

CURRENT NEEDS LIST

FOOD ITEMS:

Gallon Cans of Vegetables & Fruits / Coffee / Granulated Sugar / Mustard & Ketchup
Sack Lunch Items (i.e. *Pudding Cups, Fruit Cups, Granola Bars, etc.*)

SUPPLY ITEMS:

Purex Crystals / Arm & Hammer Washing Soda / 20 Mule Team Borax / Fels Nephth Laundry Soap
Trash Bags (*Tall Kitchen & 30 Gallon*) / Blankets / Storage Bags (*Quart & Gallon*)
Sheet Sets (*Full, Queen & King sizes*) / Bath Towels / Diapers (*Sizes 4, 5&6*) / Pull Ups (*Sizes 3T, 4T and 5T*)
Baby Wipes / Razors (*Men's & Women's*) / Deodorant (*Men's & Women's*)

CLOTHING:

Men's Winter Coats (*Sizes Medium & Up*) / Men's Pants & Jeans (*All Sizes - Especially 30 - 40*)
Men's Underwear (*Sizes 30 to 38*) / Men's & Women's Shoes (*All Sizes*) / Plus Size Winter Clothing (*Men & Women*) / Women's Underwear (*Sizes 5 - 9*) / Children's Clothing & Shoes (*2T & Up*)

FURNITURE *(in good condition)*

Furniture – i.e. couches, recliners, loveseats, dressers, tables, mattresses etc.

Large & small appliances – i.e. washers, dryers, ranges, refrigerators & microwaves

THANK YOU!

Thanks to all those who joined us for our January open house! If you missed the opportunity to see the Children's Palace and would like to schedule a tour, contact us at jhosman@trmonline.org or 785-730-8802.



TOPEKA RESCUE MISSION **MONTHLY REPORT** FEBRUARY 2017

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

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Facilities: 354-1744

Hope Center for Women & Families opt 8
Men's Shelter opt 0
Distribution Center x366
Thrift Store 235-9094



Programs: 354-1744

Dining Services x322
Food Distribution x366
Education & Mentoring x338
Volunteer Services x393

Community:

Neighborhood Empowerment &
Transformation (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: info@trmonline.org



**YOU HAVE ALWAYS
BEEN THERE FOR ME**

What Love Looks Like, From Heaven to The Streets

Loving our neighbors in Hi-Crest

YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THERE FOR ME

What Love Looks Like, From Heaven to The Streets



Almost 350 people joined us to celebrate Christmas in Hi-Crest at NET-Reach

The night of the neighborhood Christmas dinner a woman, appearing to wear the hardships of life, approached the uniformed police officer and exchanged a few words. One of the things I heard her say to him was, “Thank you... you have always been there for me.”

The Hi-Crest gymnasium was filled with an overflow crowd that evening comprised of men, women, children and families from one of our cities most economically and socially challenged neighborhoods. For decades, these individuals and families have struggled with the devastating effects of economic, physical, social and spiritual poverty. For some this means no heat in the winter, nor cooling in the summer. It means water turned off, sewer lines collapsed, rain coming through the roof, mold in the

walls, and insects and rats coming in as uninvited tenants. For many years, this has been simply a forgotten neighborhood of broken windows, tattered hearts and shattered lives. However, on this night, two weeks before Christmas, you would have thought you were at an enormous family reunion. Nearly 350 neighbors and friends gathered with singing, laughing, hugging and enjoying a marvelous Christmas meal with gifts for all.

No, it hasn't always looked like this. Run the clock back

four years earlier to that first community meal at the Avondale East Elementary School building we now refer to as the NET Center. Thirty people from the neighborhood attended that first meal four years ago with the Mission's NET Reach division, our homeless prevention initiative. There was little conversation. Mistrust was in the air. *Who were these outsiders? Why were they really here? Was this just another bunch of “do-gooders” who*

Read more about NET Reach on page 4!

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would leave us once they learned of how difficult it is here?

I remember earlier on, one dear lady who had lived in Hi-Crest for many years coming up to me with a bit of a grin on her face saying, "You won't stay. Others like you have tried this before and they left. You all will be gone in a year." She went on to tell me how in order to sleep at night she has to move from one side of the house to the other, picking up her mattress to avoid the possible bullets that might enter through a window or a wall. She told me that she had two little dogs and when they go to one side of the house and begin barking, that's when she knows they are hearing gunshots. That's her cue to pick up her mattress and move to the other side of the house to try to sleep a little bit as she cries herself to sleep. "No," she assured me, "You won't stay!"

I was determined at that moment; we *must* stay and not be one more disappointment to these precious neighbors of ours who had suffered so much for so long. It is with great joy in my heart I now recall the day, about one year later, the same lady came up to me with tears in her eyes as she threw her arms around me and said, "You stayed, you didn't leave!"

