

Winter 2017

*"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."*



# NEWS

"Taking care and compassion to the homeless."

## 2017 Board of Directors

Jim Carson  
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## 2017 Officers

Kathy Dean, President  
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## A Letter from our President



What an amazing year we have had at Uplift! It has been a year of many changes. We have said goodbye to some of our dear friends on the street, as well as some of our longtime volunteers. We have made new friendships that will continue to help move Uplift forward in the future.

Just to recap 2016, we have reconfigured the warehouse with different shelving making it possible to house the items needed in a more efficient way. We have added a 4th truck to our fleet due to the extremely high number of people we are serving. We have added a new position to help with the office duties, Kellie McDermott, a new volunteer coordinator, Pat Thomson, as well as a new cook coordinator, Margaret Longstreet. We have a new truck thanks to McGowan Foundation and Aristocrat Motors. We have been able to hand out thermal underwear, boots, sleeping bags and tents to many of the homeless thanks to the generosity of so many.

As most of you know, Uplift has no paid staff. We are all here because we care about our homeless friends, and want to do everything possible to help them. It is a true testament to our dedication when our trucks are on the street on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

I am so proud of our drivers and volunteers for taking time away from their families and friends to make others feel loved.

Thank you drivers, cooks, volunteers and donors for allowing me the honor of leading such an amazing organization, and the privilege of serving the forgotten. Without your generosity of time and financial support we couldn't do it. You are the reason that we are able to continue reaching out to those in need. I don't know what 2017 will bring, but I do know that with God leading us and all of you standing beside me, there is nothing that we can't accomplish!

**"Even if it's a little thing, do something for those who have need of a man's help, something for which you get no pay but the privilege of doing it. For remember, you don't live in a world all your own. Your brothers are here too."**

~Albert Schweitzer

God bless you and everyone you love!  
Kathy

## Urgent Needs

As the weather gets colder our needs increase for blankets, candles, crew socks, stocking hats, gloves, boots, coats, sweatshirts, pants and hand warmers.



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Uplift happenings!

# Uplift – From the front row

By Joni Kelsey



## Christmas giving – Morgan Hunter Companies

Morgan Hunter Companies located in Overland Park, KS, took on the project to wrap all the thermal under ware that was given out on Christmas Eve to the homeless that Uplift serves. Morgan Hunter also took the challenge to raise all of the money to pay for those thermals. The employees donated money toward the shirts and the company matched all of the donations to pay for the bottoms of the thermals. This challenge within the company brought a lot of Christmas spirit and fun among the employees. When they donated their money they received a paper shirt to decorate and hang on the Uplift Tree in the staff lounge. Watching the tree fill up and seeing the numbers keep going up has been a real treat for the employees.

## Special Thanks

- David Woods Kemper Veterans Foundation
- Judge Nolton Christmas for the Poor

## 2016 Fourth Quarter Stats

**796**  
number of volunteers

**1,560**  
number of camps visited

**3,980**  
number of volunteer hours

**7,758**  
number of homeless served

Gardening and volunteering have always been a passion of mine and when an opportunity came along to volunteer in a GIANT garden that was related to a non-profit organization called Uplift, I jumped at the opportunity. What I learned about this garden began to intrigue me. This GIANT garden – actually 100 feet by 150 feet (that's BIG!) – was owned by Kathy Dean and her husband, Leo. There were more tomato plants than I could count! There were zucchini, okra, jalapenos, flowers, eggplant, basil and other fun things growing. The vegetables were sold right there in front of the garden on a daily basis and all of the profits went straight to Uplift. It made me smile.

Each week as we worked in the garden, I learned a little bit more about Kathy's role in Uplift. She is the president of the whole operation. I learned a lot about the mission of Uplift. And I learned a lot about gardening. Each week as we had new volunteers joining us to work in the garden, I listened closely as Kathy told the new folks about what Uplift was all about and what their work in the garden was helping to do for Uplift. Each week while I listened, my curiosity was poked about what it was really like to go out on one of the trucks. I finally made the call to get signed up.

My night finally arrived. As I hurried home from work to change clothes and head down to the warehouse, I wondered what this whole thing was going to be like. I wondered what the trucks looked like. I wondered what other people would be there. I like to call these my "unknowns". When I arrived I was greeted with open arms by Kathy and was put to work. I learned that the "pre-load" of the trucks is a well-oiled machine! Those who had been there before knew exactly what needed to be done and got to work. Those who hadn't been there before were given tasks and then just like that we were all on our trucks and out the doors. I was very thankful to be able to be on the same truck as Kathy.

My tendency in these "unknown" situations is to hang back and observe before jumping in. So, I chose the job on the truck that I thought would be the least interactive – serving food. I observed during the first few stops. I observed the volunteer's interaction with the people at each stop. I observed the people when they came to the side of the truck and asked for a new shirt or shoes or socks or candles or bug repellent. I observed how they interacted with each other. There were a lot of laughs. There were a few not so happy things the people would share. We even sang happy birthday



to one of the guys who was having "the worst birthday of his life". It made him smile. Some stops there were 20 or more and other stops only one or two.

