

Summer 2016

*"We, who acknowledge God's providence and fidelity to his people, especially those in poverty, do dedicate our efforts toward the support of those who are homeless. Our goal is to deliver to the homeless those basic human needs, care and compassion that is not usually received from other organizations."*

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# NEWS

"Taking care and compassion to the homeless."

## A letter from our President



Dear Donors and Volunteers,

We have had a lot going on at Uplift the past three months. I'm so happy to announce that on June 1, 2016, we sent our fourth truck out on its maiden voyage! Right now we are running with our backup, spare parts, truck, but are very thankful to the McGowan Foundation for their donation toward the purchase of a new truck. Hopefully, we will be able to complete that purchase very soon.

On Saturday, June 11th, we hosted a thank you luncheon for our wonderful cooks. I was so touched by the gratitude of all that were able to attend. It was really nice to be able to sit and enjoy the food and conversation with everyone. Having food available for us each night when we are ready to go out is a vital part of our operation. Without the dedication and commitment from our cooks we would not be able to do what we do. There are no words that can express our thanks to this amazing group of people!

We had a beautiful memorial service for our friend Big Larry on Saturday, June 25, 2016. I was so touched by the outpouring of love for a man that had survived living on the street for many years. At Uplift we believe that every life is valuable, and that your worth has nothing to do with the things that you own.

I have said this before, but for anyone that doesn't know, Uplift is run by volunteers. We have no paid staff. Each night that I am on the truck I know that every person I meet will get

my attention, respect and love. What makes that so amazing is that I know that the other three drivers and volunteers are doing and feeling the same way. No one is looking at their watch to see if their shift is almost finished. We are all there because we want to be there. We want to do everything possible to help the people we serve be more comfortable and have a better quality of life. We do so much more than give them food and supplies. We become their families, and they become ours. We love them and they love us. That was so obvious when we gathered to say farewell to Larry.

I am thankful to each one of you for your support, allowing us to continue reaching out to those in need on the streets of Kansas City. The numbers are high and the need is great, but with God and all of you beside us, there is nothing we can't do!

**The first question which the priest and the Levite asked was: "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?" But...the Good Samaritan reversed the question: "If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?"**

Thank you for stopping to help!

God Bless You!  
Kathy Dean

## Urgent Needs

As the summer heat increases, the need for insect repellant/wipes and t-shirts goes up. We are also very low on candles, razors, deodorant and feminine hygiene products, especially tampons.

## **Backpack Medicine/ Street Medicine Partners with Uplift**

Peter Lazarus, a medical student, had a dream to be able to go out on the streets and help the people that were in need. He never gave up on that dream, and now has joined with Jae Edgar Bennett and a team of 20 UMKC medical students that work as part of the leadership of Sojourner Clinic.

The students have been going along with the Uplift trucks for several months and have been a great blessing to the homeless that we serve.

In April they served 83 at the clinic, 8 of which came directly from their partnership with Uplift. They have found employment for 11; found housing for 8 (5 temporary and 3 permanent); are seeing 7 people weekly for mental health therapy; and helped 2 people get Medicaid.

They have been able to help with minor problems on the street, as well as determine if any of the homeless are in need of medical or mental health help at which time they direct them to the Sojourner Clinic.

Peter, Jae and all the medical students have been a great addition to the Uplift Organization and our mission to take care and compassion to the homeless on the streets of Kansas City.

## **Special Thanks**

- Bill McGowan & the McGowan Foundation

## **Goodbye to a Friend**

As I helped prepare for the memorial service for Big Larry, I thought back to the day that the funeral home called me and said he was ready to be picked up. I don't fear death, because of my faith in Jesus Christ; however, I don't know why, but I have a paralyzing fear of funeral homes and bodies. I felt that fear as I walked inside to get Larry's cremains, and have amused many of my friends as I shared my story of the terrifying trip to get Larry to the warehouse that day. I was also really scared to think that I would have to transport him, yet again, to the memorial service.

