

## Support the Homeless in Kansas City

***Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land.***

Deuteronomy 15:10-11

Our goal: To provide an opportunity for our friends and our local community to help care for the homeless in Kansas City. If this is an opportunity you are interested in, please read on. If not, simply throw this away and think nothing more of it.

My wife and I and our kids have been volunteering with the Salvation Army since December of 2004 on a regular basis. We ride along in a meal truck that takes meals, socks, blankets, and hygiene supplies to the homeless population in Kansas City. This has proven to be a very rewarding experience, allowing us to meet and talk directly with hundreds of people who, for one reason or another, are literally living on the streets.

This started for our family last year when we decided that we wanted to use our many blessings and put together "Winter Homeless Kits" for the less fortunate here in our own backyard of Kansas City. We didn't know for sure what we should provide, and we really didn't know how to get the kits to the homeless. After discussing the kit contents as a family, we set out to buy the supplies. We put together 8 kits that each included:

Winter sleeping bag --- Hygiene kit --- 2 pairs of socks and gloves, a winter hat and a scarf --- Bible  
Duct Tape --- Bed Roll --- \$60 Gift card to McDonalds --- Duffle bag to hold everything

The local Salvation Army was very generous in helping us get the kits to those who really needed them. They know where the truly homeless are in town and made sure that the kits were not given to anybody who was "gaming the system". After riding along with the Salvation Army for more than a year now, we are much more familiar with the conditions and locations of Kansas City's homeless. Everybody at the Salvation Army involved in caring for the homeless does so on a purely volunteer basis. There is no administrative overhead involved.

We are going to put together winter homeless kits again this year, and we thought there might be other people in our local community that would like to reach out to Kansas City's homeless. If you would like to help our less fortunate brothers and sisters here in Kansas City, then we invite you to donate either cash or critical supplies for this cause. We haven't figured out how to make our cause a registered charity yet, so donations of less than \$250 in value will not be tax deductible, but are very much appreciated none-the-less. Donations of \$250 or more in value will be eligible for a receipt from the Salvation Army that can be used for tax deduction purposes.

We will put the kits together over the next several weeks, and plan to distribute them to Kansas City's homeless during January and February 2006, the coldest months of the year. We can accept supplies and donations anytime between November 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup>. Of course our family will be donating money and supplies as well. We were able to provide 8 full kits last year on our own at a cost of around \$200 each. We will contribute the same amount or more again this year. By opening this opportunity up to our friends and community, we hope to reach even more homeless this time around and in the future.

If you want to donate supplies to include in the kits, please give us a call or email to arrange delivery to our house. We will only accept supplies that are new, or just as good as new. We prefer not to take used or old clothing to the homeless. Sleeping bags are an exception to this rule if they are in "as good as new" condition. All clothing items should be large or extra large in size. Hand-made items are especially appreciated. If you want to donate money, then simply mail us a check. After the kits are assembled and delivered to the Salvation Army we will get receipts for all donations that qualify (\$250 or greater in value), and deliver those receipts to the qualifying donors. Our family will help, in coordination with the Salvation Army, with distributing the kits directly to the homeless.

Only consider participating if you have a desire to reach out to Kansas City's homeless and don't know how. We know that many of you are already supporting great charities here and abroad, and we hope you continue to do so. If this is an opportunity that interests and/or excites you, we welcome your support in any way you feel comfortable.

May God bless you, your family, and our homeless brothers and sisters in Kansas City.