

# TOPEKA RESCUE MISSION MONTHLY REPORT FEBRUARY 2021

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# HOW YOU HELPED

## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT





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***As we reflect on this past year, we do so with some bewilderment created by the devastating effects of coronavirus in each of our lives. Some of us faced great loss in the passing of friends or family. Some experienced the devastating effects of an economic earthquake related to job loss, possible eviction, hunger and uncertainty. Some of us experienced all of this and more.***

As we write this reflection on the year 2020 at TRM ministries, we also reflect with great astonishment that despite overwhelming challenges, with your help and God's direction we were able to meet unprecedented needs in our community and touch many lives in the process. The following are brief narratives combined with statistics that highlight the year 2020 at Topeka Rescue Mission Ministries.

### Homeless Shelter Operations:

Historically, TRM shelters over 2,000 homeless men, women and children annually. 2020 was vastly different. Due to the health risks related to COVID-19, we immediately took steps to minimize the risk of disease and possible death for our guests by following all of the recommendations of the CDC, inter-agency counsel on

the homeless, Shawnee County Health Department and the Citygate network, an association of rescue ministries across North America. This meant our shelter populations in both the men's shelter and Hope Center for women and families needed to be reduced by at least 50%.

TRM immediately began to develop new protocols for social distancing, training and equipping of guests, volunteers and staff to begin COVID-19 mitigation procedures. Attempts to relocate some of our guests to potentially safer environments such as motels, rapid rehousing efforts, and transportation to family in other locations had positive results. The difficult decision to activate a priority shelter protocol also helped to keep shelter populations smaller and safer.

For the first time in TRM's 67-year history, priority shelter was given to homeless individuals and families from the Topeka Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). This meant the homeless from the counties of Shawnee, Jackson, Jefferson, Osage and Wabaunsee counties were given priority for available shelter beds. However, depending on critical need and available bed space, those coming from NE Kansas and beyond were given consideration for possible shelter.

### Quarantine and Isolation:

In order to minimize the potential impact of COVID-19, TRM designated several areas within both the men's shelter and Hope Center for women and families for quarantine and isolation. The quarantine bed spaces were made for asymptomatic

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individuals who have been exposed or potentially exposed to COVID-19. The isolation bed spaces were reserved for those individuals who were symptomatic or were known to have active COVID-19.

**As a result, since March, 154 individuals were sheltered in our quarantine areas for a total of 952 quarantine bed nights. 39 individuals were sheltered in our isolation areas for a total of 276 isolation bed nights.**

Due to the health risks of the homeless population, TRM had to increase our staffing numbers and designate individuals who were trained and equipped to deal with this life-threatening virus.

**In total, by the end of the year we provided emergency shelter to 731 men, 384 women and 163 children. A total of 1278 individuals received shelter. The cumulative number of bed nights for the year 2020 was 57,876.**

## Unsheltered Homeless:

TRM instituted Operation Street Reach over a decade ago to better identify the unsheltered population in

our community and provide expansive services to these individuals. Last year we saw a very predictable increase in the unsheltered. The economic impact of COVID-19 began to add to the national homeless numbers. Fewer shelter beds due to COVID-19, unemployment numbers not seen since the Great Depression, evictions, overloaded social services and an ongoing list of economic troubles led to a need to expand our Street Reach efforts.

**By year's end, TRM had reached out to 1168 unsheltered homeless with food, tents, sleeping bags, coats, gloves and a variety of survival gear to ready them for the winter months ahead.**

The goal of TRM Street Reach is to not only assist the unsheltered with basic survival supplies, but to reach out with the love and compassion of Jesus Christ, addressing trauma and attempting to make connections to shelter and supportive services whenever possible.

Planning also began in the fourth quarter of 2020 to begin preparing for an unprecedented explosion of the number of homeless in our

community and in the nation due to the continued effects of a potential economic catastrophe, the end of the moratorium on evictions and a shortage of emergency shelter space. More information will be coming in the days

ahead about our efforts to assist the unsheltered in 2021 and beyond.

## Program Redesign:

For many years TRM has made available a number of programs designed to equip our guests to transition out of homelessness and into successful lives in our community. These programs have assisted homeless individuals in the areas of job readiness, life skills, educational advancement, mentoring, case management and Biblical studies. Program length ranged from a few weeks to two years. With fewer available beds and homeless numbers increasing, we had to consolidate our equipping programs and shorten the length of time it takes to complete each program. This took a great effort on the part of TRM staff to modify programs and still achieve intended outcomes while at the same time significantly shortening program time frames.

The Children's Palace was temporarily converted into shelter space for people in our programs, and eventually modified to provide more space for guests to safely continue our programs.

## Hunger:

Historically TRM has provided food assistance in four areas.

