

Help from the Heart of the City



2020 Winter Newsletter





Fast Day Campaign

Since 1985, the Fast Day Campaign has provided essential resources to sustain our work. Each year, we ask you to join the campaign so that those we serve can access hot meals, clean clothing, shelter, housing and so much more.

We're grateful for the leadership of chairs, Ward and Ashley Davenport, and we're thankful for your continued support. Together, we reached the critical \$750,000 goal!

While the 2019 campaign has ended, we encourage you to keep the spirit of Fast Day alive. Whether you give financially, fast for a meal, volunteer for a few hours, or donate clothing or other household items, your support offers hope and compassion to those in need.

Thirty Years of Giving

A few days before Christmas 1990, Jim Bach, Richard Wagner and some friends got together after work to grab a burger. They had a great time, but eventually the

bill came.
They all
threw in a
few bucks
and quickly
realized that
the cash
added up. A
little
machismo
meant no
one would
take any



Richard and Jim at Merv's in 2009

change, so they hatched a plan to donate the leftover funds to support the work of the Chattanooga Community Kitchen. Over the past thirty years, Jim and Richard, along with their wives, Sunny and Mary, have kept the party alive – as they say, "It's a great party: no cleaning, cooking or

stress...just a good time and a good cause." In fact, through this party, they've raised well over \$200,000 to support our work!

2019's gathering was sponsored by Wagner & Weeks, LLC with at least 100 people in



Jens Christensen giving Richard and Jim 30th year commemorative mugs

attendance. Jim and Richard, THANK YOU for all you've done to support our work and celebrate with your friends!

Holiday Cheer Around the Kitchen



MOODY FOOD DRIVE

At this annual event, we collected over 700 frozen turkeys and 6 tons of non-perishables.



THANKSGIVING DAY

Nearly 200 volunteers served over 500 Thanksgiving meals.



EMJ CHRISTMAS

Each year, EMJ Construction provides a holiday feast for our guests.







PUBLIX CHARITIES

Thanks to Publix Super Markets Charities for supporting our meals program again this year.







GRATEFUL GOBBLER

The Grateful Gobbler Walk celebrated its 20th year in 2019. Proceeds support our Maclellan Shelter for Families.



CHRISTMAS DAY

Over 500 meals were served; Santa brought gifts for everyone.



MISSION MONDAYS

Altar'd State Hamilton Place chose us again as their Mission Monday Partner in which a portion of their 4th quarter sales supported the Kitchen.

In Their Own Words

Almost every job posting has that famous phrase: "experience needed." For those just starting their careers, it can be difficult to find an opportunity to gain that experience. Despite completing a Social Work degree and an internship working among homeless populations, Carolina struggled to find permanent employment. However, perseverance has always been a part of her story.

"Growing up, my mom and I lived in poverty so I can relate to the struggles our guests face. I have always wanted to serve others so I first pursued a nursing degree, but it never quite fit. It wasn't until I took an Introduction to Social Work class that things began to click."

In March 2016, we hired Carolina as a PRN Supervisor at our Maclellan Shelter for Families. After about a year, a full-time case management position opened at the Kitchen. Carolina was immediately interested, knowing that this was the opportunity she needed to put her passion and

experience to work helping others. She's been in the program since.

Recently, Carolina worked with a gentleman who had been homeless for twelve years.
Thanks to her hard work, he now has stable housing; he's also reconnected with his family!



Carolina Evans Case Manager

Case management can

bring struggle. Despite the difficult times, Carolina loves helping people. To keep her focus and remind her of the reason she loves it, she keeps this quote near her desk: "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle."

Step by Step

Addiction can be a tyrant for anyone, especially those experiencing homelessness. For many years, Charles knew that struggle all too well. Having tried several different recovery programs over the years, he finally came to the realization that it was a battle he could not fight alone.

Charles used to sleep in front of the door of the Community Kitchen each night, often waking up to the unpleasant effects of his actions from the night before. However, a change of perspective helped break his cycle of addiction and homelessness.

Charles makes it very clear that his reliance on God has made all the difference in his journey to recovery and freedom. To affirm his commitment to sobriety, he sought help from the Homeless Health Care Center's VIP recovery program and began volunteering at the Community Kitchen. Now Charles comes to our door early in the morning for a different reason – to serve others.

Charles keeps quite the busy schedule: he wakes up at 3:30 a.m. so that he can catch the bus in time to make it to the Kitchen and volunteer. He then heads back home before

heading to his full time job. In his 'spare time,' Charles volunteers in a Recovery program where he encourages others who are struggling with addiction.



Keep up the good work, Charles!



Jens
Christensen,
Chief
Executive
Officer

A Note From Our CEO

Sometimes I struggle to write this article. Not that there isn't plenty to write about – inspirational things happen every day...amazing things, too. It's more like a lack of creativity, a writer's block of sorts: a challenge to find the story I want to tell, the story that represents what we do, and connects you back to the work you make possible. I'll call it a slump. Right now (write now), I'm in a slump.

