

Like



Happy Thanksgiving to our Wheels of Blessings Supporters!

Month after month, our dear supporters bless us! Thank you to all who are so faithful in contributing food, making sandwiches, supplying water, fruit, and snacks, and especially for the colder weather, those who give coats, gloves, hats, and heavy socks.

Special thanks to Sister Paulette Williams and the Brightmore community in Charlotte

for knitting hats and scarves and to The Belmont School of Ballet and Katie Steil who collected gloves and socks for us. Our interns from Highland School of Technology not only helps with graphics for our communications but also collected food and other items for us this month.



Sister Paulette and the Brightmore Community hand knitted hats and scarves

Thanksgiving Update

Both Wheels of Blessings Teams will deliver hot meals to our unhoused friends on Thanksgiving Day. We are indebted to Queen of the Apostles parish for providing the meals, which are part of the parish's yearly Thanksgiving day meal offering in its family center.



Ryley and Kate from Highland School of Technology sorted and organized clothing



Katie Steil collected gloves and socks from Belmont School of Ballet

Team 1 - November 13th

We found it harder to find people on this trip. As we hear from our unhoused friends and see for ourselves, they are constantly being moved on. We can only attribute this to the city and county's efforts to banish the homeless from the camps and streets. Our regular spots in downtown Gastonia were very quiet so we ventured down to the West End Walmart and met up with a crew of people living there. They were grateful for the food and clothes but really wished for a tent and heavy blankets for the incoming colder weather. One lady was worried about how she would survive in the cold. We met a gentleman who had just been released from prison and was looking for employment. He was grateful for clothes and food. Another lady had just been evicted and had nothing. We piled her up with as many clothes and essentials as she could carry. Another lady came over and said she had a job but needed work clothes. We gave her a few things to fit the bill.

We also served more elderly on this trip. One man lives in a shed, and badly needs shoes. He needs very wide 11 ½ shoes or boots, and after searching our box of shoes, we were disappointed we didn't have his size.

We saw a woman walking on the railroad tracks with a dog who had a rope as a leash.



Homeless herself, she found the equally homeless dog wandering along the tracks. She wants to take care of the dog, so Carolyn Bergman went to a nearby convenience store and found a collar, leash, (better than a rope!!) and dog food. The woman was grateful for this, and also for her sandwich and care bags. She then headed to the local spay-neuter clinic on Franklin to get the dog whatever care she

could for free. Every trip out reminds us of the role pets play for the unhoused. A stray dog or kitten will offer unconditional love and hugs, and in many cases provide protection and will "sound the alarm" when someone is sleeping or resting. There seems to be a commonality in the unhoused and stray pets: they both have needs for the most basics of shelter, food, and safety. If only we could wrap them all up in warmth, safety and love.

Since we met them in the summer (as noted in the June newsletter), we have been giving the young woman with the 6 children food, clothes, and toys. The woman's husband works, and they rent a very run-down house. Most of their money each month goes to pay rent. Months ago Carolyn Bergman had given the woman lists of resources to help, and the woman did contact various agencies and non-profits and is receiving aid. The family still struggles to keep a roof over their heads, but having some agency help is a lifeline. An example is receiving diapers, food stamps, and getting an ID.

Team 2 November 20

(Team 2 from Queen of the Apostles splits into 2 groups)

Group 1 of Team 2:

We started at the Belmont Walmart; D. informed us they no longer are allowed to park overnight and that the Belmont Police come with their blue lights and tell them to leave. D. parks in another parking lot at night but is always looking out for the police. We found folks here and there on our way towards Franklin Square, but not the usual number, which is frustrating, as we sense they are always being moved on. We went to one of the camps and found about 10 people there, but the other camps were empty, although tents were still up. Many people work during the day. Later, we stopped and gave a sandwich bag to a man who said "God bless you" and we replied, "God bless YOU!" He lifted both hands holding the food and with the sweetest

smile said, "He blesses me every day." We then took 4 meals to a lady who works at a convenience store but lives in a playhouse/shack in someone's backyard with her 2 teenage grandchildren.

We told all of our folks that meals will be delivered on Thanksgiving Day as well as invited them to come to our church for dinner. We also gave out lots of clothes, shoes, socks, underwear, the last 2 sleeping bags and all of the blankets. Our work continues.....

Group 2 of Team 2

One of us saw a tent off Airline Drive; we served 10-12 people sandwiches, sleeping bags, clothes, blankets. They are very thankful and are looking forward to the Thanksgiving meals we will bring.

On a back road we found our friend K, sitting on a bench. He is always happy to see us which certainly makes us feel good. He told us he had been speaking with his mother about going back to live with her, but she wants him to go to rehab first even though he has been sober for over a year (since he had a stroke). He sounded good and there were lots of hugs.

We saw our friends J. and J. at the library. They were both staying in her car as his car has been towed. He is trying to find out how he can get it back. Unfortunately, most of his clothes were in that car, so he took the rest of what we had. She told us the good news that she had gotten a job paying \$19 an hour but the job is in Concord. She was running low on gas and was worried about not being able to get back and forth until she gets her first paycheck We had her follow me to a gas station and filled her up. She has a chance to improve her situation and a little gas can help. More hugs ensued.

At the Midtown motel we left about 10-12 bags of food and told folks we would be delivering Thanksgiving meals to them. They were excited to hear that.

**In Gratitude,
Wheels of Blessings**

A note from Sr. Carolyn

Twice a month each of our two teams goes out to feed the unhoused who always need something to eat. Lately, it has become harder to find them



*Homeless Jesus - No Place to Rest: "What would Jesus do?"
Inscribed on the back of the bench: "Whatever you did for the
least of these, you did for me." - Matthew 25:40*

since the city has asked them not to stay in any one place. As one of our older gentlemen said, "We're not allowed to stay anywhere for very long. If the city would just give us a place where we could rest for a while it would help. Most of us don't have a means of transportation. And we can only walk so far." I asked him if he could say anything to the city what would he want to say? He replied, "I want them to know we just need a place where we can rest and not be afraid of getting chased away." As I listened I could see a tired man and yet he was thinking of not just himself but others like him.

A week later I saw him

downtown on a bench with his cart and a bag by his side. I wondered what he was thinking as he appeared to be looking to the heavens. A week later I learned the man who always greeted us with a smile and a kind word had died. He was found sitting with his back against the wall of the First Methodist Church downtown. He had sat there to rest when his Lord came to take him to a place of everlasting rest and love. This was his place of rest on Sundays, where he would meet his God each week. How fitting he should go home to God at that place. Ron finally found his rest and peace; God heard his cry. Let us not forget Ron and pray for all the unhoused who just need a place to stay, a place to feel safe and at peace. Rest in peace, dear friend, rest in peace.

I want to share a picture of my favorite statue, the homeless Jesus. May it serve to remind us that Christ lives in all of us.

Blessings,

Sister Carolyn

Homeless Jesus – No Place to Rest
“What would Jesus do?” Inscribed on
the back of the bench: “Whatever you
did for the least of these, you did for Me.”
- Matthew 25:40

Peace and Blessing This Thanksgiving,

With Love, Ellen and Your Wheels of Blessings Team



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