1. Prepared meals for our guests and the community in our dining room.
2. Food baskets distributed to the community from the TRM Distribution Center at 401 NW Norris.
3. Food supplies distributed to the unsheltered through TRM Street Reach.
4. Food supplies given to other organizations who provide food for the hungry throughout the community.



Common areas and dorms were converted to meet COVID-19 guidelines

Once again, the economic effects of COVID-19 on our community changed just about everything we had known about hunger. One of the required changes we encountered due to COVID-19 protocols and social distancing was the need to reduce the number of people who could eat at any given time in our dining room. This required more meal times with fewer individuals at each meal. The biggest change was the fact that we could no longer safely invite the additional 80-200 community members per day who were in need of food, but not staying in our shelters, inside our dining room for meals. Rather than not serve this population, we immediately began an evening “meal to go” system, providing to-go containers with enough food for an evening meal and food for the next day’s breakfast.



**Fresh produce from the Farmers to Families program.**

**In 2020 we provided:**  
**176,876** meals from our kitchen to TRM guests and the community.

**8,230** food baskets to the hungry from the TRM Distribution Center (A **29%** increase over 2019)

**Food equalling 49,149** meals to community partners

**In all TRM provided food for 368,055** meals in 2020

## **BUT THAT DIDN'T TELL THE WHOLE STORY**

In March of last year TRM was invited to a Zoom call with leadership from World Vision, Citygate Network and CityServe International to explore ways to leverage a sudden excess in food on our nation’s farms due to supply chain disruptions. Our objective was to find an innovative way to get these resources to those most in need. Little did we know at that time how hunger and food insecurity would skyrocket over the coming months, and the vital role TRM would play in addressing food insecurity in our own community.

In the coming weeks, TRM teamed up with dozens of organizations to rapidly develop a distribution hub to deploy rescued food from the USDA Farmers to Families Food Box Program across Northeast Kansas. The project was called Operation Food Secure. Since then, Operation Food Secure (OFS) has grown to activate and



**Neighbors helping Neighbors. Food being loaded to take to communities.**

leverage over 90 community and faith-based organizations to bring US grown foods - that would have otherwise gone to waste - the “last mile” into neighborhoods and communities across eight Kansas counties.

**Since May 25th, Operation Food Secure has distributed:**

**76,107** food boxes and **48,742** gallons of milk equaling:

**2.29 million** pounds of food and **3.82 million** meals

We find these numbers staggering, but even more astounding is that each food box represents a name, a family, and a story. A parent facing reduced hours at work while trying to tele-school his kids; a senior citizen on a fixed income, struggling to afford basic necessities; multi-generational families squeezing into single homes just to scrape by. Our network of OFS volunteers has come to know the names and faces of these stories and have not only gone “the last mile,” but the extra mile to bring hope in the midst of this pandemic.

## Going Forward - Hope in 2021:

As a nation and a world raced to find the exit door of this past year, we are now keenly aware that the problems that began in early 2020 are not over and no clear return to “normal” is in sight. As the hope of an effective and safe vaccine is now being distributed, the devastating impact of COVID-19 is certain to be with us for an undetermined amount of time. Job loss, food insecurity, homelessness, loss of life and now a nation divided at levels we haven’t experienced since the 1860’s when our nation went to war with itself. Many of us are now asking the question, “what is our future, will there be a future, where has hope gone?”

At the Topeka Rescue Mission we daily see this question expressed on the faces, through the actions and in the voices of those who have lost any sense of real hope. Due to the devastating impact of acute poverty, hunger, homelessness, mental illness, addiction, human trafficking, exploitation and the list goes on, these individuals live in a world of continuous turmoil and uncertainty. To them the impact of covid we all experienced last year is just one more giant road block in their personal quest to find rest, purpose and hope.

Thankfully it does not end there. At the same time we have seen devastation and uncertainty all around, we have also witnessed the incredible power of neighbors “going



Connection and Hope through Food

the extra mile” caring for neighbors. It seems as if through adversity that we are all experiencing at some level a renaissance of compassion, volunteering and connection to each other. Hundreds of compassionate soldiers have joined us to help bring food, encouragement and hope to the growing number of hungry throughout our community. A new level of compassion appears to be springing forth towards those without a place to call home. Agencies, businesses and churches are beginning to work together with a determination to break down the normalcy of silos and look for

ways to network in ways that have not been seen before.

In spite of an uncertain future before us, we believe with God’s blessing together with your support and partnership we can shelter and equip the homeless, reach the unsheltered, feed the hungry and advance our efforts to provide stabilization and restoration for victims of human trafficking.

