TOPEKA RESCUE MISSION MONTHLY REPORT AUGUST 2017

Topeka Rescue Mission • 600 N. Kansas Avenue • Topeka, KS 66608-1240

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

FACILITIES: 785-354-1744
Hope Center for Women & Families #8
Men’s Shelter #0
Distribution Center x366
Thrift Store 785-235-9094
TRM Boutique on the Blvd 785-478-5744
Children’s Palace 785-730-8810

PROGRAMS: 785-354-1744
Dining Services x322
Food Distribution x366
Education & Mentoring x338
Volunteer Services x393

COMMUNITY:
NET Reach 785-783-2535 x106
Operation Street Reach 785-230-8237

DONATIONS:
Monetary: 785-354-1744 x316
Material: 785-357-4285
Food: 785-357-4285

website: TRMonline.org
email: trm@trmonline.org

GOING TO WAR
The war on poverty was introduced by President Lyndon B. Johnson during his State of the Union speech in January of 1964 as a continuation of Roosevelt’s New Deal. Johnson stated, “This administration today, here and now, declares unconditional war on poverty in America.” Depending on which political party you lean toward and who you look to for evaluation of this program’s 53-year existence, you might have very different viewpoints on this war’s effectiveness.

As a nation, we have now spent more than $22 trillion to combat poverty. Best estimates of the number of people in poverty today include at least 10 million more people in poverty, then 1964. We’ve gone from about 36 million people in poverty in 1964 to more than 46 million people in poverty today. Poverty among Americans between ages 18–64 has fallen only marginally since 1966, from 10.5% then to 10.1% today.

I don’t know about you, but I like to learn from history and don’t want to repeat the same mistakes. After studying poverty and working for years with people in poverty, I wondered what a strategic, coordinated program, opening on new fronts with adequate resources would accomplish. We also asked “what risk factors accelerate former Mission guests’ return and need for services? How can we help them overcome those risk factors?” Now, we might not be able to change a war on a national scale, but aren’t we responsible for what we do here in our own community? Isn’t this our battle? And who is this battle really against?

We have now seen three generations of the same families come through the doors of the Mission. The parents of the families we first helped in the...
80’s, are now grandparents and their children are now parents. They have needed a variety of services. I also steadily saw more little children born into families in poverty and raised in poverty because of decisions they often couldn’t influence. We saw the number of families whose children qualified for free and reduced meals at school steadily increasing in every school district in this community.

When I consider what the future of services looks like at Topeka Rescue Mission Ministries, I am impressed by the collective wisdom and institutional knowledge our team has gained in hundreds of years of service to people in poverty and people who are homeless. We also saw our numbers of guests and people who are hungry in this community grow steadily. So, we started a small special ops team called Operation Street Reach to take services right to people who are homeless in our community, wherever they were, to love on them and wrap services, from more than 40 different organizations in this city, around them as efficiently as possible.

Next, we rolled out NET Reach in the Hi-Crest neighborhood, which you’ll read more about in September, to reach out to former guests and people in this community most at risk of needing services. We fueled up the mentor program, connecting it to Education services and deployed an extensive training program for mentors, guests, and the people living in the neighborhoods we’re helping in. That group of volunteers and staff is seeing people change and grow right now—finding better jobs, learning to lead and living more independently and interdependently.

Last month, we shared about Education services, one of nine ministries strategically deployed to fight poverty. We didn’t start Career Readiness Education because it is a revenue stream. It was a great program, run by another team in this city, and the federal grant was taken away. For years, we saw how that program helped people to work their way back onto their own two feet and very quickly, when the funding dried up, it stopped. So, we said we need to help our guests with

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this program. We stepped out in faith. This year, we estimate 36 people will graduate from CaRE.

Graduation = got a job.

When a person gets a job, they are beginning to work their own way out of poverty. Collectively, that is nearly a $0.75 million economic engine for our community. To me, that’s not just an engine, that’s like the little engine THAT COULD with armor. Our goal for 10 years from now is 1000 graduates every year. When the goal of 1000 graduates every year is realized, that is roughly a $20 million economic engine.

Shortly after that, Doxazo Ministries began, to equip the next generation of missionaries—high school and college-aged kids—to serve and help them to understand what serving in the urban core is all about. That program is growing very quickly. Then, a small group of investors came and wondered, “what are we doing for the next generation of people in poverty?” We shared our vision of the Children’s Palace and the supporting funds came in. Then, the more we worked in neighborhoods and on outreach with the Street Reach team, the more we recognized signs of sex trafficking. We realized that it is modern day slavery and many of the perpetrators prey on people in poverty and children in poverty. Over the last two years, we have now intervened in the lives of more than 150 victims of sex trafficking who live right here in this community.