As we made stop after stop, it was easier for me to step off of my "food server" position and step out and interact with the people. Kathy would glance at me and motion, "come on over". I'm glad she challenged me to engage more. Between each stop I found myself sitting there bumping along in the truck with my thoughts of the last stop. I was amazed at the amount of younger people out on the streets. Where were their families? Being a mom of kids about the same age as these young 20 somethings, I just wondered about their moms. I wondered if their moms were thinking about them and wondering if they were OK.

One of the things I will remember most was a young man sitting by himself under a lamp-post. Kathy knew him and his situation. He was really glad to see us. We stopped and gave him a hot meal and a few other needed items and then we were off to the next stop. And I wondered.....

As the trek was ending for the night and we headed back to the warehouse so many thoughts went through my mind. First and foremost, I was so thankful to be able to see what Uplift does "from the front row" and to be a part of putting my hands and feet to work to help others. Second, I was exhausted but in a good way. Third, I knew that there would definitely be a next time for me! Fourth, I needed to process all that I had just seen "from the front row". I had always seen homeless people out on the streets and volunteered at events where the homeless came to us, but I had never experienced going to them and seeing them in their world. Fifth, I wondered if there was something else I might be able to do with those in my own world who might be able to help Uplift in some way. And lastly,..... the moms. I'm still working on that one!

# School work for the homeless



## Our Lady of the Presentation School – Candle Drive

On December 2, 2016, I was invited to give a presentation to the sixth grade class at Our Lady of the Presentation School. The students were very excited to learn about what we do at Uplift and were very interested to hear stories about some of the people that we serve. They wanted to do a candle drive as “the light of Christ”. On December 21, 2016, I returned to the school and was very surprised at the large number of candles they had collected. There were enough candles to fill the back of the truck. Thank you students for caring about our friends on the streets!



## Mahaffey Elementary School – Christmas Socks

On December 20, 2016 I was asked to speak to the Mahaffey Elementary school students at an assembly. The students collected candy, Chap Stick, canned soup, water and many other items and filled 450 pairs of socks tied with Christmas ribbons. The students have supplied the filled socks for Uplift for many years. Our friends on the streets look forward to receiving them each year. Thank you Mahaffey students and Mrs. Toni Cole for your continued support!



## Hogan Elementary School

Uplift was honored to receive 26 backpacks filled with many special items for the homeless from Hogan Preparatory Elementary School on December 21, 2016. Ms. Abby Masters and two of her students brought the backpacks to the warehouse for us to hand out on Christmas Eve. The donation was in honor of two Hogan students, Jayden Ugwuh, 9 and Montell Ross, 8, cousins who died in August. Thank you teachers and students for your thoughtful donation.

## Blessing Bags

The Gamma Girls Mentoring Project is offered through Brookside Charter School for girls K-8. Keesha Anderson and the girls gather twice a month on Saturday from 10 – Noon. Girls that have graduated from Brookside Charter School also have the opportunity to give back by returning to help mentor younger girls and to obtain community service hours which is needed for their high school credits and graduation.

This holiday season the girls learned about SERVICE and how they see their hands, but fail to recognize their potential, their power and their ability to bless many people.

The Gamma Girls used their hands to make Blessing Bags for the homeless that Uplift serves. Each bag was made with lots of love and a few items to help keep our homeless friends warm this season. Their hope is that the Blessing Bags brought smiles and warmth to every heart that received them.



## Testimonial

“I felt the Lord was asking me to feed the hungry. I mentioned this to a co-worker, Ms. Keesha, who goes out on the Uplift trucks sometimes with her church. I went with them once and knew I needed to do it again. I was looking at the city through new eyes and now seeing the people we fed as I drive daily through the city. I went out with her church two more times and then brought my husband once. He was hooked after one visit as well, and we now volunteer together once a month. I am an assistant principal at Brookside Charter School in KCMO and I thank Uplift for giving the students at our school a chance to count their blessings by making Blessing Bags for the homeless. I hope to have more students involved with Uplift.”

*Emily Twyman*



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## Important Upcoming Dates

Saturday.....	January 14th
9:00 a.m.....	Warehouse Sort Day
Tuesday.....	January 17th
7:00 p.m.....	Board Meeting
Saturday.....	January 21st
9:00 a.m.....	Warehouse Sort Day
Saturday.....	February 11th
9:00 a.m.....	Warehouse Sort Day
Saturday.....	March 11th
9:00 a.m.....	Warehouse Sort Day

## 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 or [pathomson43@gmail.com](mailto:pathomson43@gmail.com).

### Prepare Meals

Cooks are needed to prepare hot meals for the homeless. Each cook needs to cook enough for 60 people. If you would like to help, call or email Margaret Longstreet at (816) 739-4050 or [margaret-longstreet@me.com](mailto:margaret-longstreet@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 p.m. The second Saturday of every month we sort donations, stock our shelves, fold clothes and have a good old time doing it. We will have a second sort day in January. In February and moving forward we will go back to sorting on the second Saturday of the month. See Important Upcoming Dates. 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).