**Thank you for standing in the gap with us, as together we minister to the broken by simply loving the ones in front of us! †**

**“Looking at his disciples, he said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.”**

**Luke 6:20-21 NIV**

# 2020 Financial Break Down

TRM is committed to being transparent with our work, the amount of money TRM receives throughout the year, and how those monies are spent. Expenses are divided into three areas:

**Program** – These expenses are related to services we provide to the homeless and impoverished. This includes providing shelter, food, street outreach, guest education and training programs, volunteer services, case management, repairs/maintenance of TRM facilities, distributions services, direct service and financial assistance for rent, transportation, medication for guests, and more.

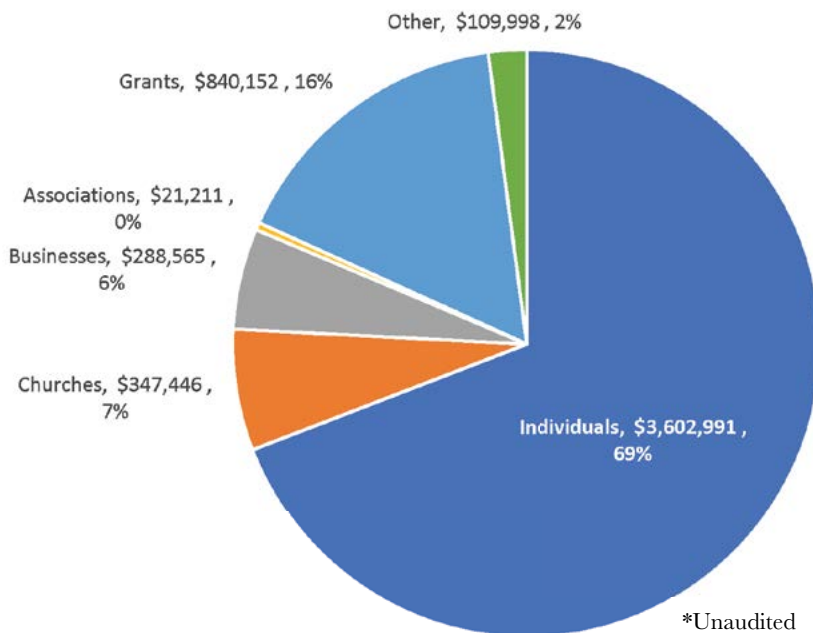
**Management** – These expenses support and promote the program services and include marketing, public education and relations, administrative services, IT, human resources, and financial services.

**Fundraising** – These expenses provide the services focused on donor recruitment, relations and tracking, event planning and organizing, and grant writing.

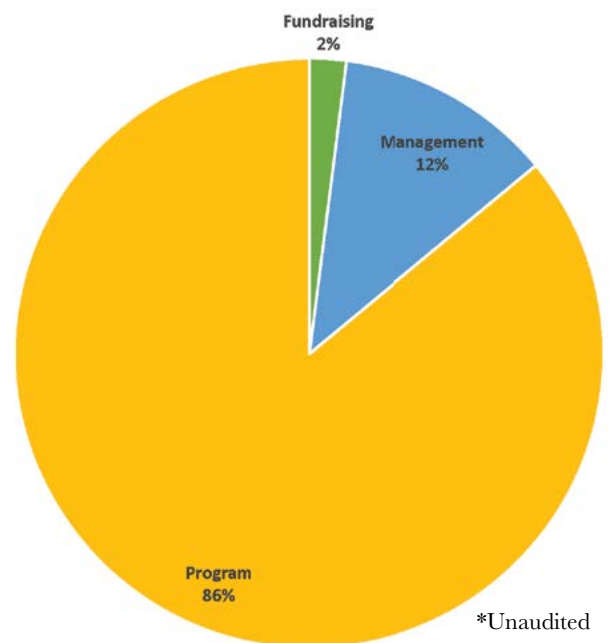
2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic provided TRM with both challenges and opportunities related to financial resources and the needs in our community. Faced with uncertainties related to the economic challenges of our community and the entire country, TRM found ways to address both our financial realities and address the increasing needs of the community. We were blessed with grants totaling over \$800,00. These monies helped in a variety of ways. We provided over 4,000,000 million meals in both traditional and new ways. We were able to construct a refrigerated cooler

and freezer, making it possible for us to receive thousands of food boxes from the USDA Farmers to Families food box program. These grant dollars also allowed up to assist guests in finding permanent housing and support them in their transition. Additionally, these grant dollars allowed us to make much needed improvements to our facilities, helping us increase our ability to keep our guests safe and decrease the risk of spreading throughout our guests and staff. These grant dollars coupled with the incredible generosity of our donors made it possible for TRM to not only continue the work we have always done for many, but to also assist those experiencing needs for the first time and plan for a future that seems to hold continued uncertainties.

2020 Revenue - \$5,210,363



2020 Expenses - \$4,013,959



Check out our 4-star Charity Navigator rating and more financial information by visiting [CharityNavigator.org](https://www.charitynavigator.org) and searching Topeka Rescue Mission or scan the QR code!

