



HONORARY STREET NAME SIGN APPLICATION

City Hall, Room 205
200 East Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202

PLEASE NOTE: A \$100 PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY THIS FORM
(Checks should be made payable to "City Treasurer")

1. Applicant information:

Applicant's Name Karen Dubis
Organization or Company MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary
Street Address 2461 W. Center St. City/State Milwaukee, WI Zip 53206
Telephone 414-405-8288 Fax None Email karendubis2@gmail.com

2. Honorary Street Name Request

Street name requested N. Sr. MacCanon Brown Pl.

Location of proposed designation: (for example, West Main Street from North 12th Street to North 15th Street)

2600 - 2700 N. 24 Pl. (1 block north of Center and 1 block south of W. Center St.)

3. Required Submittals:

- Refer to Chapter 113-3, Milwaukee Code of Ordinances (attached)
- A typed statement containing no fewer than **500 words** describing the significance of the person, place, or event being honored. The statement should indicate why a particular section of street has been requested for the honorary designation.

4. SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

My application consists of the following items necessary to complete the application. Please check:

- ☒ \$100 fee (check made payable to "City Treasurer").
- ☒ Completed Application Form.
- ☒ Autobiography or statement regarding the person, place, or event being honored.

Signature Karen Dubis Date 6-22-2022
Printed Name Karen Dubis

Vice President / Executive Associate
MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary

**Statement in Support of the Honorary Street Name Sign Application
Sr. MacCanon Brown Pl.**

We humbly request an honorary naming of N. 24 Place in the 2600-2700 block in the City of Milwaukee, WI to be Sr. MacCanon Brown Pl. We would like to share with you the exceptional case of Sister MacCanon Brown and the compelling reasons to place the street signs Sr. MacCanon Brown Pl. underneath the official name of N. 24 Place.

Sister MacCanon Brown has a long history of service to our community. She has dedicated her life to serving others that are homeless and poor, meeting people where they are in their lives and helping them to see a better day and a brighter light within themselves. Her list of achievements is considerable, although she is reluctant to take credit, taking the position that 'Taking care of people is not one person's mission. It will take all of us.' However, there is no doubt that, without her leadership, the benefits to uplifting the citizens of the City of Milwaukee would be far less than they are today. Many people that have met Sister MacCanon have voiced that she is our very own Mother Theresa. Her kind and thoughtful selfless leadership has brought hundreds of people together in solidarity. So many people from the City of Milwaukee and beyond are grateful to have Sister MacCanon show us the way.

James Causey, a reporter for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, featured Sister MacCanon in an article entitled, "A Beacon of Hope", June 12, 2022. He wrote, "Brown was born into a family of protestant clergy in 1945 in central Iowa. As a young person, she did inner-city neighborhood work and attended civil rights events during the peak of the Civil Rights movement. After being a rural homemaker and a newspaper reporter in Iowa for 18 years, Brown moved to Milwaukee in 1986."

"After seeing how people of color were struggling, Brown participated in the Benedict Institute for Urban Ministry in Milwaukee and converted to Catholicism. Deeply influenced by Dorothy Day, who founded the Catholic Worker Movement in the 1930s, Brown made a vow in 1991 to

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help homeless people. She was invited to be part of the founding group of Repairers of the Breach in late 1991 and became executive director in 1995.”

“Over 22 years under Brown’s leadership, Repairers of the Breach created a comprehensive and effective daytime resource center including a free medical clinic. Her relationship with the organization ended in August 2013 over disagreements over the mission of the organization. She then was persuaded to start her own organization, which became the MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary. At first, the name bothered her though she grew used to it. Sister MacCanon said, ‘Taking care of people is not one person’s mission. It will take all of us.’ Sister MacCanon became a vowed affiliate of Sisters for Christian Community in July 2015 and was welcomed by School Sisters of Notre Dame as an associate in December 2020.”

Prior to the purchase of the building at 2461 W. Center St., in February of 2015 the MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary organization was invited by the Pastor and Church Council of Hephatha Lutheran Church at 1720 W. Locust St. to have the full use of the entire church facility on Fridays for outreach. Sister MacCanon was given keys and the code to the alarm system. In the beginning, MBHS volunteers offered a safe space with table games and clothing distribution. Sister MacCanon and other volunteers grew the constituency by driving the neighborhood weekly and inviting people through the car window.

