

HOLIDAY ISSUE | DECEMBER 2023

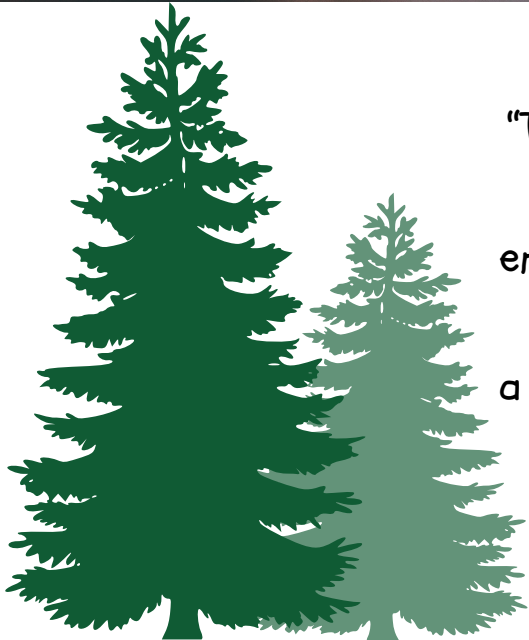


A Publication of Care and Share of Crookston, Inc.

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"The world has enough beautiful mountains and meadows, spectacular skies and serene lakes. It has enough lush forests, flowered fields, and sandy beaches. It has plenty of stars and the promise of a new sunrise and sunset every day. What the world needs more of is people to appreciate and enjoy it." Michael Josephson



Executive Director News

America's homelessness problem has the makings of an acute crisis. Shelters across the U.S. are reporting a surge in people looking for help, with wait lists doubling or tripling in recent months. The number of homeless people outside of shelters is also rising. Some living in encampments, which have popped up in parks and other public spaces in major cities from Washington, D.C., to Seattle since the pandemic. Inflation is compounding the problem: Rent has increased at its fastest rate since 1986, putting houses and apartments out of reach for more Americans.

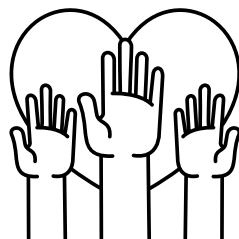
The crisis means more people do not know where they will sleep tonight. Living on the streets, people are exposed to more crime, violence and bad weather, including below freezing conditions. They can lose their job in the chaos of homelessness, and often struggle to find another one without access to the internet or a mailing address. A former homeless gentleman who used to live in a tent said, "There's a certain posture that you take when you are homeless, you lose your dignity."

No factor matters more to homelessness than access to housing. Poverty, mental illness, addiction and other issues do play roles, but they are less significant.

What I have watched come into fruition in my short time within this organization is a coordinated, community-wide approach to develop a variety of services, housing and programs to address homelessness. This community-wide approach has multiple individual programs, facilitating a community-wide response to homelessness. Our team includes Alluma, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Community Health, Tri-County Community Corrections, Crookston Police Department, Polk County Social Services, Churches in Crookston and surrounding areas of multiple denominations and others.

Because we have this wrap-around of organizations and community involvement is a direct reflection on the Care and Share of Crookston, Inc.'s ability to provide food and shelter to those in need. With your help we have been able to expand occupancy providing more beds for women. As we continue to grow, our goal is to find more spaces to provide warmth and shelter to as many men, women and families as possible.

In my short 8 weeks shadowing Jane Freeman as Executive Director, one of the most amazing components I have had the privilege to witness has been how the community has extended their hands and hearts to Care and Share of Crookston, Inc. I am humbled to see the community come together to nurture the individuals we can offer warmth and safety to throughout the years. Showing authentic gratitude is essential for fostering lasting relationships with donors and volunteers. Today, I thank you all individually for your dedication to this organization.



