

## November 2022

### 2022 Annual Letter to our Donors and Supporters

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This year has been an interesting year for serving the homeless in Kansas City. We have seen the city house some of our homeless for a second winter in area hotels. We saw many camps cleaned up and relocated to less visible areas of the city. We have seen our weekly numbers both below and above past years weekly numbers. And sad to say we lost two of our clients, Eugene and Marcie. I can only hope they are in place that knows no homelessness.

For those that were not part of that program this past year saw several camps cleaned out, relocated, and in one case fenced off so the park could not be used again by the homeless. Each time this happens our clients lose most of their belongings and we lose the opportunity to serve them until we find them again. On a good note, as a result of this HITS found two new homeless camps to serve for a time before they were also relocated.

This year we surveyed many of our regular clients to get to know them better. We asked each one the same set of questions. As you can imagine the answers to these questions varied greatly. One common theme did occur: it bothers homeless people when people refuse to acknowledge their presence or look them in the eye. We were told they (our clients) don't understand why people do almost anything to avoid eye contact with them. From suddenly having to stare at their shoes to even crossing the street to avoid walking by them.

One of the questions we asked was if they would be willing to share a little personal information with us about how they ended up on the streets. Not surprisingly this was the one question most homeless did not want to answer. We did get a few answers and I would like to share one of them with you (with his permission). This gentleman is now in his late 60's with some health issues. In his early 60's he lost his job in due to the health issues and was not able to find another job. As a result, he is very close to being homeless himself. He has managed to keep his house with his disability income, but he does not have enough money for his basic needs; one of them being food. This gentleman has opened his back yard for another one of our homeless to live. In exchange for parking a full-size van he lives out of in the backyard he does most of the maintenance and upkeep on the house and yard. A relationship beneficial to both.

It turns out that our homeless population likes to read. One of our volunteers collected books for several months, about 500 of them. Each time our volunteer comes out on the van she brings 30 or so books with her. We have a couple clients that are reading two or three books a week and several more taking a single book each week.

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

Year to date in 2022, we have served 5167 meals to our friends on the streets. In addition, we have provided: 110 pairs of socks, 125 hygiene kits, 104 blankets, and 58 pairs of gloves. Other items we also provide are hand warmers, stocking caps, and a lot of dog and cat food. By the end of the year, we will have served about 5,500 friends.

## **The Answered Prayers Grant**

2022 was year six 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 did not received any grant requests.

## **Worship Wagon Services**

We are closing in on 8 years of providing non-denominational church services in downtown Kansas City. While our homeless friends are the primary reason we hold church services outdoors, we are also seeing our volunteers participating on a regular basis and benefiting from the various opportunities to serve each week. We have several local area church partners that are loyally bringing worship leaders and speakers month after month, which means we have been able to hold services almost 100% of the time throughout the year. The only time we aren't able to hold services is when the weather dips below 10 degrees Fahrenheit, or when we get heavy snow or ice. That just hasn't happened very often on any Monday's in the last 8 years, so we are encouraged that God is looking over our efforts to keep church services going. We've had a few more vandalism and theft issues with the trailer that holds all our equipment, but we have been able to adapt and believe that we will be more secure going forward. We consider ourselves so blessed to have access to the two locations where we hold services every Monday.

## **Wrapping up**

Learning about and getting to know our clients a little more through the survey was an eye-opening experience. Many, many different reasons have caused our clients to end up homeless. This survey also re-enforced to me how important it is to be on the streets serving them and most importantly learning their names and stories.

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*