I can't explain what happened, but as I placed his picture into the frame that we were using for the memorial table, I felt a calming peace flood over me. I was able to walk into the warehouse and take his cremains off the shelf and buckle them in the seatbelt in the front seat of my car. I talked to him all the way to the ceremony. I told him that I really missed seeing him, and I thanked him for somehow teaching me to overcome my fear.

Jim and Margie Burton, long time Uplift driver and volunteers, were instrumental in the service for Larry. Margie told us that as she was planning the memorial, she was thinking how much she wished we could find Larry's family so they could join with us in this service of remembrance, but then she realized we are his family. Family are the people you can count on...and he knew he could count on us. He knew that we would always show up for him...with food, drink and most importantly love. Margie shared that Big Larry taught her to never give up looking for her son who has been missing for ten years.

Jim Schmidt, an Uplift driver and VP, shared that Larry taught him that even though a person is homeless and hungry, there are some things that you just can't eat. Spaghetti was the food that Larry just couldn't stand to eat. Jim also shared that years ago he needed a picture of a homeless man, so he asked Larry if he could take one of him. Larry responded "yes, if Jennifer is in the picture with me". Larry also asked for a copy to keep. That was the beginning of a very special friendship for the three of them.

Kirstie Roberts, another Uplift driver, gave a reading from the gospel of John: "Do not let

your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be"

She showed us a beautiful illustration of that scripture by releasing white doves. When these birds are released, their desire is to go home. There is a very nice place prepared for them with everything they need; food, water, shelter, protection, companions. We watched them circle around in order to get their bearings, and then they flew home. She released a single white dove symbolizing the release of Big Larry into the care of a loving God. Then she released three more doves symbolizing our prayers and love to escort him to his home with the Lord.

As we all stood and participated in the beautiful service honoring our friend Larry, it became so clear to me that even though we served him for many years, he had done so much for us. As we shared our thoughts it became apparent that he had taught each of us something. I know I am thankful for the special friendship that I shared with Larry, and I know that every person there today loved him and we are all honored to call him our friend.



## **The Uplift Community Garden**

The Uplift Community Garden started 8 years ago with the desire to help our homeless friends that we feed through the Uplift Organization each Monday, Wednesday and Saturday night in downtown Kansas City.

Again this year, our garden consists of 200 tomato plants, okra, yellow summer squash, zucchini, eggplant, basil, jalapeno peppers and Zinnia's.

In previous years, we have been able to supply ReStart and other food pantries with hundreds of pounds of fresh vegetables all summer long. That is our goal for the 2016 season as well.

This year has been a challenge due to the unbelievable amount of rain we received in the spring, which kept us from planting until just a couple of weeks ago. Now the very high temperatures and no rain is hard on the plants, but they are working hard to grow.



This garden has raised enough money in the last few years to purchase two new industrial-sized freezers for Uplift. This allows us to have cooks make food in batches and freeze it until it's time for it to be used. Heart of Life Church has agreed to support Uplift each month with 1,000 meals. As these are delivered to Uplift, they are put into the freezers and then used as needed.

The garden works on the honor system. Tomatoes are sold for \$1 a pound. There is a scale and mason jar for money on the table, along with a note that reads "weigh your tomatoes and leave your money in the jar. Thank you for helping us help the homeless." Kathy Dean says that in the years the garden has been operational, she has had very little loss or theft. If you'd like to visit the garden and purchase some wonderful tomatoes, it is located at 16919 Kentucky Road, Belton, MO 64012.

Or, if you would like to help in the garden, please contact Kathy Dean at (816) 590-6270.



## Uplift is Expanding

For months now the number of people that we serve has been increasing. This has made it very difficult for the homeless, some of who were not getting their meals until 11:30 p.m. and for our volunteers who were getting home very late.

As of June 1, 2016, we were able to put a 4th truck on the street. We haven't added any stops,

but have taken 4 stops off the central route, 3 stops off the west route, and 2 stops off the east route. We have made that our midtown route.

The new route will make it possible for us to feed our friends on the street at a more reasonable hour, as well as allow our volunteers to get home a lot earlier.

