



'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

In this newsletter:

- 1) By the numbers – a summary of services provided this year
- 2) Update on the General Store
- 3) Our 2nd year of Worship Wagon Services

Welcome to the 2016 Hope in the Streets newsletter. God has blessed us with another year of serving opportunities in Kansas City, and our relationships with the homeless individuals in our community have continued to grow ever deeper. Our three core programs (the Vittle Van, the Worship Wagon, and Winter Warmth Kits) have continued to operate consistently and successfully over the last several years, and this year was no different. While the Worship Wagon is only in its 2nd year of operation, it has quickly become foundational to what we do and why we are able to expand our impact on the streets of Kansas City.

Our volunteers are essential to our ability to continue to run our programs and we are so thankful to them for generously giving us their time and energy week after week. We also wouldn't be nearly as effective with our donated dollars if it weren't for our partner organizations that donate water, food, and other supplies to Hope in the Streets at little or no cost.

By the numbers – a summary of services provided this year

So far in 2016, we have delivered 6,694 meals to our friends on the streets, with several weeks to go before the end of the year. This year we may break our all time record (7,529 which was set last year) in terms of meals served. We have also provided other essential supplies to the homeless, including 265 pairs of socks, 96 hygiene kits, 73 blankets, plus several hats, gloves, and shoes already this year.

As we do every year, in the late fall we begin our annual Winter Warmth Kit campaign. We'll start putting this year's kits together in early December and start handing them out as the weather gets colder. We reserve these for the hardcore homeless population in Kansas City – those individuals who we know are truly living outdoors throughout the winter season.

Update on the General Store

Last year we started a "General Store", located at Hope Faith Ministries at 7th & Virginia in downtown Kansas City. The idea was to heavily subsidize the cost of essential street gear, including tents and sleeping bags, so that our homeless friends would have a way to get these items as needed at a very low cost.

Prior to opening up this service, we found that the folks we were serving started to expect that those items would be handed out on demand, as often as they wanted to ask for them. They began throwing these items away because they could get new stuff, for free, just by asking. The items no longer held any value in their eyes.

By assigning a value to these items, albeit minimal, they are being treated as valuable and are being taken care of for longer periods of time. By charging a small nominal fee, we are also instilling a sense of dignity and responsibility for those who choose to earn these items for themselves.

In last year's newsletter I set out 4 goals for this initiative, and we are happy to report that we have achieved success in all 4!

- 1) Provide access to these items for those who can't make their way to discount stores that are typically situated in the suburbs
- 2) Provide these items at a steep discount so homeless folks can easily afford them
- 3) Create a sense of value for these items that we weren't doing before when we handed them out for free (so they aren't considered a "disposable" item)
- 4) Directing homeless folks to the full range of daily services that Hope Faith provides

Our 2nd year of Worship Wagon Services

God has blessed us with amazing weather nearly every week this year, which is awesome considering our church services are held outdoors, in the elements, every Monday. In two years of holding Monday services at 1st & Grand in downtown Kansas City, we have only had to cancel services one time, and that was because the streets were heavily iced over and it was unsafe to drive our vehicles to that location. We have seen 100+ degree days, thunderstorms, rain, snow, and sub-freezing conditions, but we have showed up week after week for 2 years running. While we have seen adverse conditions now and again, the truth is that God has cleared the way each week, and more often than not, we are enjoying our time of praise, worship, and fellowship in mild and mostly comfortable conditions.

Our volunteer base has grown dramatically this year, and we are starting to build additional volunteer resources in hopes of starting another Worship Wagon location in 2017. We added a new church partner in 2016, Mission Church, and we are looking for three more church partners so we can expand to a new time and/or location each week. The 5 church partners we have now are strong and reliable and truly bought in to the program, which makes holding services each and every week possible.

We have continued to see attendance each week reaching upwards of 100 folks, but our congregation size certainly begins to pull back as the temperatures drop in the early winter. Check at our website at <http://WorshipWagon.org> to see photos, videos, and blog updates that we add each month. There is also helpful information on what to expect should you decide to attend one of our Monday services ... we would love to see you there sometime.

Wrapping up

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 salaries, 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. If you would like to support our efforts, please visit our website at <http://HopeInTheStreets.org> and click on the "Donations" link from the main home page menu bar. We are proud and honored to be able to run our charity responsibly from a fiscal perspective, never spending more than we can afford, and only looking for ways to expand when God blesses us with more resources than we currently need.

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