The Friday programming has grown during these four years to include basic reading and math, legal assistance with landlord/tenant issues, EmployMKE, Tai Chi, Molina Healthcare, 12-Step AA meetings, beauticians, jewelry making, wood burning, drumming circles, and more. Meanwhile Sister MacCanon Brown developed a team of volunteers that included volunteer nurses that not only conduct blood pressure checks, but engage in one on one conversations about medical concerns and offer guidance about health care access.

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These Fridays are now called Fantastic Fridays. We operated throughout the pandemic. With the easing of public health restrictions, we have resumed some of the services we were forced to curtail and have begun several new initiatives. One of the many important services to our guests is our meal program that not only feeds the poor and the homeless but also creates a community of people in a safe environment. Each week we are a source of crucial resources that positively impact the lives of approximately 400 households and individuals in the extreme food desert where we are established. Initially, the meals are carryout, and those who attend will be given up to four meals to bring to children or people with disabilities. The average number of lives impacted by MBHS out-reach per week is 250. Our in-house team of volunteer nurses distribute masks, check blood pressures, and provide one-on-one education regarding personal health.

As of May 2022, we have resumed offering fresh produce and essential supplies—such as hygiene items, underwear, and socks. We will also return to having representatives from organizations such as Employ Milwaukee, Gateway to Change (AODA recovery program), and the Legal Aid Society to consult with our guests. We presently offer activities to reverse the effects of trauma, including wood burning, a drum circle, and Tai Chi.

On December 30, 2016, Sister MacCanon negotiated the purchase of the Eschweiler designed five-story former warehouse at 2461 W. Center St., seeking to develop it into a community center. The Mission of the MBHS is to provide a daytime sanctuary and multi-resource center for homeless and at-risk individuals. Core values are healing, spirituality, recovery, peer empowerment, dignity, nonviolence, advocacy, voice, sustainability and mutual transformation. The sanctuary is a place to be, belong and become within a transformational solidarity community--interfaith, nonpartisan, intercultural, and noncanonical. The sanctuary is a racially and economically diverse family of hope who seek to strengthen Milwaukee's overwhelmed safety net.

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Phase One of 1st floor construction of the Welcome Center began on October 7, 2019. MBHS has since completed the Welcome Center as of in April, 2022, and it is now up and running. The Welcome Center offers an intake/registration area, food, bathroom/shower units, clothing distribution, community-building, a team of nurses and a violence-free gathering space to assist individuals in advancing their life situations. Continued first floor development will include access to a maximum scope of life-saving resources including medical and mental health services, a full kitchen and dining area offering a nutritious meal program and offices.

Further phases of the Expansion Project will focus on the 2nd – 5th floors of the building. Plans are underway to create (1) an Employment Floor (4th floor) with a Maker Space, and in-house industry, and other employability support; (2) a Medical Floor (2nd floor) with a free health care clinic, a free vision clinic, a foot-care clinic, and other medical support services; (3) an Interior Urban Agriculture Floor (3rd floor) that provides an aquaponics system with table-top gardens in collaboration with MSOE; and (4) a Public Forum Floor (5th floor) with meeting rooms and an auditorium to improve community solidarity.

MBHS offers a "Doorway Ministry" out of the back door of its Center St. facility. Every Tuesday, clothing, fresh produce, household items, furniture, bicycles and more are offered. Many of the doorway ministry guests appear undernourished and are clearly food scarce. The door-way ministry operates year-round. The numbers of people served continues to grow. Attendance is between 100 - 150 persons each day the doorway ministry is open. MBHS delivers a unique, nationally-recognized model, with those we serve taking leadership roles and engaging in decision making.

Sister MacCanon's vision has helped inspire volunteers to develop a green space adjacent to our building. This includes a food pod with canned and packaged food that is used to distribute during the doorway ministry. Picnic tables, an equipment shed, garden beds and mini-libraries have been built as well.

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The City of Milwaukee has recently sold to MBHS the lots at 2652-2658 N. 24th Place, eastwards across the street from the Sanctuary and MBHS is "farming" those lots. This is in collaboration with Groundworks Milwaukee and MSOE. To date, 24 large raised garden beds have been prepared for planting. Because MBHS is located in a "food desert," food production is among our priorities, bringing with it the many aspects which are life-saving and have a firm grip on sustainability.

Most of our guests live in food scarcity. A major focus of our efforts is providing fresh, healthy food (some of which we grow at the Sanctuary) to residents in our 53206-zip code. 53206 has also been identified in the Milwaukee Fresh Food Access Report (2019) as an "underserved retail food zone," more commonly referred to as a food desert. People who live here have few sources of fresh, healthy food, especially for those without transportation. This lack of fresh food becomes an added barrier to mitigating the effects of lead exposure because healthy, nutritious food is one of the best antidotes.

