RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

Programs: 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
e-mail: trm@trmonline.org
Before Tom got sick, he and Jennifer had been my personal friends for several years. He was a successful production supervisor at his work and she was a mother at home nurturing and equipping their three daughters and two sons for a successful life ahead of them. They were a good family, living in a modest home, and both serving at their small church. Tom loved serving as the youth Sunday School teacher and Jennifer was the coordinator of the children’s programs. They would regularly bring their family and youth group to the Mission to serve meals to the hungry.

Tom had been feeling dizzy and had been suffering from blurred vision with headaches for several weeks. Finally, at the insistence from Jennifer, he went to get some tests. The news they got one week later would rock their world. When they were told that Tom had a malignant brain tumor, all they could think of was what would happen to their precious children in the uncertainty of the days ahead. Their children ranged from eleven-year-old, Allison, to the youngest, Benjamin, who was just over six months old. “Surely the doctors must be wrong. This couldn’t be happening to our family,” they thought. Instead they were told that Tom had less than nine months to live and would be rapidly declining in the following weeks and months.

I remember sitting with them in their home shortly after they got this devastating news. I was feeling at a loss for any adequate words, wanting to pray it all away, wanting to bring some heavenly message from a loving God that He was going to perform a fantastic miracle and heal Tom. While I have been blessed to experience some of those miraculous events, this time I just didn’t believe that it was going to happen. My gut hurt for and with my friends. We cried and hugged that evening. All I could offer them was the assurance that I would pray hard for them and stand ready and available to do whatever I could

“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” – Romans 8:28, NASB
to help in their most hopeless of circumstances.

In the ministry of rescue we encounter pain and suffering 365 days of the year through individuals and families who have suffered some of the most devastating experiences anyone could dream of: loss of a job or a home, or the overwhelming effects of health and mental health challenges. Some have lost loved ones to about every tragedy that exists. Many lose their sense of any hope for the days ahead. Some turn to drugs or alcohol to soothe their pain.

Tom declined rapidly over the next few months. First, he lost his ability to clearly speak or communicate. His bodily functions soon needed around the clock care.

We often just assume that if things happen to us like were happening to Tom and Jennifer “the system” would be there for us. It’s times like these that, in spite of our health insurance coverage or the possibility that we should somehow be fortunate enough to have some type of additional catastrophic coverage, the system often seems to fall way short and life as we have known it encounters a devastating collision with the reality that our ship is sinking.

Tom passed from this life seven months and three days after receiving the horrific news of the tumor. Jennifer, her five young children, and Tom’s other friends and family took comfort in the knowledge that Tom wasn’t suffering any longer, but was now enjoying his eternal rest with his loving God and Savior Jesus. Even though they were all relieved that Tom was finally at peace, uncertainty filled Jennifer’s every waking moment.

During the past seven months Jennifer had seen their income disappear. Their modest savings were quickly depleted trying to put food on the table and make the house payment. Even though Tom had medical coverage while he was working, that stopped when his income stopped, prohibiting Jennifer from being able to afford any form of insurance. Due to the hospital bills and the in-home medical requirements Tom needed in his last days, the medical bills were now so large that Jennifer was looking at the very real possibility of becoming homeless.

Numerous studies have shown that the nation’s number one cause for people needing to file bankruptcy today is medical debt. Over 600,000 bankruptcies are filed in the United States every year due to uncovered medical expenses. That includes families who have health insurance.

I’ll never forget the afternoon Jennifer sat across from me at the Mission. Once a young, confident and happy woman, she was now looking worn and aged beyond her years. Tears flowing, she said, “Barry, I’m so embarrassed. Our food stamps already ran out and we have eight more days before we will get them again. All the kids are really sick and I’m coming down with something again. I’ve lost the house and spent all our savings. I’m behind on all my bills and my phone will be shut off tomorrow.” I listened intently and told her with assurance, “Jennifer, as difficult as all this is, God hasn’t forgotten about you. Come stay with us at TRM and let’s work together to pick up the pieces and see what amazing things God will do!” That was kind of a bold thing for me to say. How did I know God would do anything? And if He did, what would it look like? Thankfully, I’d become familiar with how God can turn our most tragic and impossible circumstances into meaningful testimonies of His power, provision and love. What’s more than amazing is that He uses people just like you and me to be His hands, His feet and a representation of His love towards those who are broken.