So now, more than four years later, we have seen the beginnings of transformation in a neighborhood once forgotten, where neighbors felt isolated from the rest of the city, as well as each other. Neighbors once afraid to



Officer Bracken talking with a community member from the Hi-Crest neighborhood

come out at night, now beginning to feel safe and connected to each other and to others outside their neighborhood. A neighborhood showing the signs of hope. A neighborhood daring to dream.

We have traveled from 30 mistrusting neighbors to now

nearly 350 men, women and children enjoying their time together in celebration, peace and love. *How has this happened?* It's really quite simple and may be best summed up in the statement I heard from the lips of a woman that spoke to the Hi-

Crest community police officer. As people were enjoying their meal and having great conversation I was visiting with Officer Morgan Bracken, a seven-year veteran of the Topeka Police Department. He was attending this event in full uniform as I witnessed many children coming up to him, curious, but beginning to understand that the men and women in blue could truly be their friends, and a growing awareness that people like Officer Bracken were actually friendly, engaging and safe.

Officer Bracken and I had just been visiting about the numerous challenges people face in our community and around the nation. We were marveling about the peace and joy that filled the gymnasium that night. I was explaining to him about the various initiatives for both adults and children that helped to bring this night of joy and peace about. That was when a woman, appearing to be hardened by the challenges that a life of poverty can produce, asked to speak with him. I could not hear all of their conversation but, as she was leaving, I did hear her say, "Thank you... you have always been there for me." I gathered that

The annual report will be in the March newsletter edition

this woman had encountered law-enforcement on a number of less than positive occasions. We resumed conversation and I asked him, "Did you hear what she just said to you? She said, 'You have always been there for me.'" I

thought for a moment, *that's what love looks like from Heaven's view, down to the street view.*

Jesus said that the greatest form of love is when someone lays down their own life for their friends (John 15:13). He didn't say we would always have the right answers, the best programs or even a solution to someone's problem. Oftentimes we shy away from those who suffer because we don't know what to do or say. How often we then miss out blessing others and receiving a blessing in the process.

In a way, Officer Bracken's approach with this woman might be compared to a similar approach that God takes with us when the Bible says: "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). The Just (Jesus) for the unjust (me) (1 Peter 3:18). The woman I saw that night may have made many mistakes in her life. She may have broken the law numerous times. She may have been arrested and jailed more than once by Officer Bracken. However, despite her failures, he saw someone of value. And the woman saw someone who must really care, someone she could trust, someone who, in spite of her failures, believed in her value in life.

Whether it's in a shelter for

homeless people, a long food line for the hungry, on the streets, under bridges, abandoned homes, a challenged neighborhood,

reaching those who have been trapped in sexual slavery, and even a place called a Palace for little homeless children – genuine transformation begins with loving our neighbor, just like we love ourselves (Mark 12:31).

Sometimes that love is simply just showing up in someone's life.

love is simply just showing up in someone's life.

As we contemplate this month when we often more intentionally show love to those we care about, let's consider the transformational power of a smile, an encouraging word, a hand up, or a prayer toward the ones in front of us. I would invite you to join an ever-growing army of compassionate soldiers in our community who volunteer, mentor, give, and pray... those who are witnessing a little bit of what love looks like, from Heaven to the streets... those who are making a difference, one person at a time. †

In His love,

NET REACH *Neighborhood Empowerment and Transformation*

NET Reach, a division of the Topeka Rescue Mission (TRM), was established in 2013 in the former Avondale East Elementary School located in the Hi-Crest West neighborhood. NET Reach, addresses the quality of life in a challenged neighborhood where many have endured decades of high crime, high gang involvement, high percentages of domestic violence and high infant mortality rates. Many families also suffer from generational poverty, unemployment, chronic substance abuse as well as living in isolation within dilapidated former military housing. When TRM realized the growing number of families recycling into homelessness and the potential need for more space in the shelter, TRM invested resources into a neighborhood outreach division to:

“Bring help and hope to neighborhoods through empowerment and transformation”

NET Reach was designed to be **relational** in understanding the needs of the people and the Hi-Crest neighborhood in which they live. Mentors model healthy relationships and are equipped to walk alongside individuals and families to empower them to move forward toward dreams and goals.

NET Reach strengthens relationships through **advocacy** as their needs are identified and understood. Community collaborations and partnerships respond and are developed based on the barriers and needs of those within the NET Reach program. Community leaders, churches, city, county, social service agencies and with the love of supportive mentors, work together to help restore families to dream of a new future and a hope for tomorrow. †

CHRISTMAS THANKS



Because of your generous support and the hard work of staff and hundreds of volunteers, TRM Ministries served thousands of people this Christmas season. More than 19,340 gifts and Christmas food boxes were given to 1959 adults and 2584 children from 1255 households. On Christmas day, volunteers and staff served 520 Christmas meals. Without you, many of these people would not have had much for gifts to celebrate Christmas. Again, because of your generosity, they knew Jesus loved them, you loved them and they got wonderful gifts of new clothing, toys, small appliances and other items. Thank you for your support.