

December 2021

2021 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

This year marks the biggest change for Hope in The Streets (HITS) in its 17-year history. HITS founders, Joe and Sandy Ratterman, have decided to step back from their roles on the board of directors for HITS. Through their vision and direction HITS has gone from delivering winter warmth kits to becoming a 501(c)3, to providing several thousand meals to Kansas City's homeless, to include a grant program and worship service.

A quote from the 2011 HITS newsletter shows the passion Joe and Sandy have for helping the homeless.

“Hope in the Streets, therefore, continues our mission of serving the homeless in Kansas City, by getting to know the individuals one by one, name by name, face by face.”

Our communities might just be a better place if we took the time to get to know those around us by name and face.

I would encourage you to read each of the previous newsletters to see what Joe and Sandy accomplished and meant to Kansas City's Homeless. Joe plans to stay actively involved each week with the “Worship Wagon” program that was co-founded and continues to be co-sponsored by HITS and Freedom Fire Ministries. Sandy will shifting her focus and volunteer energy to other programs in the Kansas City area, and she will be missed by our homeless and our volunteers.

This winter was one of the colder winters we have experienced in several years, with one of the longest cold spells in 20 or so years. I talked with a many of our homeless friends (that won't go to a shelter) and asked them how they stay warm. Mostly by having lots of blankets. They lay on top of several and cover up with several.

One gentleman told me that he collects blankets all year. He then ties two blankets together and drapes them over his tent. He repeats this process with most of the blankets he collects. He then covers the whole thing with three or four tarps to keep then dry. The rest of the blankets he uses on the inside of his tent. He also gets some heat by putting candles in a small metal bucket. The candles heat the bucket which provides heat to the tent. He figures he can keep his tent about 30 to 40 degrees warmer than the outside temperature.

By the numbers – a summary of services provided this year

Year to date in 2021, we have served 3,529 meals to our friends on the streets. That is 3,529 times we have had the opportunity to put a smile on someone's face. In addition, we have provided: 121 pairs of socks, 59 hygiene kits, 39 blankets, and 23 pairs of gloves. By the end of the year, we will have served about 4,000 friends.

Our numbers this year are down from years past. Kansas City provided hotel rooms for the homeless for three months this past winter. Thank you to the city for providing three months of shelter for our homeless.

The Answered Prayers Grant

2021 was year five 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 and awarded a grant for outstanding utility bills for an individual who was unable to work for a time due to contracting Covid. I am happy to report this individual recovered and is working again.

Worship Wagon Services

The Worship Wagon program has been going strong for 7 years now, offering weekly church services under a bridge in downtown Kansas City. Our volunteer ranks have really blossomed, and several new churches have signed on to bring bible-based teaching and worship music to the homeless week in and week out. The number of homeless folks attending each week has remained mostly constant on a seasonal basis, and our volunteers have remained vigilant through all kinds of weather as well. We have been able to keep both service locations going each week, allowing us to reach even more homeless folks with an opportunity to attend a non-denominational church program each week. Services are open to anyone who would like to stop by, so please feel free to join us any Monday evening that you are available. All the information you need to know can be found at the website: <http://worshipwagon.org>.

Wrapping up

We cannot thank Joe and Sandy enough for the work they have done with Hope in The Streets. I personally would like to thank them for patience and guidance as we transition Hope in the Streets. As the board president, and now the primary sponsor and advocate for the organization, I am looking forward to continuing Hope in The Streets and the services it provides.

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.

Hope in the Streets and those we serve thank you for your 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.

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 holidays, and eager to continue supporting Hope in the Streets.

God Bless and Sincerely,

Gene Lowther

on behalf of the Hope in the Streets family