Our gardening initiative, which includes significant participation from neighborhood residents, produced a bounty of fresh, healthy produce from our garden beds last summer—produce that was given away to neighborhood residents. We focus, therefore, on fruits and vegetables rich in nutrients that are helpful in counteracting lead toxicity. We are also moving ahead with plans for an aquaponics program; renderings are complete, and fundraising has begun.

Most of the guests served by the MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary are from our own 53206 zip code. U.S. Census data for 53206 (American Community Survey, 2019) estimates an overall poverty rate of 39%, and a poverty rate of 56% for families with children 5 and under. Some guests are destitute, living in cars or on the street. A larger number live in unstable housing conditions that could include "couch surfing" with family or friends, living on the precipice of eviction, or staying in overcrowded spaces—sometimes abandoned buildings, sometimes places where someone is paying rent—where the majority of the dwellers are homeless.

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Because of Sister MacCanon's leadership, MBHS currently has over 800 volunteers who are actively engaged in a variety of roles. MBHS partnerships with schools of learning, diverse faith communities and community organizations has grown to more than 80. This includes:

- Feeding America, providing free, fresh produce
- Students from Marquette University, who assist with our Doorway Ministry and with ongoing organizing of our clothing bank
- University School of Milwaukee, sharing fresh produce grown on the school's campus
- Lake Country Caring, making free furniture available
- Team of MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary volunteer nurses, registered with the state
- Employ Milwaukee, assisting individuals in finding employment and other income solutions
- Running Rebels, who have assisted with construction projects in our building
- Legal Aid, helping with landlord/tenant issues

We are offering employment opportunities to people who have been chronically unemployed. Our current staff of 14 part-time employees includes 7 neighborhood residents who live in Milwaukee's central city and who have experienced the same hardships our guests live with each day. We also employ an accountant and a grant writer. Some of these people might be seen as unemployable by the broader community; however, they have an opportunity—through their volunteer work with us—to show that they can be dependable and hard-working. In each case, we are finding appropriate educational resources related to their duties (e.g., classes at MATC) and paying for them to obtain this additional education.

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Besides neighborhood residents, people also come to the MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary from other parts of Milwaukee based on word of mouth or referrals from the 2-1-1 Crisis Line or from the Milwaukee Police Department. We often serve families who have lost everything in house fires or who have been evicted.

Finally, as part of our new initiative to assist in addressing the lead crisis in the City of Milwaukee—which is particularly serious in our own 53206 zip code—we offer presentations on the dangers of lead and the need for testing. Water testing kits and water filters will be distributed. We are currently collaborating with the Milwaukee Health Department to set up finger prick blood testing for lead, which will be offered to both children and adults. According to City of Milwaukee Health Department data, 53206 is one of five zip codes in our city in which more than 13% of children have unsafe blood lead levels. Even low levels of lead exposure can affect a child's behavior and intelligence.

With Sister MacCanon's leadership, the MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary is funded by a wide array of partners, including local foundations, faith communities, and individuals. In addition to the Marjorie L. Christiansen Foundation, foundation support comes from Bader Philanthropies, Evinrude Foundation, Forest County Potawatomi Foundation, Helfaer Foundation, Mayer Family Foundation, Neumann Family Foundation, ROS Foundation, Scripps Howard Foundation, and We Energies Foundation.

In 2020, Sister MacCanon Brown was named "Best Community Advocate" by MKE Lifestyle Magazine.

On Sunday, July 18, 2021, the MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary was featured in a main front page article in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. It is our honor that MBHS is brought into light to support the excellent journalism of James Causey.

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In 2021, Sister MacCanon Brown received not only the "TMJ4's Positively Milwaukee Inspiring Senior of the Year", but she also was awarded the overall recognition of "Inspiration of the Year". As important as the financial gifts that came with these awards is the publicity that resulted in so many more people who learned about the Sanctuary and stepped forward to support our work through both financial and volunteer assistance.

Under Sister MacCanon's leadership, MBHS functions as a community in which persons who are homeless or at risk of homelessness work side-by-side with other volunteers from diverse backgrounds, serving in solidarity as equals. Her patience, tenacity, incredible work ethic; her tireless support of service to the poor and the homeless; her care, concern, kindness, teachable moments, belief in the potential of growth from everyone whom she meets; her touching the lives of others giving us all the feeling that we can be, belong and become side by side, one day at a time, gives each of us hope to carry on what Sister MacCanon has begun to continue to make Milwaukee a better place and to make a difference in the lives of the people who need it the most.

