



You shall give to him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.'

Deuteronomy 15:10-11

Welcome to the 2013 Hope in the Streets annual newsletter. God continues to bless our efforts and we are so grateful for the awesome support from our volunteers as well as those who have donated to our organization. Without the time and energy from our volunteers and the cash, food, water, and other supplies donated throughout the year, we would not be able to reach out and “open wide our hands” to our homeless brothers and sisters.

So far in 2013, we delivered 4,387 meals to our friends on the streets with another 7 weeks to go before the end of the year. While out on the Vittle Van route each Thursday and Sunday we are also looking for opportunities to provide other essential supplies to the homeless, including so far this year 446 pairs of socks, 233 hygiene kits, 122 blankets, plus several hats, gloves, shoes, and so on. We are so grateful for everybody who plays a part in this vital service each week.

Last week we assembled this year’s round of Winter Warmth Kits. We handed out our first ones on Thursday and will be looking for those who really need them as the cold winter season starts to settle in. We are in our 10th year of providing these kits and we know that they are put to good use and desperately needed by those who will be calling campsites in the woods around Kansas City their home for the next several months.

In our 2012 newsletter, I mentioned a new program we were contemplating called “Worship Where You Are”. We continue to pray, brainstorm, and network with other organizations in Kansas City on this idea, but we haven’t made any formal steps in that direction as of now. Sandy and I did travel down to Waco, Texas, and were lucky enough to experience first hand the “Church Under the Bridge” program in that city. I talked with the pastor and took away some key insights that may help us down the road. I’ve also met a few times with another street-focused mission group in Kansas City and we have talked about what a program here might look like.

Part of the challenge for Kansas City, versus Waco, is that the weather in our city, for 4 – 6 months of the year, is so cold and wintery. Because of this, we have wondered whether we can truly develop a worship opportunity that doesn’t revolve around some kind of building or facility. We will continue to keep “Worship Where You Are” on our radar and will continue to look for ways to make this idea come to life.

One of the homeless gentlemen that we have known and served for many years has just been provided access to an apartment through another organization, but that access will only last a few months. His name is Joseph and we already took a “Fresh Start Kit” to him to help him get started on the right foot.

We will watch his progress, and if he is making positive steps forward we may consider him for our Lazarus program. This way we can extend his access to an apartment for even longer and give him better odds of changing his life permanently for the better. The transition from homeless to self-sufficiency can take several months or even a couple of years, especially for somebody like Joseph who has been on the street for over 20 years.

We are proud to report again this year that there is no administrative overhead at Hope in the Streets ... every penny of every dollar we receive goes directly to providing much needed benefits to the poor and homeless in Kansas City. There are no office supplies being purchased, no marketing expenses, and no office space to lease. It's just us and our volunteers, and a desire to help those less fortunate.

I was a little frustrated this year as Google decided to stop supporting online donations, which is how I had developed our Hope in the Streets website. They didn't say why they were pulling away from non-profits, but they did, effective this month. I had to scramble and find another payment/donation solution, which I did through Amazon.com. As of now, anybody who wants to provide an online donation will need to have (or create) an Amazon.com account, and then they will be able to make their donations through that account. The new button has already been integrated on our website, so please let me know if you have any trouble with the new system.

If you would like to support our efforts, please visit our website at <http://www.HopeInTheStreets.org> and click on the "Donations" link on the left side of the page or you can send a check or money order to:

Hope in the Streets
PO Box 261
Stilwell, KS 66085

To those who have donated so generously to our foundation, we and the homeless we serve are grateful. If you like what we are doing and how we are doing it, please help spread the word. Tell your friends, family, and co-workers about Hope in the Streets, and with God's grace we can continue to serve the poor and homeless here in Kansas City.

Sincerely,

Joe Ratterman
on behalf of the Hope in the Streets family