

Summer 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
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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 continue to find ourselves in a challenging time for our entire community. As of this writing in early July, much has changed since our last newsletter and yet much has remained the same. Consistently, your generosity, kindness and creativity continue to allow us to actively take care and compassion to the homeless. Thank you to each of you.

I am pleased to share news that the Wellsky Foundation selected Uplift as a 2020 grant recipient of \$10,000 earlier this spring. The Wellsky Foundation's mission is to improve the quality of life for vulnerable populations by removing social barriers to recovery and wellness. Thank you to the teammates at Wellsky Foundation for their generous gift to help provide needed items this summer and winter.

To our many volunteers, I cannot thank you enough for your thoughtfulness during this time. This spring, we implemented necessary changes to our operations and outreach. Our focus for these changes has solely been to ensure the safest experience for homeless and our fellow volunteers. Listening to our local public health leaders and consulting with our gifted volunteers, we are not only supporting each other but especially the homeless individuals we serve.

A source of pride for many involved with Uplift has been our consistency. For so many years, Uplift trucks, full of volunteers, have consistently served Monday, Wednesday, and

Saturday. This

spring, for the safety of our volunteers and homeless, we reduced our service to Monday and Saturday in April and May and reduced the number of volunteer roles on our trucks.

Since June, we have been able to resume our Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday service providing both food and necessities. Our focus will continue to be on those we serve and our volunteers. The flexibility of our drivers, volunteers on our trucks and volunteers "standing by" has been critical to our continuity. Thank you to each of you.

The relationships Uplift volunteers have created continues to be an inspiration to me. I believe one of the most important things our volunteers do is look those we serve in the eye and get to know them. Thank you to each of you for the individual relationships you have cultivated.

Looking ahead, we continue to serve in these trying times for homeless individuals and many across Kansas City communities. 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



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

Urgent Needs

It's summertime and the bugs are out so we are in need of Insect wipes/spray!
Also, sunscreen, shorts and t-shirts and men's and women's underwear.



Uplift Community Garden

The Uplift Community Garden is back, and we are growing strong!

We can have the garden again this year due to the generosity of the Abmayr family. They purchased a new tractor in honor of Susan Abmayr to replace the one that was stolen.

"Susie Q" (we named the tractor in honor of Susan), did a great job of getting the soil ready to plant, and with the help of Margaret Longstreet, we were able to get the garden in. I am amazed by God's goodness each year when I put the seeds into the ground and about 7-10 days later see the tiny little sprouts poking their heads through the dirt. I am blessed to witness such a miracle.

We planted zinnias, okra, zucchini, yellow squash, eggplant, jalapeno peppers, sweet mini peppers and tomatoes. Again this year I will be selling the tomatoes at the garden for \$1.00 per pound. All the money goes to Uplift to help in any way needed to make life a little better for all our friends living on the streets. I hope to have a very successful season and will report back at the end of the year

Kathy Dean

Welcome Keith!

Hi there! My name is Keith Espelien and I am the new Chair of the Uplift Board of Directors for 2020. As you know, the prior Board Chair, Dan Schipfer, was selected by the Board to be the President of Uplift. Dan is doing a great job filling the spot opened as Kathy Dean changed her role within Uplift this past January. We all still enjoy working with Kathy as she assists through the transition and maintains many of the relationships she has developed through her years of service.

My interaction with Uplift started in 2016 when my wife, Shelley, and I bought a Kansas City business called "Creative Candles". Creative Candles has been in Kansas City since 1961! Prior ownership had been supplying candles for distribution to the homeless through the Uplift trucks. When we bought the business, I invited Kathy Dean to my office to share the vision of Uplift and help me to understand the way that candles impacted the lives of the homeless. Once Kathy started talking with me I knew that the Creative Candles team was going to continue to help Uplift. The only difference was in the "how". Soon after that meeting, we started making candles purposely for Uplift. The Creative Candles team has been wonderfully supportive of the mission of Uplift. I am so proud of them!

