



## RadioMilwaukee's Community Stories Best of 2010 - Meet The Need!

by 88Nine

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**Listen:** After spending an autumn with Make A Difference, during the holiday season we turn to organizations working with those in our community facing the greatest challenges. During Meet The Need we hear the stories of 50 organizations in 50 days working with basic and human needs in Milwaukee. Taking on a project of such great scope might sound a little crazy, but hey — that's how we do things at 88Nine.

Feeling like a sprint and marathon at the same time, the stream of voices and stories in Meet The Need never lets up. Poverty and need are two concepts we might feel like we understand to some degree, but unless you've worked with them first hand or had the experiences yourself, there's always some important perspective to gain. Below are a handful of highlights from the series.

I'd worked with the Salvation Army of Greater Milwaukee in last year's Meet The Need campaign, so with many of the basics already covered, I was able to dig a little deeper with Director of Community Relations Faithe Colas. In this piece, she speaks on an issue I'm familiar with, but comes at it from a perspective that was eye-opening for me — how a child conceives of their own experiences with poverty and homelessness:

Sherrie Tussler, Executive Director of the Hunger Task Force, is a rare person. She's at the same time honest, intelligent, razor-sharp, funny, deeply invested and wholly like-able. I've been fortunate to interview her two times now, and she's left me charmed both times. In this piece, she dashes us through a busy day at the Hunger Task Force:

Towards the end of my interview with Diane De La Santos from City On A Hill, I asked her a somewhat hard question because I knew she could give me a thoughtful answer: "Since you work with people in need, do your friends and family ever feel like you might be putting yourself in danger?" Her answer is elegant and beautiful:

Brother Dave Schwabb from St. Ben's Community Meal comes across as a gentle and unassuming guy. From the moment I shook his hand I could tell he was a remarkably nice person, but as we spoke during our interview, it became immediately apparent that there's a lot more to him than just niceness — he's

an incredibly astute and deep thinker about the world around him. In this piece, he discusses how St. Ben's Community Meal has adapted and met their clients' need for haircuts:

St. Catherine's Residence may have been my favorite interview. Ruthia was one of two residents that came to our studios to discuss their time living there, and they both charmed and inspired the dickens out of me. Listen to her story:

When speaking about basic and human needs, oftentimes the conversation pulls in well-known cliches. Teaching a man to fish or bandaging versus looking for a cure. And while they can feel superfluous sometimes, I've come to realize folks use these as tools because they can be quite helpful in discussing approaches to the challenges of poverty. That being said, there's one concept that returned to my conversations throughout the campaign more than any other — bootstraps. Few people in this line of work have any fondness for an account of low-income communities that involves this simplistic framing of the situation. So, in this piece with Admission Possible I challenged them to make "bootstraps" into a tool that could be constructive. What might a set of non-reduced, multi-dimensional set of bootstraps look like?

That's it! Some selected highlights from 2010 that made my personal list for one reason or another. It's been a long and meandering and ultimately wonderful year of community stories at RadioMilwaukee — get ready for a lot more of that in 2011!