

TOPEKA RESCUE MISSION MONTHLY REPORT AUGUST 2020

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

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HAPPINESS IN A BOX: OPERATION FOOD SECURE





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When we think of the millions of people currently unemployed in our nation, it's easy to feel powerless to help. Especially when many of us are struggling ourselves with jobs lost, hours cut, schools closed, or the myriad of other problems COVID-19 has brought into our daily lives. What can we do to support our neighbors during this time? Millions in our nation are struggling and many are suffering in our own communities as social services and safety nets have been dramatically affected by the pandemic and resulting global recession.

One of the outcomes is increased hunger and food insecurity. Although the United States is one of the most food secure nations in the world, millions in our nation are still unable to access nutritious food - or sometimes food at all. Those facing low income or poverty are already spending a significantly higher percentage of their income on food - and now we're seeing the highest increase in food prices we've experienced in over 40 years.

For several months the Topeka Rescue Mission has been working around the clock to find additional ways we can get food to people in need. We have changed the way we give out food to our community and feed our guests; people now can drive to pick up spots outside our buildings to receive food baskets and sack lunches rather than coming inside, reducing the risk of community transmission, and we have established social

distancing rules and mandatory usage of masks for our guests, staff and volunteers.

But even as we find new ways to continue to help the hungry in our community in the face of COVID-19, a question keeps coming to the forefront: What about the people who can't come to us?

What about the people who may not be able to walk, drive, or get on a bus to go where the services are? The ones who can't

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get to the grocery store or other resources they desperately need for survival?

We think of the elderly, the disabled and the sick who may not be able to get out of their homes or neighborhoods at all. We think of those who have high-risk health issues that require them to avoid crowds and public places.

Recently TRM was approached by the CityGate Network in coordination with World Vision and City Serve regarding how we can address the ever-growing need to bring food into our communities. Through a USDA program funded by Congress called Farmers to Families, TRM has become a designated distributor for large amounts of high quality, nutritious food donated to us. Our role is to receive, store and redistribute this food. In the initial phase we have been giving out over 1,700 boxes of food per week through this program and anticipate this number doubling or tripling in the coming months.



In tandem with the City of Topeka and United Way of Greater Topeka we have created a program called Operation Food Secure, designed to engage our community to quickly get food to people who are in need and provide hunger relief to all those who cannot come to TRM or other social services. Our first phase in this program has been finding and creating more space to store this food while working with volunteers to help distribute to our neighbors in need - to engage neighbors helping neighbors.

As we go into Phase Two of Operation Food Secure we're expanding our approach to equip our staff and volunteer teams to look for other needs as well: medical, environmental, and domestic needs that go beyond hunger relief. For instance, what if someone has no way to refrigerate or cook the food we deliver to them? What if they have no electricity, running water, or transportation to the doctor? Many people in need of food have other needs as well.

We will train our volunteer neighborhood teams to identify and look for ways, as much as possible address these needs too.

Indeed it's a challenge and a risk for everyone involved. It's a risk to receive help for those who

have a hundred reasons not to trust someone again. It's a risk to give our time and emotional energy to strangers, not knowing



what the outcome will be. It's a challenge for TRM to take on the responsibility of receiving and distributing hundreds of thousands of pounds of food every week. But it's also an opportunity to not only help our neighbors in need but to help strengthen the heart of our neighborhoods during these uncertain times. Often its the simplest of things in life that bring us the greatest happiness. Proverbs 22:9 says, "The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor. In some ways Operation Food Secure could be called, "Operation, Happiness In A Box", both for the receiver as well as the giver. Thank you for standing with TRM in your prayers, volunteering and giving. May God bless you and your family as you remember when Jesus said, "when I was hungry you gave me something to eat.... when you did it for one of the least of these my brothers and sisters of mine, you did it for me." †



**OUR
Community
OUR
Mission**

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RESCUE MISSION
MINISTRIES



Check out our weekly audio podcast with news and updates from TRM Ministries by going to TRMonline.org/news/podcast
OR scan the QR code with your smartphone camera!



CURRENT NEEDS LIST

FOOD ITEMS:

Sack Meal Items Needed: Slice or Bulk Lunch Meat/Sliced Cheese/Ziploc Sandwich Bags

Food Bag Items: Meat (Frozen, Refrigerated, or Canned) / Ravioli / Spaghetti / Spaghetti Sauce
Mac & Cheese

Kitchen Items: Gallon Cans of Vegetables & Fruits

STREET REACH ITEMS:

Tarps/Sleeping Bags

SUPPLY ITEMS:

Fans / Clorox Wipes / Alcohol Prep Pads / Isopropyl Alcohol/ Bath Towels / Paper Towels
Toilet Paper / Kleenex (Large Boxes) / Dish soap / Twin Size Bedding / Powder Laundry Detergent

HYGIENE/HEALTH ITEMS:

Hand Sanitizer / Men's and Women's Deodorant (No Aerosol) / Foot Powder / Shampoo & Conditioner
Shower Gel / Razors (Men's and Women's) / Cough Drops / Hair Brushes / Liquid Hand Soap / Tylenol
Ibuprofen / Cold and Flu Medicine / Tampons/Women's Underwear (5,6,7) / Men's Underwear (30-38)/
Baby Wipes

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