

Spring 2020

"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."

2020 Board of Directors

Jim Crawford
Kathy Dean
Ross Dessert
Andre Logan
Margaret Longstreet
Rob Oyler
Keith Espelien, Chairman
Jennifer Schmidt
Jim Schmidt
Samantha Shannon
Pat Thomson

2020 Officers

Dan Schipfer, President
Samantha Shannon, VP Administration
Jennifer Schmidt, VP Internal Operations
Andre Logan, Treasurer
Margaret Longstreet, Recording Secretary



NEWS

"Taking care and compassion to the homeless."

A Letter from Our President

Dear Donors and Volunteers,

I hope this letter finds you and your families well and safe. We find ourselves in a challenging time for our entire community. Our newsletter will share more on our response to the Covid challenge. As of this writing in mid-April, your generosity, sensitivity and creativity continue to allow us to actively take care and compassion to the homeless. We will approach each day prepared and thoughtful. Thank you to each of you.

I am honored to be stepping into the huge shoes of Kathy Dean, Uplift's president and leader for the past 8 years. In my time as a volunteer, driver and board member, I have had the pleasure of meeting many of you. For those I have not met, my wife Christine and I were first introduced to Uplift in 2008 by Jim and Margie Burton, my wonderful & energetic in-laws. Christine and I had the pleasure of meeting Jim & Jennifer Schmidt on our first night. We began serving monthly in 2008 and I became a regular driver in 2009. The friendships with homeless and volunteers hooked me. Christine and our children Abby (17) and James (16), my parents Dan & Marty Schipfer (Ohio) have volunteered in several capacities over the years too.

I am inspired by the compassion and generosity of so many volunteers and donors, from our leads to first time volunteers. I am appreciative of the leadership and counsel of Board Members. I look forward to working with our lead volunteers and coordinators: Ross Des-

sert, Jim & Jennifer Schmidt, Tammi Jehle, Margaret Longstreet, Andre Logan, Samantha Shannon, and Pat Thomson. I cannot thank Kathy Dean enough for her continued counsel and volunteerism.

Earlier this year, Trinidad Molina and Rich Salzman completed their time as Board members for Uplift. I thank Trinidad and Rich for their wisdom, energy and commitment. During Trinidad's 10+ years as board member, he also served as a consistent West driver and he was instrumental in the kitchen upgrade in 2013/14. Rich generously shared his kindness and insights to Uplift since 2018. Trinidad and Rich continue to be a friend to homeless individuals in our communities.

Looking ahead, I expect these to be trying times for homeless individuals and many across Kansas City communities. We have a renewed appreciation for togetherness. We see interdependencies more clearly. I find hope in your kindness, friendship and generosity shared across our community.

"The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away".

Gratefully, Dan



Urgent Needs

Toilet paper, bottled water or bottled drink.



Search for
Uplift Organization Inc.
page to stay current with
Uplift happenings!



Kevin Cochran and Angel Gonzales

REST IN PEACE

Angel Valentin Gonzales
3/10/1990 - 02/15/2020

I met Angel almost 4 years ago, in the summer of 2016, when I started driving a route for Uplift. Angel was a regular at a stop in the Crossroads area of Kansas City.

As a new driver I was trying to learn names and new faces. Early on I noticed this quiet young hispanic man. He would wait and let others get supplies and food. I asked his name and gave him mine. I would practice my limited Spanish and he would smile and correct me.

There was something different about Angel that drew me to him. He had a big smile and was very kind. We quickly became friends. I soon found out that he was the same age as my older son. I would go down during the week and we would go to lunch. He showed me some wonderful authentic Mexican restaurants. Another thing that I admired about Angel was that he was always looking for work. He would show me pictures of construction projects. He never once asked me for anything. Whenever I helped him out, he was always thankful and said, "No, that's too much".

One day, Angel called me and asked me to come to the Westside center. He said there is a fiesta with food and dancing. This is when I knew that he considered me a true friend. Angel was more than a friend to me - he was FAMILY. I thank God for bringing Angel in my life. He was a blessing. I miss my friend.

By Kevin Cochran,
Uplift Driver and Friend of Angel

Uplift and the virus

At our board meeting on March 10th, we discussed potential changes we might need to make in the coming weeks or months due to the spread of coronavirus. Little did we know that three days later, all of those contingency plans would need to be implemented. And that the "normal" operations of Uplift would be radically altered even more in the following weeks.

Our initial phase of changes (mid March) included:

- reducing the items we offered on the trucks
- more rigorous cleaning procedures of the warehouse and the trucks
- more widespread use of gloves and masks
- implementing "social distancing" practices at the warehouse and at the stops

Our second set of changes (end of March) included:

- further reduction of items on the trucks
- suspension of receiving most donations
- suspension of having sorters and warehouse volunteers
- reduction of the number of volunteers on each truck

Our most recent changes (early April) included:

- consolidating stops and reducing from four trucks down to three
- reducing our offering on the truck just down to food, water, and pet food
- Reducing the people on the truck to the bare minimum - one driver and one volunteer
- Eliminating any unnecessary people in our warehouse

Each of these changes has been heartbreaking and sad. But these measures are our attempt to prevent the worst possible scenario - a shut down of our operation due to coronavirus breaching our ranks with a positive case. We intend to do everything we can to prevent that from happening!