All these different ministries and divisions are coordinated strategically in the war on poverty in this community. Our employee team now numbers more than 120 people. Each one feels called by God to be here. Each one brings the joy of the Lord to a job here. Volunteers now fill more than 1600 slots each month. Each one helps us to keep the doors open and lights on. When you volunteer here and serve a meal, load a food box into a car or mentor someone, you might be the only Jesus that recipient has ever seen. You are His hands and feet and you may never know how much that one act of kindness and smile with a hand up meant to that person and family. Our donors number in the thousands and every one of you makes a difference. God is using the resources you give in amazing ways—$1 feeds 7 hungry people a meal. Did you know that if every person in this community who has a place to live and food for a meal gave $5 each month, we would have the resources needed to win this war?

Ephesians 6:12 says, “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” I believe that the darkness of this world—whether in sex slavery, addiction, abuse, crime or gangs is not from God. If it isn’t from God, the logical conclusion is that it is from the devil—the ruler of the darkness. I believe we’re in a battle against the devil himself and that by fighting poverty and fighting for...
people who are homeless and hungry, we will win.

As I was finishing this article, a woman came in and invited our team to participate in a mental health awareness festival her church is sponsoring this Fall. We estimate that 60% or more of the people we serve struggle against mental illness and addiction. We were honored to be invited. For me, the best part of her visit was when she turned to me and said, “I used to be a guest here. In 2003, I had nowhere to go. Family wouldn’t take me anymore. I came here to survive. Now I have had my own place for more than 10 years, belong to a church and give back in other ways. Your team really helped me straighten out my life. Thank you.”

We have several signs in our office. One says, “expect a miracle.” Another says, “Faith is not believing God can. It is believing God WILL.” I get the pleasure of seeing those reminders every day. I believe God asks us to live this way and I approach life in that manner—expecting miracles and with faith that believes God WILL.

It takes an army to wage a battle and win a war. It also requires solid strategy and the flexibility to move on new fronts. This is an all-volunteer army and this is our community. Will you help us win?

“If God is for us, who can be against us” – Romans 8:31b †

– Mark DeGroff, Resource Development Director

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– Romans 8:31b
CURRENT NEEDS LIST

FOOD ITEMS:
Gallon Cans of Vegetables & Fruits / Coffee / Sack Lunch Items (i.e. Pudding Cups, Fruit Cups, Snack Crackers, etc.)

SUPPLY ITEMS:
Storage Bags – Quart & Gallon / Hotel Size Shampoo, Conditioner & Lotion / Large Shampoo / Large Conditioner / Bath Towels, Hand Towels & Wash Cloths / Diapers & Pull Ups – All Sizes / Dish Soap / All Purpose Cleaner / Pinesol / Arm & Hammer Washing Soda / 20 Mule Team Borax / Fels Neps Laundry Soap / Purex Crystals / Sheet Sets: (Twin, Full, Queen & King Sizes) / Household Sponges / Scrubbers / Adult Sleeping Bags / School Supplies (see below)

CLOTHING:
Spring/Summer clothing for Men, Women & Children (clothing & shoes can all be used) / Men’s & Women’s Shoes – All Sizes / Plus Size Clothing – Men & Women / Children’s Clothing & Shoes All Sizes, especially 2T – 5T

FURNITURE (in good condition)
Furniture – i.e. Couches, Recliners, Loveseats, Dressers, Tables, Mattresses etc.
Large & Small Appliances – i.e. Washers, Dryers, Ranges, Freezers, Refrigerators & Microwaves

SCHOOL SUPPLIES NEEDED

- Backpacks
- Spiral notebooks 70 pgs. (College rule)
- Notebook Filler paper (College rule)
- Plain pocket folders (without brads)
- Pencil Boxes
- Pencil Pouch
- Pencils (#2)
- Pen (Black or Blue)
- Big Pink Eraser
- 3 Ring Binder (1 or 1&1/2 inch) NO ZIPPERS
- Composition Notebooks
- Colored Pencils (12 ct. pkg.)
- Colored Markers
- Pointed & Blunt Scissors
- Hi-Lighters (yellow)
- Dry Erase Markers (Black)
- Kleenex (Large Box)
- Antibacterial Wipes
- Hand Sanitizer
- New Clothing for sizes 5 Toddler – Adult 2XL

Please bring all donations to the TRM Ministries Donation Center at 206 NW Norris between the hours of 8am-6:30pm M—F and 8am-3pm Saturday. Thank you.

Questions? Contact the Distribution Center at (785) 357-4285.