Yesterday, I tried to write; I couldn't even start. I had plenty of other things to do, so I pushed the writing off until later. That evening, as I was about to head home, I walked through our family shelter to check in and say hello. They were in the middle of an art class. The families were gathered around tables in the lobby, paper and pens in hand, creating art, sharing food and, most of all, laughing. These families, who just days ago had been on the streets, they were sitting around our tables, enjoying life, relieved enough to be laughing. The kids had huge smiles on their faces, while Joli and Aaron, shelter supervisors, chatted away with the parents who were telling stories of their days, discussing their plans, and get this, also laughing. As I walked away from this scene, I wondered how I could be in a slump.

Earlier that day, I met with a man who comes here for services. He's been staying in our warming shelter and eats most meals here. Having been on the streets for years, he's weathered in appearance. He'd left his guitar unattended, and along with other abandoned items, it was gone. He was distraught, even a bit angry – after all, it was the one item he had of value. We were able to get the guitar back into his hands. His toothless grin told a tremendous story. But even more, just after we parted, Katie, a case manager, told me that she was looking for him because he had a voucher – he was about to be housed. I was able to catch him on the front porch and let him know. I saw that toothless grin once again. And, I'm in a slump?

Today has been very, very cold – actually the coldest day so far this year. We've been overrun with people trying to stay warm. I've come back to my office and I'm again trying to write. I sit here, and sounds from the 100+ people in our day center echo down the hallway. Some of the sounds are unpleasant; others are just plain loud. But, as I write, I hear Wayne, one of our day center supervisors, blast through a microphone "Okay everyone, quiet time! No one talks, not even a whisper!" Suddenly the room turns to laughter. Over 100 people – frustrated, cold, irritable, stressed, struggling people, stuck together in one room because they have nowhere else to turn – suddenly turned to laughter. I can't be in a slump.

In this newsletter, you'll read some stories from last year; you'll see numbers of those served; you'll learn about the hard work that led to a successful annual campaign. But, the stories above, they're not in the annual report, or the numbers. They're in what we do every day – what we can do, only because of you and your support. Thank you!



2019 Annual Report

In addition to being open daily and working to meet the most basic needs of hungry, homeless, and vulnerable people in our community, here are the services you helped provide in 2019:



175,408 MEALS

We serve three meals a day, seven days a week, every day of the year to anyone in need.





\$306,476.26 in Clothing Giveaway

Roughly 80% of the clothing "sold" in our thrift store is given away to those in need.



146 Families at the Maclellan Shelter for Families



Our family shelter provides 24/7 shelter for the entire family. In 2019, 306 children stayed at the shelter and 85% of families went on to greater stability.



12,521 Shelter Bed Nights



We operate St. Catherine's Shelter for Women and St. Matthew's Shelter for Men nightly and the Winter Warming Shelter during the coldest months of the year.



Thank you for your support in 2019!



1,097 in Foot Care

Nursing students at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga offer foot care throughout the year.





152 tons of material recycled

The "Recycling Lives" program began in 1989 as a work training program. We accept all major recycleables.





More than 82 People Housed

Our Permanent Supportive Housing Case Managers work with people to find and maintain housing.







Groups and indviduals are needed year-round. Check out volunteer opportunities on our website: homelesschattanooga.org



Warming Shelter Opens Early

An unusual cold snap brought about an early opening to our overnight cold weather warming shelter. We had planned to open in mid-December, but the weather had different plans, resulting in opening almost a month



early on November 11. We anticipate staying open until mid-March unless the weather turns again. Either way, the numbers are clear as is the need!

By the Numbers (as of 2/15/2020):

Shelter Bed Nights: 7,120 Unique Individuals Served: 546 Nightly Average: 89

Bright School Pasta Drive

The Bright School recently collected over 2,000 boxes of pasta for our Food Services program! Classrooms and individual students competed to see who could collect the most. The collection culminated with a faculty vs. fifth grade basketball game where students were rewarded for their collection efforts and learned about the work of the Community Kitchen (and, yes, the kids beat their teachers!!!).

Thank you, Bright School students, staff and parents. Your donations are greatly appreciated!









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P.O. Box 11203 Chattanooga, TN 37401



We value your support and regard ourselves as accountable not only to you but also to God for stewardship of the funds you entrust to us. We are audited by a recognized, local independent CPA firm and publish an audited annual financial statement.

The Chattanooga Community Kitchen (Chattanooga Church Ministries, Inc.) is a 501(c)3 organization with EIN 62-1151413.

Qualified contributions are tax deductible per IRS regulations.

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Thank you for being a partner in our work to change lives!