Carolina Alfonso



Care and Share
of Crookston
Presents



Open Hearts, Open Doors

Dinner & Silent Auction

Saturday, January 20th, 2024

CROOKSTON EAGLES HALL

5:00 p.m. - Social Hour

6:00 p.m. - Dinner

7:00 p.m. - Silent Auction & Games

*Meal Choices: Prime Rib
or Walleye*

\$50 *per ticket*

All proceeds
will go towards a
cargo van

For Ticket Information
Please Call Care & Share
@ 218-281-2644

Open Hearts, Open Doors



In our last newsletter, we reported that a generous donor started a fund for a van for the Care and Share. Our board of directors and employees believe in this need and have embraced helping us reach this goal.

We welcome you to join us on January 20th, 2024 for a sit down meal, silent auctions, and games. All proceeds for this event will go towards purchasing a van to help us address unmet needs. If you can't join us but feel moved to donate to the van fund, please make sure we know by indicating "Van fund" on your check or envelope.

There are several ways a van will be used in our daily operations. Here are just some of the ways:

- Milk pick-up from the Food Bank in East Grand Forks. This is several plastic cartons at a time. We do this to ensure fresh milk for people coming to the food shelf and our residents
- Transporting cardboard to the weigh station. This often adds up to 2-3 loads per week and is fluctuates based on the volume of food coming into the facility. Feeding the community 14 meals every week and distributing thousands of pounds of food from the food shelf every week adds up.
- Facility projects and clean-ups result in several pickup loads being taken to the weigh station. Projects such as cleaning out the donation room account for some of these trips
- Picking up regularly scheduled donations from Hugo's and Walmart as needed. Volunteers with pickups have had to make two trips on some donation days.
- Transporting residents to achieve necessary documentation or take necessary actions to be housed. An example is driving a resident to Grand Forks to get a Social Security card, which is required to ensure housing. This alone will save one wear and tear on employee vehicles and mileage payments will be eliminated.
- Trips to local businesses to pick up items for general operation- Hugo's for groceries for onsite meals, Walmart for office supplies etc.
- Picking up furniture donations that we our residents use when moving into their own homes.
- Helping residents transport furniture and items to their new homes.

The last two items require volunteer activity. We want to utilize more volunteers to strengthen bonds with the community. A van would let volunteers help with this area of giving that is highly useful. A van will allow us to reach out to more volunteers.

Care and Share inspires us to take care of others and share what we have. This is a great opportunity to give a gift that will last for years. We hope you consider a donation to this project. Volunteers and donations are welcome at Care & Share.

Capacity limits

How Many People Can Care and Share Provide Shelter to at One Time?

Capacity is a big word in the world of homeless shelters. While there is need, the bottom line is that buildings and services are limited by things like square footage, available staff, supplies and funding. That is why we are concerned about capacity and concerned with increasing capacity at Care and Share.

How has Care and Share met the capacity needs of the increased number of people in the community who are homeless?

Around 5 or 6 years ago at Care and Share there were 3 men's dorms that could hold 15 – 18 individuals. There were no separate women's dorms, women who were homeless stayed at the Hope Center where homeless families also stayed. There were 6 units for single women and the families. That meant at that time we could serve a maximum of 30 – 35 people.

Things have changed in this short period of time. Today there are 4 men's dorms that can support 20 – 24 individuals. We opened the fourth dorm when the pandemic required distancing, so originally there were 16 beds in the 4 dorms. Once things loosened up, we kept the 4 th dorm and added one or two beds to each dorm to get us where we are today. Why??? Because we are often almost full, and occasionally completely full in the men's dorms.

In the meantime, there was a shift where more women were seeking shelter, and more families were seeking shelter. We looked around and converted a room on the second floor of the Care and Share building (the men's area is on the third floor) into a dorm for women that can house 5 individuals. That has been useful for the last 2 years or so, but now we have more demand for beds for women than we can meet. That led us to looking around again, doing some moving, and creating a second dorm for women. Now we have the capacity to serve 10 women! This happened in October 2023 and the second dorm has already been used.

