



Homelessness Awareness Month

November is homelessness awareness month. There are some holidays or awareness campaigns that seem invented by the card companies with the goal of selling candy or encouraging you not to forget how important so many people are.

For us, homelessness is never far from our minds. We continue to serve so many who constantly find themselves jumping back and forth over the line between homeless and housed. Sometimes because of dumb decisions of their own, often because of forces completely out of their control. Whichever the case-- there we are helping people get sure footing on their way to something more stable.

This week we had the honor of attending [Hope Warming Center](#)'s vigil for the homeless, remembering folks we have lost recently. The vigil brought together a small group of us who serve our homeless friends to mourn and read the names of those who had passed. As each name was read, a hand-held bell was rung.

Many folks have remarked that we have had a lot of loss in our sphere recently: Red, Sam, Cheryl, Ms Anne, Tim. At the vigil, we had some fears confirmed, as a number of folks we haven't heard from in a while, were among the names read. This is all heartbreaking.

To bring more awareness to this issue as well as share some of the work that we do, this newsletter is going to revolve around stories of homelessness. Some stories are funny. Others are frustrating. Some are sad. But they are all about real people who we love and serve every day.



This year, we lost a long standing member of our community, Red. Red was a legend at Micah 6 Community. He taught the people who came through our doors so much about addiction, homelessness, joy, family, and community.

There was no one who simultaneously pushed the boundaries of our open door policy while benefitting from those policies like red.

We held a funeral service for Red that brought together more than 100 people to celebrate his life. We knew he meant a lot to many people, but even we were surprised at the outpouring and number of people who showed up to pay their respects.

Samantha was one of our first friends in the neighborhood. She and her partner would come by the house to charge phones, cook food, and watch the Walking Dead with us on Tuesday nights.

She had a long walk with addiction, sobriety, survival, thriving and back again. She even helped many consider and achieve their own sobriety at times.

She finished her battle earlier this year.



This is our friend Coolbreeze. He has been with us at Micah 6 from the very beginning. He would show up on garden days and just sit, share thoughts about life, give big hugs, and be back the next day.

It was Coolbreeze who led us to truly live with an open door when, one night in February, we accidentally left the door unlocked. When we came downstairs, we found half a pot of coffee, a few soggy paperback novels and a note that said, "Got to the shelter too late, was going to have to sleep outside, then remembered here. Thanks for leaving the door open."

We haven't seen Coolbreeze in a while. His name was not read at the vigil.

Derek lived down the street from Micah 6 and was often the community caretaker. As someone who had been homeless before he knew how hard the streets were and how lucky he was to have a roof over his head.

This was never something he took for granted and something that he often shared. When Derek passed away unexpectedly, his funeral service was a stream of people who, at one point or another said, "He let me stay at his place when..."

He was a true person of peace in our neighborhood and the vacant lot across the street from his apartment has been turned into a flower garden and is dedicated to him.



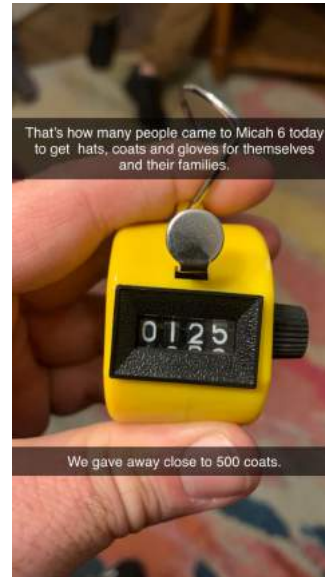


Last week we received a phone call from some local officials. Around the corner from us six undocumented families had been living in an apartment building where the basement had been flooding with raw sewage for months. The crummy landlord knew that he could get away with letting them live this way because illegal immigrants won't complain thus drawing attention to their situation.

When the city official explained that the building was condemned and that he needed to refund their deposits and prorate their rents, the landlord (who showed up in a Tesla and shiny track suit) said, "I don't have it." He had no insurance. They were on their own.

Meanwhile, standing on the curb, speaking no English, and unable to go back into their home, these families were lost, scared, and unsure about what to do.

We jumped on the phones, called friends at the county, at housing organizations, at our local hispanic outreach and made sure they were in good hands.



Every year we do a hat, coat and glove drive for our community.

Folks who work with homeless folks know that it isn't often that you lose someone in the bitter cold of February, but rather, that first night that gets down to 45-degrees in October. That's because by the time February gets here, our friends have had plenty of opportunities to pick up winter gear. Every church, agency and organization has handed out coats by February, but it is easy to get caught off guard for that first one.

That's why we try to do it early, to help as many people as we can get geared up in time for that first cold night.

This year, we gave away over 500 coats to 125 people, all in our living room at 32 Newberry.

Where Your Giving Goes

It is the end of the year and for organizations like Micah 6 Community, this season is when we are soliciting the hardest for donations. People are thinking of their year-end giving. The

holiday season is here which can inspire greater giving. We are aware that you have a lot of options when it comes to where to give your funds, but we hope that you'll consider us.

Below are just a few numbers on what kinds of assistance we were able to provide in the *first half of 2023*:

\$17,000+ on rental assistance, moving help, and emergency housing.

\$1,415 on emergency utilities to avoid shut off

\$1,280 on laundry assistance

\$3,738 on grocery assistance

\$3,868 on other support such as car repairs, clothing needs, phone restoration, diapers, etc

\$8,000+ in home repairs

This is just the stuff we are good at counting. This doesn't include the many showers in our house, rides to the Social Security Office, quick runs to the pharmacy to refill meds, collecting furniture for someone's new apartment, finding a neighbors a working stove, or the hours spent on the phone running down apartments with available units.

Many of these items are also things that no one else pays for, like car repairs or laundry assistance, but are absolutely vital to keeping people going in and out of a "home."

Our partnership with [OLHSA](#) this year expanded food options though Meet Up and Eat Up, allowing anyone who came to the park on weekday afternoons to get a meal, including our homeless friends.

Please consider supporting this work as we get deeper into winter, and utility bills get higher, and groceries become more expensive, and our friends need more help.

Support!



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