We have faced some mighty challenges:

- It is heartbreaking to tell people that we can't provide them with clean clothes or underwear or other items that they so desperately need.
- We have had so many faithful and dedicated volunteers and drivers make the prudent decision to take a step back from Uplift due to risk factors, or family situations, or job requirements. We know that this is so very hard for them.
- It hurts, but we have had to tell some volunteers to stay home...that the best thing for Uplift right now is for them to not come to the warehouse to help.

We have also had some wonderful things help our operation during this time:

- There are people sewing masks for Uplift volunteers and for the homeless
- People have acquired hand sanitizer, disinfectant cleaner, gloves, and masks for us
- People collecting toilet paper, pet food, and cases of water or powerade to donate
- It is amazing that we have not experienced a food shortage yet. We have cooks who have stepped up and committed to additional shifts. We have restaurants, grocers, bakeries, and caterers who have called us to donate food. As a result, we have been able to serve larger food portions and give "seconds" on most nights.
- We still have an incredible group of volunteers and drivers who are able and willing to continue to go out and help the homeless, despite the risk of the coronavirus. These folks take immense precautions and protections to keep the homeless safe and to keep each other safe. Yet, they also understand that they are in harm's way every night.

Thank you to ALL of our volunteers, cooks, and drivers.

Thank you to all who are donating financially or materially.

Thank you to those who are able to continue to actively serve right now.

And thank you to all who have served, but cannot serve right now. We know that your heart and your thoughts and your prayers are with the homeless and with those who continue to serve out on the streets. May God continue to bless the homeless, our supporters, and our organization!



Valentine Treats for the Homeless

American Heritage Girls from troop KS0138 at Holy Trinity, Good Shepherd, and Sacred Heart parishes made cookies for Uplift to send out to the homeless on Saturday, February 15th.

Tonya Gast said, "I think one of the best things that happened is that the Sacred Heart Community was drawn in to providing cookies and love to Uplift. They also learned about American Heritage Girls and the service we do."

Sarah Reynolds said "We bagged 358 bags of cookies." (Note: more cookies were found the following week in the Outreach closet. They were frozen and given to the Food Kitchen.)

"We all stood in a circle and prayed for the people receiving the cookies," said Amy Reynolds.

I gave Mya Bremer my card as she was going out on the truck that night as a volunteer. I asked her to send me a comment when the cookies were passed out.

"I talked to many of the homeless and had so many compliments about the cookies! I think they really appreciated it! That was so thoughtful that your groups made them! Lots of the homeless wanted more bags. One man even commented that they were phenomenal!"

"Everyone loved the cookies," said Jennifer Schmidt, one of the Uplift volunteers. "They were sincerely touched by the message, 'You are loved,' on the package. Many were choked up and everyone told us how much they appreciated them. Thank you!"



Special Thanks

- Smith Fries Foundation
- Dean Productions LLC-In honor of Kathy Dean
- Church of the Nativity-Leawood
- Church of the Resurrection-Morningstar/ABC Sunday School Class
- Spencer Fane LLP
- Cerner Corporation-First Hand Foundation
- Flint & Field LLC
- Charles Schwab-William Paul Service Jr
- Olathe South High School-DECA & Annabelle Daugherty, Ashley Gregg & Sarah Tolman
- CKS Packaging Inc.
- MailWorks Inc.
- Creative Candles
- The following restaurants and food suppliers have all supported Uplift over the past few months. We give a "shout out to them" and ask you to support them in any way that you can.
- Jax Fish House
- Bonefish Grill (Leawood)
- Broncato's
- Food Rescue US - Kansas City
- Evolve Juicery & Kitchen
- Gus's Fried Chicken
- Garrozzo's
- Johnny Cascone's Italian Restaurant
- Jasper's Italian Restaurant
- Boulevard Brewery Catering
- Jack'snak (Sunflower Food Company)
- Price Chopper
- Hiland Dairy
- Operation BBQ Relief

2020 First Quarter Stats





Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage PAID
Mail Works

PO Box 270175
1516 Prospect
Kansas City, Missouri 64127-0175
www.uplift.org

Important Upcoming Dates

Due to the coronavirus, we are suspending the Sort Days at the warehouse until it is determined to be safe to return to our normal operation. Watch the website, www.uplift.org, for further updates.

Stay Connected...

Uplift Volunteers & Donors can now:

- Visit our website at www.uplift.org
- Sign up to receive our newsletter and blog updates via email – go to our website and click on Blog to subscribe
- If you have articles or comments for the newsletter, please send them to the editor: Pat Thomson, pthomson43@gmail.com
- Changes of address should be sent to Kellie McDermott at upliftorg@att.net

Volunteer Opportunities Outreach

Help deliver meals to the homeless. Uplift trucks “roll out” at 6 p.m. on Mondays and 5 p.m. on Saturdays. We are not going out on Wednesdays right now due to the virus. The average route takes 4-5 hours. Please call in advance to schedule your participation. Contact Tammi Jehle at [816-287-1827](tel:816-287-1827) or Tammi@uplift.org.

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](tel:816-739-4050) or margaretlongstreet@me.com for more information or go to our website at www.uplift.org.

Warehouse Sort Day 9:00 – 12:00 p.m.

Normally we would be at the Uplift warehouse on the second Saturday of each month for our sort day. On this day we sort the donations that have come in and have a good time doing it! Because of the coronavirus, we have suspended the sort days until further notice.