Moving the women over to the Care and Share building means the 6 Hope Center units have been available to homeless families alone for the last couple of years. This has helped meet the increased demand from homeless families. More often than not, all of the family units are full. This increased our capacity to serve several more people since a family consists of a minimum of 2 people per family (although families come in all sizes and numbers). Overall, we have increased our nightly capacity by around 20 (depending on family size) meaning we can give 50 - 55 people who are homeless a warm and safe place to lay their heads on any given night.

This growth has been organic and a response to observed need. We have met the needs creatively. However, it has also clearly shown us our limitations. That is why we are pursuing grants related to facility remodeling and renovation.

Thank you to the Crookston community that has supported Care and Share with funds, goods, food, and time. Without your support and help we would not have been able to increase our capacity and better meet the needs of people who are homeless in our area.



Words From Sister Justina

Care and Share is in the process of seeking grants from the State of Minnesota for renovation of the Care and Share building, New Hope Food Shelf and the Hope Center. We want to continue the good work started by Sister Justina, the founder of Care and Share, for many years in the future. Our buildings need some help to carry on her good work. This is an opportune time to share some of Sister Justina's words about Care and Share. This quote is from a Position Paper to the Board of Directors March 20, 1990.

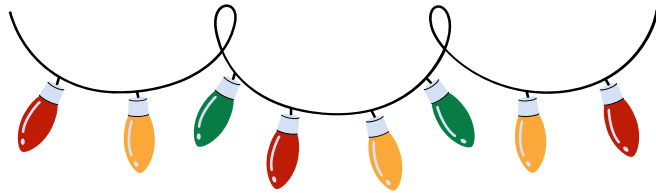
“The purpose of Care and Share is to respond to the needy, the homeless, the people who are falling through the cracks. It is a response and refuge for the fragile elements of our society. Anyone who has bothered to spend some time here watching people heal spiritually, emotionally, and recover their sense of dignity will see the importance of this work. Through the renovation of the building by grants and above all by the work of the men and women who have passed through our shelter, this building has become a living symbol of the response to the Gospel question: “Who is thy neighbor?”. Just as the heart is the symbol of our Center, so our Center is in the heart of this town. It serves as a living and constant reminder of the gospel injunction, “What you do to the least of my people you do to Me.” As people pass by, it is a constant reminder of “there go I but for the grace of God.” As Jesus said, one does not hide a lamp under a bushel basket but puts it in place where it will give light. Care and Share is in a place where it is light for the people who come to us and light for the people who live in this town.”

Christmas Donation Ideas

Adults

Colored T-shirts, Lounge Pants, Men's Boxers, Women's Underwear,
and Long Underwear- sizes M, L, XL, XXL

Socks (white or black), Manicure kit, Christmas Theme Toiletries Sets,
Journal and Pen, Adult Coloring Books & pencils, Men's and Womens
razors and shaving cream, Men's and Women's Shampoo & Conditioner,
Gloves and Mittens, Gift Cards



Children

T-shirts (18 months-4T), Sweatpants & Leggings (18 months
to 4T), Socks, Gloves and Mittens

Toys (without lots of parts), Cloth or plastic dolls or figures
(Superhero, Princess, Dinosaurs, etc), Board books, Children's
books, Pre-teen book series, Color books & pencils, Carry
cases for treasures, Diapers (size 5 & 6), Pull-ups (size 5t & 6t)

*Items can be picked up and dropped off at the shelter or found on
our amazon wish list*

Show your support



Getting an Amazon Wish List package always makes us smile and brightens our day! The generous donations we receive, including through the Amazon Wish List, help us better meet the needs of residents. Thank you to everyone who sends donations through our Amazon Wish List!!



<https://urlgeni.us/amazon/CareandShare>

[Shaola at shaolab@careandshareofcrookstoncrk.org](mailto:Shaola@shaolab@careandshareofcrookstoncrk.org)

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