high school and college, spoiling me with gifts at birthdays and graduations, and providing a job for me (and all my siblings, at one time or another) at Holy Cross Cemetery.

I would have to write about watching Joe work at St. Pat’s. Joe was always talking to someone – whether it be on the phone with a utility company, pleading his client’s case, or comforting a frightened young woman who just lost all she had in a house fire; or listening patiently to an ungrateful mother complained that CUP was not doing enough to meet her needs. Through it all, Joe has never lost sight of his mission: to serve God by humbly serving His people. As Christ said, “Whatever you do to the least of My people, that you do unto Me.”

I would also include a chapter on Joe’s spiritual guidance. Make no mistake, Joe is not a preacher. In fact, I cannot think of a time that Joe ever talked to me about anything religious. But, undoubtedly, Joe has taught me more about Christ and God’s love than any priest or minister ever has. Joe does not talk about what it means to be a Christian – he lives it. Joe is the person all Christians should strive to be – utterly selfless, infinitely compassionate, and ceaselessly striving to do the work God asks of him.

I could go on, but as I said, any attempt to sum up a man of such greatness in a letter would be futile. I’ll just finish by saying that David, if your book can give someone a mere glimpse of the life of Joe Hubbard – a life I have been so blessed to know on a personal level for more than 30 years – then your efforts will be well worthwhile.

SISTER ANN CONNOLLY, ASC

My first contact with Joe Hubbard was about thirty-five years ago. I am in the same religious community as Sister Paulette Huber who worked with Joe for several years from the beginning of CUP. I heard of her ministry and admired her work. I was working at the Ruma Motherhouse caring for the elderly Sisters at the time. We began to collect clothes and other things which could be used at CUP. Since I drove the Sisters to the doctors in St. Louis, I often dropped them off at CUP.

In our community, we were asked what we hope to be doing the next five or ten years and since I admired the ministry at CUP, I stated that I would like to work there. I began working at CUP in 1985. I continued to live at Red Bud where I helped my elderly Mother. However, after a couple years, I moved to East St. Louis.

The living out of Matthew 25 – “what we do for the least of his people, we do to Him” was very meaningful to me and I was grateful to be in a program where that was the motto.

Joe is a very good, adaptable director of the program. He tries to help where and when needed, 24 -7. He helps in any area where help is needed.

Joe took very good care of his mother, who was sick for many years before her death. He also was very caring for his elderly brother, Edward, who died about a year ago. At present he lives with his older brother, John, in Belleville.

Many other agencies and church-related programs ask Joe for help when they are having programs, and he helps where he can – usually helping with food or donations. Many programs who have food left after their meeting call CUP, and Joe picks it up or sends one of his helpers to get it. It is taken to the soup kitchen or out to people who give it to those in need.

PAT LEWIS

I remember one night I was in bed. I heard a knock on the door. It was Joe. McDonald’s had given him a load of potatoes and he wanted to dump them on my lawn. It was about eleven thirty at night. I walked outside and he had this old rusty green truck full of potatoes. So Joe dumped them on my lawn and people were coming all over from East St. Louis and loading up those potatoes and carrying them off.

Joe is always thinking of others. During the floods we would go house to house and rescue people that were stranded. In snowstorms, Joe would go door to door and make
sure people were warm. He would pass out coal to people who needed it to stay warm in the cold snow.

When my daughter was sick and we couldn’t afford medicine, Joe got on the phone to Springfield and made sure we got the medicine. Joe is a wonderful man. He visited my daughter in the nursing home and prayed for her. She died but Joe was very, very good to her and to us. He has done many great things for people. He is very, very special.

VENESSA

My name is Venessa and I first met Joseph Hubbard approximately twenty-eight years ago. I was a new caseworker with the Illinois Department of Public Aid.

At the time, my supervisor was giving me a list of different resources in the area to use for my clients; then he said if all else fails I should get in contact with none other than Joe Hubbard. So, I’m thinking that this man has to be at least sixty years old to wield so much power. Then by chance, Mr. Hubbard comes walking through the door and he’s not even forty years old!

Who would have ever thought that about eight years later, I would get a job working for St. Patrick’s Church and that Joe Hubbard and Catholic Urban Programs would be housed in the same building. At that time, they needed a volunteer to help enter their finances into the computer, and the rest, as they say, is history. Even though my job with the church ended, I remained a volunteer. When about ten years ago they needed someone to fill the position of bookkeeper, I came on as a part-time worker and have been with Catholic Urban Programs ever since.

Over the years, one thing that stands out very clear in my mind is how he works with the indigent who have no one else to bury them. I can remember one time, there was an elderly woman who died who was at least ninety years old; even though she had dedicated her life to church work, and at the end there was no one there for her. We went to the funeral, I sang a song, and one of our volunteers Sr. Pam (who was a nun), offered a prayer and Joe did the rest. It was quite moving.

