

Dear Wheels of Blessings supporters:

Before we begin our April update on our ministry this week, we first wish Carolyn Bergman, a founding member of Wheels of Blessings, a very happy 80th birthday (April 6). Carolyn is well known in Gaston County for the example she has set in her never-wavering concern for and help to the poor, sick, or anyone needing help. Carolyn has spent all of her life living out the Gospel. And, as a Sister of Mercy Associate, she exemplifies the founder of the Sisters of Mercy, Catherine McAuley's never-wavering commitment to the poor, sick, and uneducated. Happy 80th, Carolyn!

The April 10 update with thanks to our sandwich makers, water, chips, fruit, cookie, toiletry bag, socks, and dogfood suppliers:

Team 1: (covering Gastonia downtown and points west): Mary Ellen Weir, Judy Dobies, Sr. Carolyn Coll, Carolyn Bergman, Stewart LaFrancis, Mary Wright.

- Please pray for two of our regulars who call home the area around the Gastonia bus station: one will have a check on his heart this week to determine if he is a viable candidate for aneurysm surgery. He keeps his belongings nestled against a building. We asked who would look after them while he is hospitalized; he said he just has to have faith no one will steal anything. We asked if we could visit him in the hospital, and he said " Absolutely! And bring me a peanut butter and jelly sandwich!" The other person needing prayer is having surgery on her leg to clear up a blood clot. She was in much pain when we talked to her. She works but is still not able to afford rent. Both asked for prayers. We continue to be blessed by the faith of so many homeless persons. It seems their only dependency is on God. Another person told me about the small wooden cross Sr. Carolyn had given him a few months earlier. He always has it in his pocket.
- We met several people with dogs and gave them dog food. Another dog was wandering around the dilapidated car "camp." She had just had puppies; we gave out more dog food to those who said they were watching out for her and the puppies.
- One woman at the camp was barefoot. She had several scratches on her feet; we gave her socks. Unfortunately, we had no shoes with us this time.
- In probably the most touching moment of the day, we saw one of our regulars, a 73-year-old with cancer, sitting by the Gastonia post office. She had several bags of belongings with her. We got out of the car, calling her by name, and saw she was crying. She and her companion had been staying at the Midtown Motor Inn, where we also deliver food and supplies. The woman and her companion didn't have enough to pay for the \$66 a-night room, so they were on the streets until she got her Social Security check and he got paid. He works for a landscaper, but when it rains, he has no work and doesn't get paid. We felt helpless, as we do not give out money. However, a woman saw us talking to her, came up, and said: do you need any help? We all explained the situation, and she reached into her purse and gave us \$120!! for 2 nights in the motel. As Sr. Carolyn and Carolyn Bergman drove our homeless friend to the motel, she kept saying: right before you all came, I was praying for an angel to come. I got several. There are angels in our midst, as "the Lord hears the cry of the poor" (Psalm 34:2).

Team 2: (covering Gastonia and points east, Cramerton, Belmont): Zeke and Jean Panzica (in absentia), Mary Kane, Rebecca Willey, Terry, John Gallegos.

- We saw a woman in a black coat by the Franklin Square McDonald's. She was near a drain pipe, and we saw she was crying as we asked her if she would like a sandwich. She said the police had moved her on twice that day, and she just didn't know where else to go.
- We met a young couple on Cox Road; they were so appreciative of the sandwiches and other items.
- At a small encampment behind a Lutheran Church, we talked again with a young woman we had met last month. She was excited, as she said she was waiting for a stimulus check to purchase a used car for \$900 to get transportation for a job at Amazon.
- Our friend with colon cancer told us he'd been in and out of the hospital for the last month. The sense of community has always struck us in this small camp (which has been moved on several times). Everyone seems to look out for one another, and the younger ones have great respect for our friend with cancer, called "The Mayor."
- We found several of our regulars in Belmont. They had been moved on, but have resettled elsewhere. They will no doubt be moved on again and again.

To all of you who make this possible, thank you for being angels!
Your Wheels of Blessings Teams