Jennifer and the kids were indeed broken but did move into the Hope Center for Women and Families where they remained for several months. After landing a job
with a business owner from her church and saving up necessary funds to relocate, Jennifer was once again feeling hope despite all the losses she and her children had gone through. When she was ready to move into her new home and embark on the next phase of her life, she was faced with a complete life start over. Losing her husband of fifteen years and the father of her children was just the beginning of her losses. Losing her home also meant losing almost all of her belongings... no furniture, no appliances, no beds to sleep in, no blankets, no towels, pots, pans, dishes or utensils to eat with.

Thankfully, supporters like you help the Topeka Rescue Mission by donating your gently used clothing, a couch or chair to sit on, a table, chairs and utensils to have a meal. Your generosity has supplied thousands of beds to sleep on, lamps to see by and appliances from stoves and refrigerators to washers and dryers. In this month’s report we are featuring the TRM Distribution Services, one of the nine Ministries of the Topeka Rescue Mission Ministries. Because of this division, Jennifer and her children were able to begin again with a home as well as many belongings we often take for granted. One of our biggest joys is when we are able to help our neighbors like Jennifer fill their home with those things you may no longer need. The joy it brings to the recipient of the gift as well as the giver is impossible to measure. But one thing is for certain, it brings a sense of satisfaction to the giver and hope to those who receive it.

Today Jennifer is remarried to a wonderful man who pastors a small church in another state. Her five children are doing very well and Allison and Matthew, her two oldest, are both attending college. Jennifer is serving the widows and the orphans in her own community as well as through mission programs around the world. Through many prayers from her friends and others she never met, Jennifer discovered a peace and strength she didn’t know was possible. She can now look back and say, “I can see it now, He was there all along.”

In the Bible, Romans 8:28 says, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” One day several years ago, Jennifer thought God had abandoned her. She had lost the love of her life, her home, all of her earthly possessions, her dignity and hope. But God had not abandoned her. While Jennifer didn’t understand why God allows the suffering that occurs in this world (and seldom do we understand either), we may see, if we choose to look, His love and compassion is at work through those who make themselves available to Him and also through those He places in front of us.

You might be feeling pretty hopeless right now. You may feel like everyone and everything is working against you and there is no hope for a better tomorrow. You might be thinking of “checking out” so to speak. But know this, you are not alone in the way you feel. Many like Jennifer, as well as myself, have felt overwhelming hopelessness before; but we are here today to tell you that you are not alone. God really does love you and He has an amazing plan for your life. So, don’t give up – don’t check out! Your life is way too important and meaningful. You may not see it now but, if you keep holding on, I believe one day you too will be able to look back and say, “I can see it now, He was there all along.”

Thank you to all of you that are demonstrating God’s love by reaching out to those who are suffering. Your prayers, your financial and material gifts and your gift of time are truly making a difference as together we “distribute” God’s love to those who suffer. †

With gratitude,

– Barry Feaker
Executive Director
CURRENT NEEDS LIST

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

SUPPLY ITEMS:
Storage Bags – Quart & Gallon / Razors / 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 / Kleenex / Disinfecting Wipes / Arm & Hammer Washing Soda / 20 Mule Team Borax / Fels Neptha Laundry Soap / Purex Crystals / Sheet Sets: (Twin, Full, Queen & King Sizes) / Twin Flat Sheets / Household Sponges / Scrubbers / 1” & 1.5” – 3 Ring Binders (solid color) / Adult Sleeping Bags

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 / Men’s Briefs – Size 32-34 (new) / Women’s Briefs – Size 5, 6 & 7 (new) / Children’s Clothing & Shoes All Sizes, especially 2T – 5T

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