Of course there are many other “Joe” stories, such as him sitting and holding the hands of those who are dying, his nursing home visits, and the times he has played Santa, helping the homeless, everything as we say “from the cradle to the grave.” It is the little things, the caring for those who are not cared for that makes up the personage of Joseph Hubbard.

SISTER CAROL LEHMKUL, OP – Director, Catholic Urban Programs - Family Center

I first met Joseph Hubbard in East St. Louis in September 1993. At that time, three Marianist Brothers – Walter Ebbeomeyer, Norbert Kappfinger, John Lundenbach and I were attempting to organize a new program called the Family Center. Joe was the first on the scene to offer his assistance. With his kind words and “seed money” for our first projects, he adopted us as the newest child of the prestigious Catholic Urban Programs.

Through the years, Joseph has continued his interest in, support of and involvement with our people and our programs. He is a Board Member, Big Brother, Friend – and even functions as a formidable part-time Security Guard – especially in the area of 7th and Summit Avenues during home build season.

Joe is the “Ultimate Connector”. Perhaps one of his greatest gifts is his ability to evaluate a situation, to determine individuals who need to be involved and, finally, to help these groups come together so that solutions and new programs can move forward and become reality. Many “good things” have happened in East St. Louis because of this special gift.

It has been my privilege and my blessing to have Joe Hubbard in my life for these past 15 years. Indeed, he is a “Man with a Mission” – that of spreading God’s goodness and love to all who meet him and to all of us who are fortunate enough to call him “Friend”.

SISTER DOLORINE - Sister Dolorine died a few years ago, but her and Joe maintained a long friendship. Here is a letter from Sister Dolorine to Joe:

Dear Joe,

Thank you for showing us the way to really love and care for all of God’s people, to give the last ounce of one’s energy and not to count the cost.

Thank you for showing us how to cover up one’s personal feelings, so as to never brood over hurts and slights and even down-right contempt – how to rise above pettiness and human respect, ever forgiving and befriending those who inflict pain upon you.

Thank you for showing us the way to live simply in true Poverty of Spirit, how to be free from riches, prestige, even personal comfort and relaxation!

Thank you for sharing Christ’s Light in our darkened, materialistic world, so that we can see more clearly the Way along which Christ is leading us to the Father. May the “Light of Christ” continue to enlighten you, so you may ever be a “Lumen Christi” to the many people whose lives you touch.

We appreciate you, Joe, for all the beautiful lessons you teach us by your lifestyle and goodness – just by being YOU!

I also appreciate your acceptance of me just the way I am. It is relaxing and assuring to feel no obligations to impress you, or to be anything except what I simply “am”- I, forgetfulness, Irish temper and all! Thank you for putting up with me, Sir.

Gratefully,
Sister Dolorine

BILL KREEB

Dear Joe,

I know you will be busy tomorrow so I just want to take this time to congratulate you on
your award. I also want to take this opportunity to thank you for being my friend all of
these years. You have always been there when I needed to talk and have really helped me
every step of the way in developing all the programs at the Neighborhood House and
throughout the city and county. Even when we weren’t on our Board you were always
showing me new ways of getting things done and were always ready to help start
something new, even when we had already tried it two or three times.

I know that these days I seem to be overwhelmed with the kids and Nancy. I kind of
really miss the old days but I know that I am doing the right thing because really in the
end what we need to help everyone with is to have a strong and good family. I don’t know
if you know this but I call my mom almost every other day for a few minutes. I think you
and I are a lot alike when it comes to our Moms. We’ve both been really lucky to have
such strong and loving mothers and families. We have a lot to be thankful for. I think
that’s what pushes us to keep trying to help all the children we serve and to help mothers
who are struggling to provide the kind of love and environment that we know they want
for their children.

I know you have gotten a lot of awards and I know they really don’t mean a lot to you
because I know that your reward is knowing that you are doing what God has asked you to
do and that is serve the poor and to serve all people who are struggling and suffering and
need someone to simply reach out and show a little love. This is what you do best. You
simply love people no matter who they are. However, I think this award is pretty special,
and certainly, and foremost an advocate for everyone and I guess I see you in the same way. Dr. King was not afraid to speak out against the injustices that exist in our community or state or nation. You have always been an advocate for everyone,
the sick, the poor, the elderly, the people in prison, for truly the least of our brothers and sisters. The most important thing is that you have, Joe, is that you still have a
real “passion” for helping people and speaking out against the injustices even when you
know that it may come back and hurt you. I think that is the thing that taught me most
is that you have to have a real “passion” for serving people; for doing whatever it takes to
help people, and not judge them as bad, but just try to see the face of Jesus Christ in every
person and know that they are God’s children. I also want to thank you for never being
afraid to tell the truth to even your friends like me and to other people who have lost that
special “passion” for speaking out against the injustices.