Sketch of N. 24th Pl. and W. Center St.



Existing light pole
with N. 24th Pl. Sign



W. Center Street

MacCanon Brown
Homeless
Sanctuary
2461 W. Center St.

**N.
24th
Pl.**

Existing Light Pole
without sign
We are requesting an
honorary sign be
placed here as well

Alley



W. Center St. Looking East

Office of the Mayor
CITY OF MILWAUKEE



Proclamation



Whereas:

The City of Milwaukee proudly joins the community, friends, and family in celebrating the contributions of community homeless advocate Sister MacCanon Brown on July 22, 2022; and,

WHEREAS, Sister MacCanon Brown attended Otterbein College, in Westerville, Ohio, where she participated in Black Studies and interracial dialogue, and also volunteered in inner-city neighborhoods and attended civil rights events in Columbus during the peak of the movement in the 1960s; and,

WHEREAS, Sister MacCanon Brown moved to Milwaukee in 1986 with the dream of being an intellectual artist, she connected with the Catholic Worker movement and converted to Catholicism, in 2015 she proclaimed her vows as a Catholic Sister and made a vow to God to do all she could for those who were homeless or facing the risk of becoming homeless; and,

WHEREAS, Sister MacCanon Brown was one of the founding members of Milwaukee's only daytime refuge and resource center for homeless adults in late 1991, where she became board president and then executive director, in 2014 she and her co-founders established a new non-profit organization called the MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary, where her work continues to this day; and,

WHEREAS, Sister MacCanon Brown continues to serve the homeless community at MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary at 2461 West Center Street, Milwaukee, 53206, which has been one of Milwaukee's most challenged zip codes as well as a food desert, the Sanctuary provides hot meals, clothing, hygiene products, showers, nurses and other services to those in need, while also providing fresh vegetables from a large garden across from North 24TH Pl., the Sanctuary services over 100 families weekly; and,

WHEREAS, The City of Milwaukee commends Sister MacCanon Brown for her endless dedication to serving residents in need throughout Milwaukee with love and support;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, CAVALIER JOHNSON, Mayor of the City of Milwaukee, do hereby proclaim July 22, 2022, to be

"SISTER MACCANON BROWN" DAY

throughout the City of Milwaukee.



MACCANON BROWN HOMELESS SANCTUARY, INC.

Thursday, June 23, 2022

**MacCanon Brown
Homeless Sanctuary**
c/o 3314 W. Juneau Ave.
P.O. Box 80165
Milwaukee,
Wisconsin, 53208
414-404-0600
www.mbsanctuary.org

Board of Directors:
Sr. MacCanon Brown (SFCC),
President and Executive Director
Karen Dubis, Vice President
Chris van den Elzen, Treasurer
Holly Morse, Secretary
Sonya Lee Ball, Member-at-Large
David Holmes, Member-at-Large

Emeritus Board members:
Dorothy Jackson
Lisa Rosier
Carmella Thomas

Founding Donors:
Andy and Barb Doermann
Tom Giles
Elizabeth M. Matz
Holly T. Morse
Steve and Maryann Radowski
Don and Barb Zacharias

**MacCanon Brown
Homeless Sanctuary, Inc.**
is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization.
This acknowledges that no goods
or services were provided to you in
exchange for your gift. Please save this
letter for tax purposes.

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary, we would like to show our support for the Honorary Street Name Sign for Sister MacCanon Brown for N. 24 Place, 2600-2700 block. (Proposed N. Sr. MacCanon Brown Pl.)

As board members, we have stood with Sister MacCanon through her journey of service with the homeless and poor members of our community. Her commitment and dedication are truly something to behold. She has given and continues to give tirelessly and selflessly her entire life. She has taken this organization from nothing to the thriving, growing organization that it is today. It truly is an example of the phoenix rising from the ashes as represented by our logo. Sister MacCanon has also inspired hundreds of people to come to the sanctuary to help others and be together in solidarity.

Sister MacCanon is a true leader of our board. Her vision, integrity, tenacity, work ethic, kindness and ability to work with a diverse community of individuals is an inspiration to all of us. We work harder because Sister MacCanon works harder. We truly are blessed to have a person that has often been likened to Mother Theresa that pushes us forward to be leaders ourselves.

With the bar that Sister MacCanon has set for all of us with hard work and commitment to others, we are all able to be, belong and become ourselves for the good of others.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors
MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary

Karen Dubis - Vice President/Executive Director