My original thinking when I was selected for this position was that the Board would be focused on long-term strategy to prepare Uplift for an exciting future. Uplift works in a dynamic environment where outside influence plays a huge role in how we accomplish our mission. When I came into this role, the focus was on how to help the Uplift organization prepare for internal and external factors that were

going to influence our future. It was great to be able to talk about the opportunities to develop while still remaining true to our thirty years of history in bringing "Care and Compassion to the Homeless Community".



Of course, all of that work got put on hold as the Uplift team dealt with all of the local issues related to the Coronavirus pandemic and the operating restrictions placed on organizations in the Kansas City Metro area. Safety, restrictions and flexibility have been the key words driving day-to-day decisions for Uplift operations. I am extremely proud of the Uplift team and the homeless community for their care, concern and adaptability over the last several months. The Uplift leaders and volunteers have found many ways to deal with the issues, large and small, in ways that are both effective and sensitive to our friends. I am so proud of each one of them! And, the homeless community has adapted well to all the new guidelines!

As we come out of the pandemic, I look forward to working with the Board, our wonderful volunteers and external resources that can help the Uplift board review the issues before us. With God's guidance, we will begin our long-term strategy work for Uplift's future while continuing our regular service work to the homeless community through love and compassion.

We thank you for your support of Uplift and request your ongoing prayers as we move forward together!

COVID Update

Uplift continues to serve and go out on our routes every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. We have had success so far in making modifications to our operating procedures. We are taking precautions of distancing, masks, hygiene, and cleaning, among other measures. We are so thankful for the support of all of our cooks, volunteers, drivers, and donors as we continue to help the homeless of Kansas City in these difficult times.

Sort Days: We are still not having large group sort days. We are allowing small groups of 4-8 people to come in and sort by appointment. If you are interested in trying to set up a small group sort time, please email to upliftorg@att.net

Donations: We are still not ready to receive large volumes of donated items yet. If you have a smaller volume (less than three or four bags/boxes), feel free to bring them. Our drop off hours are Monday 4:30-6:00, Wednesday 4:30-6:00, and Saturday 3:30-5:00. If you have any questions, please email upliftorg@att.net



Our friend Paul

On May 28, 2020, Paul Rader passed away at 49 years of age. He was a dear friend of Uplift for over 15 years. Paul was homeless until a couple of years ago, when he was able to get into an apartment. Many volunteers and drivers came to know Paul for his wonderful humor and intelligent conversations. Losing one of our friends is always very hard.

Uplift held a beautiful memorial service for Paul on June 23rd near his former "home" under a bridge. The service was led by Jim and Margie Burton, who knew Paul well from their time volunteering.

We love you, Paul, and we miss you!

Special Thanks

- Michael Bartkoski
- Our Lady of the Presentation
- Burger Family Charitable Foundation & Greater Kansas City Community Foundation
- Beverly Murray
- WellSky Foundation
- Green Mountain Charitable Foundation
- Kaitlyn Jashinski - Blue Valley SW High School Fundraiser
- Appraisalytics, LLC
- Dill Enterprises, Inc.
- Beth Orscheln
- Spencer Fane, LLP
- Lockton Insurance Company
- St. Michael Church Kitchen Angels
- Vanguard Packaging, Inc.
- The Church of the Redeemer



Our Lady of the Presentation Donation

Mrs. Kenney's 6th grade class from Our Lady of the Presentation School hosted a St. Joseph's Table. They raised a total of \$4500! Way to go sixth graders! Uplift is so grateful for your continued support!

2020 Second Quarter Stats

242
number of volunteers

779
number of camps visited

1,210
number of volunteer hours

5,640
number of homeless served



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1516 Prospect
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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 Wednesday’s and 5 p.m. on Saturdays. The average route takes 4-5 hours. Please call in advance to schedule your participation. Contact Tammi Jehle 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 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.