For all of the above reasons I think that it is important that you are getting this special
award and I know that I can always count on you as a friend who will be there no matter
what. Thanks for your love and support and your friendship.

Yours in Christ,
Bill Kreeb

DOROTHY HEBLING

It is hard to find how to truly picture Joe Hubbard as he really is. I have known him
for over 50 years. He was always looking out for everyone. He is considered a “saintly
Reverend” by many people. I don’t believe he can say “no” to anyone in need. He is the
“power of attorney” for many elderly people in their homes or in nursing homes. So he
gets many calls at any hour of the day or night to help make decisions for these people.

Joe is a great organizer. He was instrumental in all of the outreach programs in East
St. Louis. Some of them are: Holy Angels Shelter, Vincent de Paul store, Cosgrove’s
Kitchen, Food Bus, built the Peace Chapel at Mount Carmel Cemetery etc. He works with
other churches in East St. Louis to build homes for the poor. He, with his crew, work with
volunteers, especially during the summer months. He is very influential in the many
boards he has been asked to help in East St. Louis and Belleville as he has great insights
and knowledge of how to get a project done. In his free time, he beautifies the two
cemeteries that he has under his supervision. I consider him a saint! The poor come before
any relaxation or time off for himself. I keep praying for him that he take care of himself
so that he can continue doing the good works for many years! May God bless him and
give him all he needs to do God’s work here on earth!

Sr. Dorothy Helbling, OSU

LES HIMSTEDT

Joe often introduces me: “Les used to be my pastor at Holy Angels.” I’ve been
privileged to know Joe since the mid-1960s when I was a priest at his parish. More
recently I have been able to work with him in his ministry with the St. Vincent de Paul
Thrift Store and Cosgrove’s Kitchen in East St. Louis.

Perhaps with the laurel of this book Joe will finally at least slow down.

Les Himstedt

REV. DENNIS F. VOSS

Joe Hubbard has certainly done a lot to help the poor. I go way back to the time when
he was not working for the diocese. He was always a member of the St. Vincent de Paul
Society, and he found in some of the members of the society at Holy Angels, men who
were as he says role models.

He attributes to me the fact that he began working for the church, which is true. We
had some trouble at the St. Vincent de Paul Store with the previous manager and the store
was financially going down to ruin. We got the person in question to leave. I forget how.
Then Bishop Zurawski approached me and asked what I thought of Joe Hubbard. I said
he would be an excellent choice. Joe was getting fed up with Levee Board and was
looking for a new position.

Joe did very well in restoring the store to some fiscal soundness. I don’t remember the
details, but he soon had the store once again showing a profit. From then on, Bishop
Zurawski asked him to do work to help the poor. He has been doing this now for many
years. Catholic Urban Programs has grown significantly. He also manages the Mt. Carmel
Cemetery in Belleville, which has improved tremendously since he has taken it over. He
now manages Holy Cross and St. Adalbert’s cemetery.
Bishop Cosgrove wanted him to study—to be a deacon, but Joe said that he did not have the time to do this because of all he was doing to help the poor. He certainly works hard and is admired by many people. Even though the diocese does help fund some of his programs as well as governmental grants, many people send regular and substantial contributions. I know that is especially true of Cosgrove’s Kitchen.

He has often talked of retirement, but we don’t think he will until he can’t do it any more. His heart is in helping those who are in need and he has a tremendous reputation.

Sincerely yours,
Rev. Dennis F. Voss

M. CLIFFORD
I’ve only known your Uncle Joe for over a little 5 years when I landed in East St. Louis, IL. I tell people there are two words that will open doors in this area and make crooked ways straight....and that is to say “Joe Hubbard”! He is known for cutting through red tape, his generosity and his undying commitment to get the poor what they need and usually what they want! I’ve never been anywhere with him that we weren’t continually stopped by people, people who want to thank him for all that he’s done for them or someone that they know. With one phone call he can make more things happen then anyone I know or any committee that’s ever been created.........I’ve always told your Uncle Joe that when he dies I’ll never tell anyone but just say that “He’s busy right now!” for as long as we can get away with it! The threat of him even getting back with someone is enough to get what you need to happen completely done! My only concern continues that there’ll never be another one like him! And the gap that he will leave in the East St. Louis area will never be filled.........M. Clifford

JOHN AND BOBBIE LAKER
We have known Joe for a little over twenty years, having moved to the Belleville area from Oak Park, IL in the spring of 1988. John had accepted a job with Catholic Social Services and so we ventured down to southern Illinois, only to be blessed by meeting Joe Hubbard.