It took a lot of planning and hard work to get everything in place to make this happen. Mostly, the new route means that we had to add, and train, 10 new drivers as well as a few regular drivers to fill the extra spots. We were very fortunate that we were able to find some of our best volunteers that were willing to be trained and take the responsibility of becoming a driver. Thank you Mike, Jim, Mark, Jack, Dave, Tricia, Tom, Marty, A.J. and Kevin for becoming drivers!



## Veterans Community Project

The Uplift Board welcomed Kevin Jamison to its Board meeting in January to listen to his vision for the homeless veterans in the Kansas City area.

Kevin is the vice-president/co-founder of the Veterans Community Project. He is a veteran himself and knows first-hand the problems that face our men and women who have served our country and are now having to enter back into society.

Kevin and his co-founder/partner, Chris Stout, also a veteran, are working with the Kansas City business and private communities to raise funds for 52 small houses for the veterans. Four acres of land were purchased near 89th and Troost where the first structure has been built to show what their vision is for the community. The tiny homes are 240 square feet and contain a shower, toilet, sink, oven, microwave and refrigerator. The veterans will be offered a place of their own to live, a community to support them and services needed to help them rebuild their lives. Kevin will be calling on veterans in the area to be volunteers and mentors to them, as well as on the community to support the veterans in the village.

Uplift will partner with the Veterans Com-

munity Project to help them identify/locate homeless men and women veterans that Uplift serves. The Veterans Community Project wants to support Uplift in any way they can.



## Third Annual Camp Cleanup

Uplift, Salvation Army and Takin it to the Streets partnered again this year for the third annual camp cleanup.

Uplift was responsible for three camp sites in the downtown area. We were only able to give our volunteers about 2 weeks' notice, but when April 2, 2016, came we had about 50 Uplift volunteers that were there to help us.

This year we were able to use an ATV and trailer to haul the trash to the street for the city trash collectors to pick up which made it a lot easier due to the distance from the camps to the street.

Thank you to everyone that helped us. I'm still hearing from the homeless on how much it meant to them that we were able to help clean up their areas and make their lives a little more comfortable.

## 2016 Third Quarter Stats

**655**  
number of volunteers

**1,518**  
number of camps visited

**3,475**  
number of volunteer hours

**8,324**  
number of homeless served

**42,650**  
number of pounds of donations



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## Important Upcoming Dates

Saturday.....	July 9th
9:00 a.m.....	Warehouse Sort Day
Saturday.....	August 13th
9:00 a.m.....	Warehouse Sort Day
Saturday.....	September 10th
9:00 a.m.....	Warehouse Sort Day
Tuesday.....	September 13th
7:00 p.m.....	Board Meeting

## Stay Connected...

Uplift Volunteers & Donors can now:

- Visit our website at [www.uplift.org](http://www.uplift.org)
- Sign up to receive our newsletter and blog updates via email – go to our website and click on Blog to subscribe
- We hope you enjoy the new look of our newsletter. If you have articles or comments, please send them to the editor:  
Pat Thomson, [pathomson43@gmail.com](mailto:pathomson43@gmail.com).
- Changes of address should be sent to Samantha Shannon at [Samantha.shannon@jocogov.org](mailto:Samantha.shannon@jocogov.org)

## Volunteer Opportunities

### Outreach

Help deliver meals to the homeless. Uplift trucks “roll out” at 6 pm on Mondays and Wednesdays. 5pm Saturdays. The average route takes 4-5 hours. Please call in advance to schedule your participation. Contact: Pat Thomson at (913) 207-9391.

### Prepare Meals

Summer is upon us and our numbers have increased. That means that our need for cooks increases also. Cooks are needed to prepare hot meals for 60 people. If you would like to help, call or email Margaret Longstreet at (816) 739-4050 or [margaretlongstreet@me.com](mailto:margaretlongstreet@me.com) for more information or go to our website at [www.uplift.org](http://www.uplift.org).

### Warehouse Sort Day

9:00-12:00 pm. The second Saturday of every month we sort donations, stock our shelves, fold clothes and have a good old time doing it. If you are planning on bringing a large group, please contact us first. Phone: (816) 241-0060 or Email: [upliftorg@att.net](mailto:upliftorg@att.net).