

"The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness." -Jeremiah 31:3

KID'S KORNER!

GOD LOVES YOU!!!

Little Lions Learning Center at Cair Paravel Latin School decided that instead of a gift exchange between students this past Christmas, children would pick out and collect gifts for the children receiving help from the Topeka Rescue Mission. When delivery day came, the students piled the gifts high and prayed over them – asking God to bless each child who would receive a gift. One by one they marched the gifts out to a vehicle for delivery. One student was then able to deliver the gifts personally to the Mission and then tell his classmates about the experience.

What generous and thoughtful hearts these children have! Through their selfless giving they made Christmas special for other children who found themselves homeless and in need during the holiday season. Their sweet sacrifice teaches us all how to embrace a childlike faith and heart! †



FAMILY ACTIVITY:

Valentine's Day is a wonderful opportunity to show people how much you love them; and, even more importantly, how much God loves them. This year talk with your family about what it means to show others the love of Christ. After you talk about it, consider doing the activity below.

"You're Special" Jar:

This jar will become a gift that you can give to someone you love.

Supplies Needed: mason jar, glitter, glue or mod podge, tissue paper, stickers, paint, construction paper, and markers

Steps:

1. Decorate your mason jar with stickers and paint, or cut tissue paper into fun shapes and glue them to the outside of your jar.
2. Write bible verses about God's love on pieces of construction paper and decorate the notes before putting them in the jar.
Some suggested verses: John 3:16, 1 John 3:1, 1 John 4:12, 1 John 4:19, 1 John 5:1, Jude 1:21, 1 Corinthians 13:13, and Psalm 136:26
3. Write another notes that include things you love about the person you are going to give your jar to.
4. Say a prayer for the person, seal up your jar, and give it as a gift on Valentine's Day.



FAMILY VERSE
TO LOOK AT:

1 John 4:19

TOPEKA RESCUE MISSION **MONTHLY REPORT** FEBRUARY 2016

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



WHAT IS **GOD** UP TO?

Part Two: **Rescue Ministry Today**



DID YOU KNOW that in 1953, the Topeka Rescue Mission was nothing more than a small storefront dining facility that offered donuts and coffee to 15-20 homeless men? *(That's hard to envision when we look at our current operations which serve hundreds, and sometimes over a*

thousand, full meals per day!) A turning point came when someone gave a skillet to the ministry, allowing meals to be cooked and served for the very first time. While men ate, the Gospel was preached and heavy spirits were momentarily lifted. However, those serving soon realized that, even though they were helping to fill hungry hearts and stomachs, the men were leaving and returning to the streets of what was then called Skid Row. There was no Street Reach program at the time to reach out and assure these men were safe; there was not even a sleeping area to provide warmth through the night. There was little space with which to work and resources were meager. But the men overseeing the ministry knew that more needed done to meet the needs they were encountering. They reached out to God in prayer, put their heads together, and created a small shelter space which could sleep 10-15 men per night. Those operations continued until 1959 when the ministry moved to its current geographical location in North Topeka. That's when accommodations grew to assist more men (and eventually women and children) with safe shelter. Fast forward another 57 years and that brings us to where we are today. While much has changed, how we have gotten where we are remains the same as it did back in the beginning days.

Much like in the former days, people still think of the Mission as a shelter where homeless individuals live. While sheltering guests in need remains a huge part of what we do, we've also recognized, like the ministry's founding fathers, that more is necessary to meet the needs in front of us. Prayer was an essential part of how decisions were made back then, and it remains our most effective strategy for knowing what steps to take today.

It's been a long time since only ten men were in need of a warm bed to sleep at night. Sleeping up to 325 guests a night in recent years makes the idea of such a small need at one time not even seem possible! Our **SHELTERS** continue to be overflowing and operating with a variance to code from the City to be able to accommodate everyone in need. But the good news is that we are beginning to see a light at the end of the tunnel! What we have realized through prayer and careful examination is that, while we could continue to build more shelters to increase capacity, there may be a better way to tackle the issue at hand.