Almost immediately we were introduced to Joe through our friendship with a Daughter of Charity, Sr. Julia Huiskamp who was working and still is, in East St. Louis. Joe gave John a guided tour of the city of East St. Louis and introduced him to those administrating to the poor and hurting in East St. Louis.

Over the years we have seen Joe as a friend, a confidant and advisor both spiritually and regarding the work we do. Joe has been and continues to be an unflinching advocate of the poor. He is comfortable with people from all walks of life. He is always accessible and ready to help any person in need. If he can’t give you what you need himself he will make a call, making sure that this person’s needs are met as soon as possible. Joe is the one person we would call when other resources have been exhausted. If anyone can open doors, it is Joe Hubbard.

We often wonder how Joe works so tirelessly, often seven days a week, putting others’ needs always before his own. We can only believe that it is God who lifts him up every day

giving him what he needs to be a servant to others. Often we feel blessed in his presence. Joe has a gift of saying things that makes one feel that they are the most important person in that room.

Joe is a modern day “Francis”, a modern day “Vincent de Paul”, who cares little for his own bodily needs and comforts but totally spends himself for the poor. He often not only provides for their physical needs, but he often gets up in the middle of the night to pray and be present to the dying. He will make sure one has a proper burial even though the family has nothing. Joe has touched so many people in this community. We don’t know of a more known or respected person in this community.

John and Bobbie Laker

PAT HOGREBE
There are not enough nouns and adjectives in the English language to describe Joseph Hubbard. Integrity, character, generosity and heart must begin the long litany. This remarkable man has spent most of his life in service to others – the people he has helped and the lives he has touched are numerous as the stars. And no matter how tough the situation and insurmountable the problem, Joe manages to “find a way!”

Thinking of “Reverend Hubbard” makes me smile, because no matter where we go, what we do or how difficult the day we always find a way to laugh, sometimes at the situation sometimes at ourselves and always at each other. It’s just like an episode of Springer Live!”

To know Joe is to experience his wisdom, his courage and his passion for the poor. It is to be reminded that faith can move mountains AND move people! Knowing Joe is a privilege. It is an honor. Thank you my dear friend.
CHAPTER 7 - A Writer's Thoughts

A writer is not supposed to editorialize in a biography. It's hard when a writer is writing about a loved one or a person that he has great respect for, so I am throwing all writing rules out of the window and taking an opportunity to share some of my thoughts.

There is a lot of good in the world. Sometimes it seems like evil is winning. The media want to focus on the bad and to be honest, that is what people trust. When they hear too much good, it sounds like public relations and they are suspicious. There is not a doubt in my mind that everyone who has read this far is good. This is who this book was written for, it was written for the good people in the world. I doubt very seriously if anyone evil bought this book. The people that bought this book and that have read this far are quote probably friends or associates of Joe Hubbard. These are the people that stand behind Joe Hubbard.

As I talked to people and read letters from those who know Joe, I realized that Joe is not alone. He would and could say great things about the same people who spoke about him. Everyone that I contacted or was contacted by are great people who have done great things. These are people who have been in the trenches with Joe over the years. They have witnessed the same nightmares, cried the same tears, and have prayed together. These people are not fans of Joe or awed bystanders. These people are allies. They have walked the same road together and they have carried Joe through bad times just as he was there for him.

For there is not any doubt in my mind or heart that the readers who are reading this know what good is. Because I know in my heart that good is in their hearts. That is one reason I wrote this book. There are so many good people out there but they never receive any recognition. The true heroes are saving lives in their own way. They are sending checks to charities, they are reading stories to the blind, they are listening to the lonely, they are delivering or preparing meals for the hungry, and they are doing what they can to spread the gospel and good word of God. It is not easy word and I can see in Joe Hubbard’s eyes sometimes the frustration that the good has to go through and I know it is hard to get up in the morning and to keep fighting the fight when you are not even sure you are winning. But what keeps great people going is that they know the fight is worth it. But sometimes good people do not know what great deeds they are doing. They never see their names in the newspaper or get the pats on the back that some may get. They may not have high self-esteem and just not realize what their self-worth is. But it is my opinion that if you have brought a smile to a stranger’s sad face then you are doing God’s work.

I wish that I could meet everyone that has read this far, because I feel if you have read this far, then you appreciate good and kindness. If you appreciate good and kindness, then I am positive that you have done great things yourself. Everyone can make a difference. In the battle of good and evil, it is our war to win. One good deed at a time. One positive word at a time. God bless you, Joe Hubbard. And God bless everyone who has read this book. We all can make a difference. Together.