



'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

December 2024

2024 Annual Letter to our Donors and Supporters

As 2024 comes to a close, I reflect on the past year with joy, gratitude, humility, and a deep sense of loss. This has been one of the most challenging years for Hope in the Streets (HITS) during my tenure as board president. Despite the difficulties, we made new friends, both two- and four-legged, and witnessed a significant milestone; another record year.

HITS celebrated as four of our clients found homes for the first time in several years. We also welcomed several new volunteers who have become integral to our mission. However, we also faced heartache, losing one of our long-time volunteers and losing two of our friends—one to natural causes and one to violence.

One truly amazing highlight this year was our successful mid-year fundraising campaign. This achievement was made possible by our generous donors who believe in HITS' mission. A special thanks to one donor who provided a matching dollar-for-dollar grant for most of the funds raised. Without you, our donors, HITS would not be able to serve and make new friends.

Among our new friends is a young man known as "D." D is always polite and grateful for what he receives. In February, we provided him with a winter coat, boots, gloves, and a stocking hat. As the weather turned colder, he proudly shared that he still wears the coat we gave him. D has a wonderful dog, around 3 or 4 years old, who is always by his side. This summer, I discovered that his dog loves to eat ice. By mid-summer, his dog would eagerly approach our van, tail wagging, anticipating the ice from our cooler. It was a heartwarming sight.

HITS also saw four people secure apartments for the first time in years. I am happy to report that three of them have found jobs—one as a janitor, another learning to be a painter, and the third in an unspecified role. These young clients are taking their first steps toward turning their lives around. Additionally, two of them now volunteer at our 1st and Grand Worship Wagon stop, helping distribute clothes to other homeless individuals.

Unfortunately, we faced a significant setback this year when our Vittle Van was stolen on October 21. Security footage showed that it took the thieves just 61 seconds to steal the van, which had just been stocked with a large supply of winter gear. This gear will never reach those who need it most. I am deeply grateful to our drivers who graciously offered the use of their

personal vehicles until we can replace the van. I am pleased to report that HITS has settled with our insurance company, and the search for a new van is underway.

By the numbers – a summary of services provided this year

Year to date in 2024 we will have served 9000 meals to our friends on the streets. Making this the busiest year in HITS history. In addition, we have provided: 243 pairs of socks, 288 hygiene kits, 59 blankets, and 58 pairs of gloves, 124 packets of hand warmers, and 237 small zip-loc bags of dog food. In addition, we handed out Coats, stocking caps, baseball caps, shoes, and winter boots.

The Answered Prayers Grant

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 one grant request to help with funds for past due utility bills. A family, due to no fault of their own (broken water line), incurred a large water bill and was struggling to pay. After the grant was given the family was able to pay the rest of the past due amount and keep the water service on.

Worship Wagon Services

The Worship Wagon Ministry had another wonderful year of non-denominational church services at both of our downtown Kansas City locations. We thought we were going to be disrupted by the KC Streetcar expansion project, but as of December, we have been able to continue holding services under the 1st and Grand Street bridge location all year ... no disruptions yet!

We have been blessed by all our partner churches to bring great music and meaningful biblical messages to our locations every Monday throughout the year. As with recent years, each month that had a fifth Monday was highlighted by Jimmie Bratcher bringing his uniquely soulful blues band and down to grass roots gospel message. We appreciate Jimmie and every one of our partner churches and the dozens of volunteers that make the Worship Wagon ministry happen week in and week out.

There were a handful of Monday's where weather kept us from holding services at the Washington Park location, but we were able meet under the Grand Street bridge every week

this year ... it's clear God is paving the way and clearing obstacles so we can bring church service and regular fellowship gatherings to our homeless friends and in Kansas City.

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. 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