

*"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,  
I hope this letter finds you and your families well and safe. As of this writing in April, spring is here in Kansas City. Consistently, your generosity, kindness and energy has continued to allow us to actively take care and compassion to the homeless. Thank you to each of you.

In January and February, we all experienced very cold days and nights. The generosity of our volunteers and donors provided lifesaving essentials including food, sleeping bags, jackets and boots to each of those we served. Many of you assisted in ensuring that warmth and necessities were made available to the homeless as the temperatures dropped. Thank you to our drivers, sorting volunteers and volunteers on the trucks for ensuring the generous donations were put to use in these times of need.

This winter was hard in many ways for the homeless we serve as well as our volunteers and community. Our heart goes out to those who battled illness and to those who lost their loved ones. From talking to many of our volunteers to witnessing your service and generosity, I am continually wowed by your selflessness and relationships that have been developed.

As we enter the spring, I'm filled with hope and appreciation. Many volunteers have been able to return to serve with the support of vaccinations and a reduction in cases of Covid. We continue to follow our precautions to create a safe environment at our warehouse and when serving with each other on our trucks. We are excited to be returning to full strength of four truck routes in April.

I would like to share special thanks to Ross Dessert in leading our operations this year. He and his entire family have been continually active in service and coordinating with so many of you and our volunteers. Thank you to Jim and Jennifer Schmidt for their endless support of Uplift's needs for all things and for their tireless service day and night across our greater Kansas City communities. On behalf of so many, I extend thanks and appreciation to Claudia Bosshammer-Bilimek and George Bilimek. Together, Claudia and George have been a consistent team driving monthly for 23 years for Uplift. I expect many of you know Claudia and George personally or met them when you volunteered. One of Christine's and my first nights at Uplift was serving on the truck with them. Claudia and George epitomize knowing and loving one's neighbor. While their time driving has reached its end, Claudia and George remain active in supporting Uplift in collecting and transporting donations. Thank you Claudia and George for all you do.

Thank you to each of our cooks, donors and many volunteers for your service.

**"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

This Spring our greatest needs are for summer clothing, tennis shoes, baseball hats, rain gear, sunscreen and insect spray/wipes! Also, you can go to our website, [www.uplift.org](http://www.uplift.org), where there is a link to our Amazon wish list.



## The Uplift Garden

Last year's garden was the strangest growing season that we have ever had! We fought against the weather, squash bores, Japanese beetles and many other obstacles, but in the end, it was a successful year!

When the season began, it looked like we wouldn't have any produce to sell, but then the tomatoes started to produce slowly, but steadily, which made it a lot easier for Leo and me to handle the workload. We ended up having tomatoes until Thanksgiving, which in the eleven years we have had the garden has never happened. We were able to sell 3,354 pounds of tomatoes and donate over 3,000 pounds of the other vegetables that we grew to the food pantries in the area.

The weather stayed warm long enough so that we were able to remove all the plants and get the ground tilled and fertilized, thanks to my sister Eileen's 6 horses.

The garden was put to rest for the winter and now it's time for it to start waking up! The days are getting warmer and it's time to get the ground ready to plant.

The corn has already been planted and will be ready to harvest the first part of July. I look forward to watching the amazing produce grow. I also look forward to seeing the smiles on the faces of the people that receive the bounty each year.

We are hopeful that the 2021 growing season will be the best ever! If you'd like to help in the Uplift garden, contact Kathy Dean at: deanjk@comcast.net or 816-590-6270.

Kathy Dean

# Bishop Miege Stags Baseball Players to the Rescue!



Uplift has been in the same warehouse for 26 years. When we moved into the warehouse, Uplift was serving 30-60 people a night. We now serve 200-400 a night.

But more people served means more items coming in and going out. We serve WAY more people, but still have the SAME square footage. These past few months our supporters have been so generous with their donated items that we've literally been packed floor to ceiling. We want to store all of the winter items for next year, but we literally have nowhere to put the donations!

This morning the Varsity Baseball team from Bishop Miege High School came to help



relocate all of our winter items (hats, gloves, scarves, coats, heavy blankets, thermals, boots). They helped pack them into boxes and bags, load them up and unload them at another warehouse nearby. A small business supporter of Uplift is allowing us to store at their location until next winter.

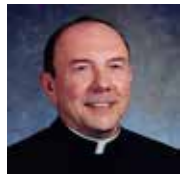
Now we have more space at Uplift to keep the donated items organized so that we can more efficiently get things out on our routes and into the hands of the homeless.

Thank you Coach Dan Meara and Stags baseball players for the gift of your time and youthful strength this morning.

Your service matters!

## Monsignor Bergman & The Louisburg Candle Ladies

Every 2nd Monday, a group of volunteers from Louisburg, KS, drive almost an hour to Uplift to go out on our routes to serve the homeless. They return home late after a long night on the routes and an hour drive home. They are a steadfast and dedicated group with big hearts for the homeless. They always bring special items for their friends they know on the streets. Beth Shoemaker Koechner, Dawn Shelton and Susan Waggerman (among others) have shown up like clockwork every month...through thick and thin...for years!



And they always bring homemade candles, but we never knew the story behind the candles. In February, they brought over 500 homemade candles!

The candles are made by Jeanette Ackerman Urbom and Rebecca Poulter of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Louisburg. These ladies have been making candles for Uplift for about 2 years now. Monsignor Robert Bergman got them started on this ministry. He gave them one candle as an example and they just figured it out and winged it. And they do an amazing job!



