

## The Wheels of Blessings Team Reports:

**Team 1 Report:** (Carolyn Bergman, Sister Carolyn, Judy Dobies, Stuart LaFrancis, Ellen Weir, Mary Wright) thought we would share our process of delivery to our homeless friends: ( photos)

On Tuesday afternoons, the Sisters of Mercy make 100 PB&J, ham and cheese sandwiches. The sandwiches are then stored in the convent kitchen refrigerator. The next morning your newsletter writer Ellen goes to pick up the sandwiches, always met by a smiling and gracious kitchen staff. The boxes of sandwiches are then loaded into my tiny Fiat Pop. See first 2 photos. I am always amazed how all those boxes fit in that very small car...but somehow it always works. I always thank God, who says, "there's always room and space for everything and everyone!" I just smile with the truth of that. I then take the boxes to Carolyn Bergman's house in Gastonia, where Team 1 unloads them from my car to then pack fruit, cookies, and water into the bags. We then load the boxes and bags, Sr, Rose Marie Tresp's toiletries bags, and donated socks, blankets, etc. into the cars and take off to deliver.

We had an interesting talk with many folks at the Gastonia Bus station. Sister Carolyn always politely asks them to dispose of their trash, saying this is what upsets people and gives the homeless a bad reputation. From that, somehow the topic of what the City of Gastonia is doing for the homeless came up, with many saying: "The City does nothing for us. Nothing. They talk about helping but do nothing. They constantly move us from one place to another. We feel they treat us like trash...throwing us out for someone else to pick us up and throw us out again."

One man at the station was blind. When Sister Carolyn handed him some water, he dropped it and she tried to retrieve it for him. He said, "I'm sorry, but I'm blind." Sister Carolyn said: "I'm sorry, I can't hear!!" They both laughed.

We met a woman at a gas station who took a sandwich and water, and then went on. She came back a few seconds later and said: "thank you so much for what you do. For what all non-profits do to try to help us. I was evicted last month. My landlord went up on rent. I work 2 jobs, but can't pay the rent. So now I'm out here. I'm on my way now to apply for a third fast food job. I'm really trying. But between non-profits like you and us on the streets really trying to make life better...I believe we'll do it . We'll make it!"

Later, looking for people on the streets, we flagged down a man pushing a grocery cart with a suitcase and some bags. We asked him if he would like a sandwich, and he asked for 4. He was from Haiti, and pointed to his house. Four others live there, he said. The house was in very bad shape, had tarps on the roof, and was quite dilapidated. He told us how bad things were in Haiti now. As we left, he said: God bless you!



Sr. Carolyn and Ellen went out again on Friday, as we were not able to cover all the places we usually go to on Wednesday. It rained heavily and was colder than it's been, but we were very glad went, as we saw so many homeless friends trying to shelter from the driving rain anyway they could. Huddling outside of store entrances, under the eaves of abandoned buildings, etc. We had lots of rain ponchos, thanks to Sr. Rose Marie, and all were very happy to get them. We gave a shower curtain for one woman to put over her shopping cart to try to keep things dry.

### Team 2 Report (notes by Deacon Zeke)

We once again had a large group of volunteers on Tuesday to make sandwiches and put the bags together. We were finished, packed up and heading home in an hour. Lynn made cookies again, this time with a St. Patrick's Day flair of green frosting.

Mary, Sandy, Jean and Zeke headed out on Wednesday at 11AM. We had already scouted the Walmart parking lot and found no one sleeping in their cars there. So we headed to a new location which a parishioner had told us about behind Our Redeemer Lutheran Church. There we found 3 people: a young couple who had just arrived there a few days earlier and a middle aged woman. The couple had a rather nice

tent, sleeping bags and blankets which had been given them by the relief center in Belmont. They were in relatively good shape but were happy to get food and some socks. We then spent quite a bit of time speaking with the other woman. She told us her story: she had a good job as a nursing assistant but got in with the wrong crowd and lost everything. But the good news is that she has been sober for 3 years now and is determined to get back on her feet. She had nothing but praise for the church community there who have helped them with food and have encouraged them to keep the area clean, which they do by placing all their trash in the dumpster. There are others that live in tents here but they were not there at the time.

Our next stop was at the IHOP on Cox Rd. where we saw a few people. Two of them we had seen last month and they were surprised when we called them by name. We then headed to Court Drive and found some more people there but not as many as we had the last time.

We then stopped at the tent on Wilkinson by the South Fork River. While there was no one there again, we left food by the tent, which was still amazingly clean.

Since we still had a lot of sandwiches, we headed to the motels on Wilkinson and left them with quite a bit of sandwiches. All were immensely grateful.

**Once again, donors and supporters, thank you. You make all this possible.**

**Your Wheels of Blessings Teams**  
our website address: [wheelsofblessings.org](http://wheelsofblessings.org)

