

## 2020 Annual Letter to our Donors and Supporters

### In this newsletter:

- 1) By the Numbers – a Summary of Services Provided this Year
- 2) The Answered Prayers Grant
- 3) Worship Wagon Services
- 4) Wrapping up

Welcome to the 2020 Hope in the Streets newsletter. This year marks our 16th Anniversary for Hope in the Streets. Hope in the Streets is trusting in God to guide us going forward as we faithfully live out our mission of serving the homeless in Kansas City.

What a difference a year makes. The pandemic has changed our lives in ways we would have not thought possible. As inconvenient as it has been for our volunteers it has been worse for our clients, Kansas City's homeless.

The Hope in the Streets organization made the decision to suspend service from early March until the first of June. Two opportunities were missed each week to show that people do care to greet them and call them by name. Two meals a week our clients were not given.

After the decision to suspend service was made, I chose to drive around to the camps and tell our clients personally that we were suspending services. I am not sure what I was expecting in terms of reaction from our clients but what I received I can only describe as compassion from several of them. I had several homeless thank me for taking the time to let them know of our decision. Here I am telling them we won't be providing any services to them; no meals, no socks, none of the other items we hand out and they were thanking me!

That is something I can learn from and something I will never forget.

In speaking with a couple of our folks they were impacted in ways I had not thought of and by things I take for granted each day, like A/C. Most of the places they could go downtown to escape the heat were closed; Libraries and Churches closed, shelters with reduced occupancy.

With the work from home orders less traffic, both automobile and foot, impacted them as well. Donations were down for those who sit on street corners "flying signs". I am not sure how much social interaction the homeless get on a daily basis, but I am assuming it is even less with the lockdowns.

### **By the numbers – a summary of services provided this year**

Year to date in 2020, we have served 4163 meals to our friends on the streets. That is 4163 times we have had the opportunity to put a smile on someone's face. In addition, we have provided: 104 pairs of socks, 75 hygiene kits, 43 blankets, 22 hats, and 56 pairs of gloves.

## **The Answered Prayers Grant**

2020 was year four of our “Answered Prayers Grant” program, which is available to help those looking to take the next step in turning their lives around. Grants are awarded to those having small financial obstacles in their path to moving away from homelessness. As well as those struggling to keep from becoming homeless.

This year we received grants for:

- Security deposit and first month’s rent for someone who had their current rental sold.
- Mortgage and Insurance payment for a couple with 4 children who were hit hard by this year’s pandemic.
- Current month rent and utilities to keep a single mom and her son in current residence.

## **Worship Wagon Services**

Our church service continues to reach dozens of homeless individuals each Monday and our partnering churches have remained committed to bringing amazing worship music and on-topic biblical teaching every week. We are entering our 6th consecutive year for Worship Wagon with many of the same volunteer church groups that have been with us since the beginning. We also have a host of new partners serving alongside us as well.

After a couple of years of planning and praying, God brought us the needed volunteer churches and individuals we needed this spring to start up a 2nd service each week! Freedom Fire Ministries continues to be a backbone partner, filling in the gaps for days and locations that aren’t fully committed to yet, but we are excited to welcome Leawood Presbyterian and Navah Church to our family now as well. Between these two new church partners, Grace Church stepping up for additional commitment, and Freedom Fire, we launched a second service on Mondays at 20th & Oak each Monday. Keith K. and Allan C., both volunteers from our first location, stepped up to be the lead volunteers to oversee the new location’s services each week. We are so grateful to Keith, Allan, Leawood Pres, Navah, and Freedom Fire for making it possible to reach more individuals each week in another area of underserved Kansas City.

Because of the pandemic, we not only had to delay the launch of our 2nd service, but we also suspended church services at our original location for part of the spring as the pandemic took hold of our city. Due to government instituted restrictions and guidelines related to trying to prevent/slow the spread of the virus, we felt it was best to stand down for a few weeks until it looked like we were safe to start up services again. We were shut down the same period of time that the Vittle Van stopped delivering meals at the onset of the pandemic.

With better knowledge of how to be safe, be socially distant, provide and wear good protective face coverings, we feel confident that we can continue to offer services for the foreseeable future. Since we started back up in May, our attendance has been pretty much what we would expect each week, with seasonal and monthly fluctuations that we’ve seen in prior years. In fact, it feels like our weekly attendance has been higher this year and our “congregation” is continuing to grow at a healthy rate.

## Wrapping up

At the bottom of our website's [home page](#), you will find an old testament verse:

*'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 2020, the year of the pandemic, I cannot think of a better verse to describe where my heart and mindset is where our homeless are concerned. I have to assume that our volunteers feel the same way evidenced by the giving of their time month after month. Verse 11 says *"You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land."* Because of you, our donors, Hope in the Streets is able to accomplish this.

Hope in the Streets and those we serve thank you for that generosity. If you like what we are doing and how we are doing it, please help spread the word to your family, friends, and co-workers. With God's grace we can continue to serve the poor and those experiencing homelessness here in Kansas City.

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. It is just us, our volunteers, and a passion to help those less fortunate.

If you would like to support our efforts, please visit our [donations](#) page.

Signing off, I hope this newsletter finds you healthy, ready for the holiday's, and most importantly eager to continue supporting Hope in the Streets.

*Sincerely,*

**Gene Lowther**

*on behalf of the Hope in the Streets family*