The candles are a crucial item for the homeless all year round, but especially in the winter. They use them for heat, for cooking and for light. These "tin can candles" don't tip over easily and pose less of a risk. No one knew where these candles had been coming from...and now we know! They come from Msgr. Bergman through the hands of these lovely ladies.

Msgr Bergman passed away in August 2020 after 50 years of service as a priest.

Thank you to Beth, Susan, Dawn, Jeanette, and Rebecca!

Msgr. Bergman is smiling at you and offering his blessings as you continue these Works of Mercy for the homeless!

# The 4th Route is Back!



On Saturday, April 17th, after more than a year, Uplift's fourth truck was back in service again!

The COVID pandemic caused Uplift to modify some of our operations. For more than a year, we have been serving the same routes and stop locations out of 3 of our trucks.

The driver role is such a key position for our operation. They manage the volunteers and route operation, keep everyone safe and most of all they lead us into friendship and compassion with the wonderful people we serve on the streets.

Many of our drivers were sidelined for various reasons with COVID. Some had their own personal health concerns or risk factors. Others had jobs or family situations that precluded them from continuing as a volunteer driver this past year. A smaller group of drivers has shown great dedication and commitment to ensuring that Uplift can serve the homeless through the pandemic. They committed to doing what-



ever they could to keep Uplift going. Some of them drove every week or even multiple times a week! Please join us in thanking these drivers for continuing to serve and lead through this challenging year:

Frank Kratofil, Tom Carter, Dan Reynoldson, Mike Bartkoski, Hamp Henning, Jason Schilder, Bill Schoep, Jim Schmidt, Kevin Cochran, Aaron Haffey, Ross Dessert, Jeff Westmeyer, Brett Schnake, Norm Burkart, Phil Jorgenson, Tom McGuire, Dan Schipfer, Keith Espelien, Tom Moore, Tim Fortin, Mike Denning

We've had many of our "sidelined" drivers now return to serve. We've also gotten some new volunteer drivers trained and out on their own leading the routes.

Welcome to our new drivers:

Matt Flynn, Stacy Johnson, Tom McGraghgan, Ryan McLaughlin, Ponce Tovar, Dennis Gulley, Doug Erich, Matt Monroe

## Special Thanks

- Farrell and Mark Hope
- Tami Daniels
- Stadium Management Co., LLC
- Richard Carlson
- Donald Buckholz
- Greg Hawkins
- St. Luke's United Methodist Church
- Raymond James Charitable-Rodney Carson/ Jane Vega Family Foundation
- Andre Trudell
- Elizabeth Becker
- Flint & Field, LLC
- Amanda Porter
- Trey Marler
- Dennis Sweeny Business Consulting, Inc.
- Jim Burger & Greater Kansas City Community Foundation-Burger Family Charitable Foundation
- Dan Dubinski
- Lyle Feld
- William Paul Service, Jr.
- Tammi Jehl & Thrive Real Estate KC Fundraiser
- Robert Lock, McBride, Lock & Associates, LLC
- James Carty
- Those who donated to the Paypal Jeans Drive
- Matthew Fandre
- Charles Auer
- James Abel Our Lady of Presentation
- Sue Vicory & Shayna Lamb of My Power of One
- John & LeAnne Hecke
- Katie Grabowski & Medical Students at Kansas City University
- Plato's Closet in Mission, KS
- Grace Riley, Ana Colliton and Laila Foy
- The Exchange in Parkville
- Rolly Dessert and Academy Leadership
- Lisa Kettler and GEHA Health
- CKS Packaging
- Index Restaurant Supply
- Angel Heart's Rescue
- Care Beyond the Boulevard
- George Tillitson & Symetra
- Kansas City MO School District
- Portals Hardware
- Brian Stewart and Kansas City Orthopaedic Institute
- Helias Catholic High School Faculty & Staff
- Visitation Catholic Church
- St. Michael & All Angels - Men in Ministry

## 2021 First Quarter Stats

**458**  
number of volunteers

**1,071** number of camps visited

**2,025**  
number of volunteer hours

**6,417**  
number of homeless served

## The Kansas City Chiefs collect practice gear

At the end of every season, The Kansas City Chiefs collect any practice gear that the players don't wish to keep and donate it to Uplift to give to the homeless! Many items have the players name and jersey number on them. They love it!



Thank you to the Chiefs for supporting Uplift and the homeless of Kansas City!



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[www.uplift.org](http://www.uplift.org)

## 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
- If you have articles or comments for the newsletter, please send them to the editor: Pat Thomson, [pthomson43@gmail.com](mailto:pthomson43@gmail.com)
- Changes of address should be sent to Kellie McDermott at [upliftorg@att.net](mailto:upliftorg@att.net)

## Donations

We are accepting donations. Feel free to bring them. Our drop off hours are **Monday: 4:30-6:00, Wednesday: 4:30-6:00, and Saturday: 9:00 -NOON or 3:30-5:00**. If you have any questions, please email [upliftorg@att.net](mailto: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](tel:816-287-1827) or [Tammi@uplift.org](mailto: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 Renee Jones at [\(816\) 377-6009](tel:816-377-6009) or email her at [hiampacity@yahoo.com](mailto:hiampacity@yahoo.com) for more information or go to our website at [www.uplift.org](http://www.uplift.org).

### Sort Days

We are having sort days a few times a week at our warehouse with groups of 10-12 volunteers. Warehouse volunteering is by reservation only at an online signup, which can be found at <https://www.uplift.org/volunteer/>