We frequently shelter guests who have been to the Mission on numerous occasions before. While they tend to do well while they are with us, they often return to unstable surroundings with very little support when they leave. This makes it difficult for them to make it on their own for very long before returning to our doors. That is why we have created new initiatives to both strengthen our shelter programs and create healthier neighborhoods.

Within the Mission's shelters we are continually looking at ways to improve upon guest advocacy, mentoring and career readiness. Our desire is for each guest to have someone to walk alongside of them while they are with us who can help them achieve necessary goals prior to leaving the Mission so they can continue with that same support and be successful after they leave.

Our **DARE TO DREAM** mentoring program is one example of how we are wrapping around the guests within our shelter to offer this support as well as in the Hi-Crest neighborhood. Last year we had five teams of mentors who met with Mission guests on a regular basis and another 50 residents of Hi-Crest who received support as well. Several of those participants have obtained jobs and housing as a direct result of the emotional and spiritual support they have received from their mentors. Many continue to meet after leaving our shelter programs, reinforcing the support structure and helping to prevent a recurrence of homelessness. We



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have a total of four mentor trainings scheduled for this year and the only thing we are lacking is YOU! In order to be successful in any of our initiatives we need an army of compassionate individuals who are willing to come alongside and be a positive support to current and former Mission guests and those living in impoverished neighborhoods. (If this is you, please contact our Volunteer Department to begin the process today! 785-354-1744-x393 or trmonline.org "Volunteer Now.")

Our **CAREER READINESS EDUCATION (CaRE)** Program is another way we are helping guests better prepare for success upon leaving the Mission. In this 13-week program, guests are given assistance in finding, obtaining and maintaining employment. Four total classes are scheduled for this year and our goal is to train at least 30-35 people to start.

When the Topeka Rescue Mission first began, those leading the charge realized that more was necessary to aid the men who are unsheltered and homeless. We recognize that same need today. That is why

STREET REACH is such an essential and effective part of our ministry. Through efforts which reach out to individuals in chronic homeless situations, we have seen a significant reduction in the number of people who are unsheltered in our community. While that is great news, this still remains one of the most critical issues of homelessness we face. We are continuing to seek God for ways to improve the function, collaboration and resources needed to break the perpetual cycles of homelessness and addiction we see within this group of individuals.



Human trafficking is another critical area of need we have become more aware of in recent years. We have been working behind the scenes to minister to victims in need, but we feel we are to be more of a voice in the months ahead for this often hidden tragedy. We recognize that, in order to be most effective, awareness of the need must be illuminated. Through **RESTORE HOPE** we will continue ministering to victims but will also do what we can to increase awareness so that others know how to pray effectively, engage effectively and help break the cycle of human trafficking. We believe our commission from God is not only

to rescue, but to put a spotlight on this hideous crime which exists within our community. Because of the inherent risks involved with such a serious endeavor, we need much prayer for safety and strategy.



Another growing need which the Lord has brought to our attention in recent years is the need to assist individuals and families who many not be homeless yet, but are living in unsafe housing conditions and on the brink of homelessness at any time. That is where **NET REACH** has begun assisting in what has become known as our most "in-need-of-care" area of the City, Highland Crest West. When we first set up camp within the neighborhood, we went door-to-door attempting to engage residents and encourage them to embrace the support we had to offer. Now we have approximately 50 adults and over 90 children who participate regularly and a waiting list of residents who are eager to receive the support and participate in programs in place to better themselves and their community. We are thrilled at how far this neighborhood has come but we recognize that more is still necessary. We will continue with Dare-to-Dream mentoring, job training, summer activities for children and other programs currently in place for residents of this neighborhood, but we are also prayerfully exploring new opportunities for improvement as well. One of our heart's desires is to see the current summer program within NET Reach expand to a day-long opportunity, five days a week throughout the entire summer. We'd also like to develop an afterschool opportunity for the children and youth that are in need of a supportive environment at the end of their day. Additionally, the physical housing conditions within Hi-Crest are known as some of the worst in our City. However, some exciting collaborations have recently taken place to address these serious needs and help to bring improvement. We are honored and eager to be a part of what is unfolding in this once forgotten area of community!

