



Servants Center helps the mentally ill homeless and poor get off the streets and provides ongoing support with dignity, reflecting Christ's love.

June 2023

From the Executive Director

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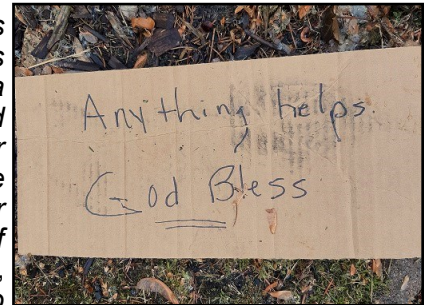
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"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."
Proverbs 31:8-9

Servants Center has a heart for homeless individuals roaming the streets of Grand Rapids, especially for those suffering from mental illness. We do not hesitate to engage with these individuals. That can be daunting or downright uncomfortable for others.

Often when people come in contact with a person experiencing homelessness, the encounter is not a positive one. When a homeless person approaches someone asking, "Got some spare change?" or flies a sign, "Anything helps, God Bless," some may scowl or look away. Or when someone passes by a homeless person who looks dirty, and smells of alcohol or urine, they take a wide berth around them. What we are not thinking is, "I wonder where he slept last night, or did he have something to eat today, or how many stares or demeaning comments did he see or hear today? Did anybody show him compassion or offer him food? Does anyone really see him or is he invisible?"

In Matthew 25:35-36 & 40, Jesus says, *"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me..."* "The King will reply, *"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."* In Isaiah 58:7 God says, *"Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help."* In Proverbs 31:8-9, God says, *"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."* Throughout God's Word we see passage after passage revealing the Lord's heart for the poor and oppressed of this world.



Encounters with the homeless become uncomfortable for many of us and we turn away from them, judging them as too lazy to work, or too weak to say no to their addictions, not realizing that many suffer from a variety of mental illnesses. They have become displaced or unhoused for various reasons we don't understand and so, as a result, the homeless become the invisible and unwanted people in our comfortable world.

This is where Servants Center and you make a difference. These individuals are not invisible to us. You play a vital role as a partner in our ability to help these individuals out of homelessness. We get out there and do the one-on-one, face-to-face work in building a relationship of trust, especially with those suffering from mental illness, and this can be difficult work. We work hard in encouraging and convincing them to get connected to medical and mental health services. We work hard in transporting them to numerous appointments. We work hard looking for and securing suitable housing. We work hard at *keeping* them housed and convincing them to continue with mental health services. But it's not hard work to love them. Because each and every one of these individuals are precious to our Lord, they are important to us, and they are not invisible.

With your generous gifts, Servants Center has been able to provide these services to the homeless for well over 30 years. Please consider a donation to help us close out our fiscal year strong so that we may continue to engage with and advocate for those the Lord brings across our paths. We are the feet on the ground and your gifts help keep us going!



Helping the mentally ill homeless get off and stay off the streets

Housing Challenges

Steve has been bouncing from one group home to another, 13 placements in the last 5 years. He would be asked to leave due to his combative behavior. His last option was a motel, but he couldn't care for himself very well. As his health declined, he needed the care from a nursing home. He had been rejected by many due to his behavior record. After many months of searching, we found one that has accepted him! He is adjusting well.

Richard had been homeless for years, visiting the ER daily due to his extreme alcohol intoxication. He would be found lying on the ground next to his wheelchair, covered in his excrement and urine, and taken by ambulance to the ER. They know Richard well. After months of this cyclical behavior, we found a place where he wouldn't have ready access to alcohol. After 6 months of drying out and doing well, he found alcohol, broke the house rules and was kicked out. His alcohol use is jeopardizing his health. In the interim, he is housed in a motel until we can find housing outside of the city.

When Sharon was told in 2019 that her subsidized apartment building was going market rate in 2020, we began the search for subsidized housing. She and her husband have special needs and everywhere we looked, there was a waiting list, or no one could meet those needs, or there was no availability. Her apartment manager received permission for Sharon to stay until housing was found. Sharon was just accepted into new subsidized housing and we moved her in this week!

Growing the Team

We welcomed Ryan Strehl to our staff in January of this year. He felt the Lord leading him into a whole different line of work. After many years in the banking industry, Ryan joined us as a Client Services Specialist. He is helping clients with scheduling and keeping their medical and psychiatric appointments, with housing and personal needs, and he offers a willing ear to spend time with each person who would otherwise be alone or back on the streets.



Join our Team?

We are still looking to add one more Client Services Specialist. Interested? We have a great team in place, and we will help and support you all along the way!

Email us at scgr@scgr.org

Office Volunteers Needed

We can use your help in our office with routine office duties such as filing and assistance with special projects. You can help half days, full days, or anything in between. We are very flexible.

Email us at scgr@scgr.org

A BIG thank you to the Calvary Church Choir and Orchestra for providing our clients Christmas gifts last December. You made Christmas very special for so many!



THANK YOU to Magnify Church Women's Ministry group for the care bags full of goodies for our clients! Everyone was excited to receive them!

Please help us expand our services so we may help more homeless and mentally ill individuals. Will you consider making a regular monthly or quarterly gift?



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