Our **DOXAZO** division of the ministry is helping minister to the youth of the Hi-Crest community, Central Topeka through the Bridge, and the Mission's shelters as well. They will continue hosting bi-annual mission trips which reach out to children and youth and aid in other areas of the

ministry. Basketball tournaments and other activities already in place will also continue. What will be new this summer is that we will have our first official Doxazo Mission's Institute which will equip and train youth for ministry service and missions. Also, next fall we will begin the year-long institute for college-aged students to gain preliminary urban mission's training in preparation for longer term missions. Some of these students will then



choose to enter into our two year Biblical training program, **CENTER FOR BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (CBLD).**

CBLD in its infancy is open to guests of the Topeka Rescue Mission and currently has 15 students in the program. These students are doing missionary work within the ministry of the Mission while attending seminary level courses which are equipping them to become urban ministers with a Certificate in Biblical Leadership upon graduation. This new venture for the Mission is directly connected to the international mission's organization, World Impact. As students plug into various areas of ministry, we are excited about this unique way the Lord is bringing support through the placement of laborers into His harvest field. We are hopeful to open opportunity to non-Mission guests within the next two years.



The **CHILDREN'S PALACE** will be another area where students of both the Doxazo Mission's Training Institute and CBLD can eventually minister and assist. We are in the process of furnishing the inside and will be finishing exterior work in the

Spring. Depending on weather and operational funds, we hope to open at half capacity in early Summer. While some may consider this facility simply a daycare for homeless children, we see it as something much larger. Research shows that support received by children in their first five years of life has a direct impact on how they will relate to others and function in society later in life. If a child enters kindergarten unprepared, for instance, they are more likely

to fall behind throughout school, potentially even dropping out and eventually becoming homeless or otherwise crippled in life. Similarly, if a child is void of consistent nurturing in a safe environment during infancy, they are more likely to have difficulty engaging with others as adults which can impair their ability to maintain stable employment and housing. We believe that helping the homeless children who come through our doors receive some of the extra support their parents may have not received will help break the cycle of homelessness within their families down the road. We will be embracing these children – and their families – helping them to understand how valuable they are and who they are in God's eyes. A simple gesture of love and planted seeds of faith can go a long way and we believe God will use them to transform the lives of many both on this side of heaven and for eternity.



As you can see, the Mission has grown exponentially over the past six decades. Just as our initial leaders saw a need, trusted God and did what they could to meet it with the little they had, we continue aspiring to do the same. The needs may have increased and become more challenging through the years, but God hasn't changed. He remains faithful and the best guide we could ever choose to follow. We recognize that even our best efforts would do little good without His direction and hand of blessing. That's why we continue to seek Him every step of the way and encourage others to join us in the same. Apart from Him we can do nothing, but with Him - all things are possible. Thanks for believing and partnering with us for the impossible. It's an honor to serve within our community and we are grateful for your support!

We look forward to sharing with you what that looks like in tangible terms next month in our annual report. †

CURRENT NEEDS LIST

FOOD ITEMS:

- Gallon Cans of Vegetables & Fruits
- Coffee
- Granulated Sugar
- Bottled Water
- 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
- Tall Kitchen & 30 Gallon Trash Bags
- 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*



COMING SOON!

We prematurely announced last month the release of our new

publication, "In Darkness, a Light Still Shines... for Kids!" While we made every effort to have it in the hands of families before Christmas, unexpected delays occurred in the printing process. We do not have an official release date set currently but will make the announcement as soon as it is available. We look forward to hearing how God will use this publication to minister to children and families for years to come!