



OneKeyATX - An Affordable Housing Initiative for Austin's Homeless Veterans

There are thousands of homeless people living in Austin and many of them are veterans. They served our country and now they need our help in finding the stability,

safety and comfort that comes with having your own home. OneKeyATX is an initiative to find affordable homes for 234 homeless vets in Austin by January of 2016. It is a partnership of the City of Austin, Travis County, the Veterans Administration, and several nonprofits, including Caritas of Austin, the Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO), Front Steps, Goodwill, and the Salvation Army. They are currently looking for landlords and property owners willing to partner with OneKeyATX to help end veteran homelessness. Will you commit ONE unit? For more information on OneKeyATX, visit austinecho.org.

Street Stories November 16-20

Portraits of People Experiencing Homelessness Sonja A. Kever (Member of University United Methodist Church) Portraits will be on display in the Atrium of City Hall in conjunction with National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week. This will be the backdrop for round table discussions by homeless service providers. The goal is to formulate recommendations to take to Mayor Steve Adler, in response to his end homelessness initiative, with an emphasis on veterans. <http://www.streetstories.info/>

I first met Mrs. M at worship following the Feed My People Breakfast. She became a regular in worship for about a year. Then, she disappeared. After many months, Mrs. M was back and shared with me that she had been diagnosed with breast cancer and had a mastectomy. I have been blessed to get to spend time with Mrs. M during her difficult journey – infection and additional surgeries, chemotherapy, and in and out of homelessness. And yet, through it all, Mrs. M always had a positive outlook and hope for the future – especially when she planned to visit her grandchildren. Through our Emergency Assistance Fund I have been able to help Mrs. M with transportation on Capital Metro to get to and from weekly medical appointments, as well as a Megabus ticket to Houston to spend time with her grandchildren before beginning chemotherapy. Mrs. M and I see each other every few weeks, sharing our prayers and ups and downs of life. What a gift and joy she is!

-Pastor Cathy Stone



HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS MONTH



Did you know:

- that every night, it is estimated that there are over 2,121 homeless individuals in Austin/Travis County?
- that more than 18% of Texas households (one in six) experienced food insecurity in the years 2011-2013?
- that the number of homeless students in Austin ISD has been rising with an estimate of 2,642 students without a permanent address for the 2014-2015 school year?

National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week is November 15-22, sponsored by the National Coalition for the Homeless. FUMC is spending all of November highlighting this pressing problem and working to raise awareness about the problem of hunger and homelessness.

FUMC Emergency Assistance Fund

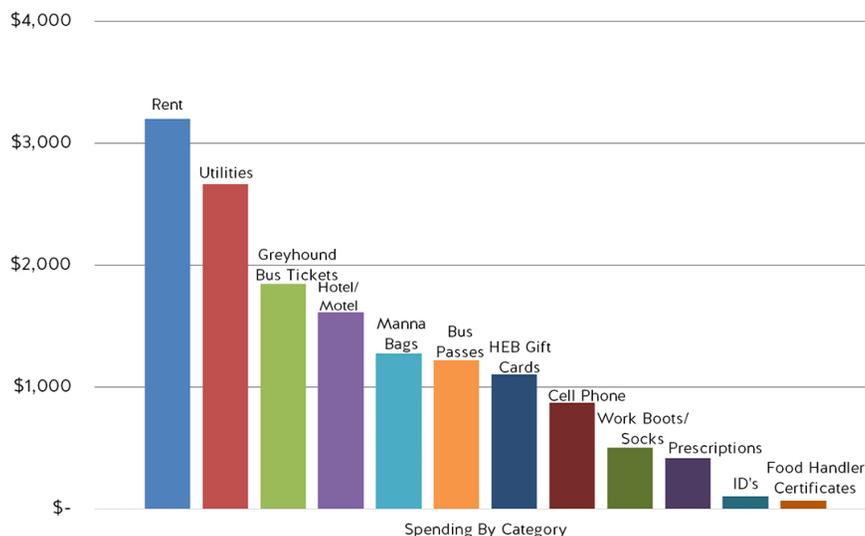
During the month of November our Mission Emphasis/Communion Rail Offering will go to replenish our Emergency Assistance Fund. This fund is able to provide assistance to individuals and families in crisis due to domestic violence, poverty, homelessness and/or unemployment. The Emergency Assistance Fund is completely dependent on donations from our congregation. Last year was an amazing year of giving, and so much was done for the individuals and families in crisis.

One of the gentlemen seeking assistance came with numerous needs... rent assistance, prescriptions, utilities, food and a bus pass. Mr. K has stomach cancer and had just been diagnosed with lung cancer as well. The following week, he was scheduled to begin an intense chemotherapy treatment which would be ongoing for 2 months. With the generosity of our church, he was provided two months rental assistance and utilities (he lives in Section 8 housing), food, and a bus pass. In working with another church, his prescriptions were filled. Now, through this grace, Mr. K can focus on his health without the worries of bills.

-By Libby Sykora, Congregational Care Coordinator

Throughout the year, FUMC is blessed to provide emergency assistance support people facing hard times, including homelessness. Below is a summary of how the fund has been utilized this year to assist the varying needs of those we serve.

Emergency Assistance Fund Spending YTD (Jan - Oct 2015)



Please prayerfully consider participating or financially supporting the ministry opportunities below to help FUMC serve the hungry and homeless in Austin.

• Cold Weather Shelter Program

During the winter months, FUMC participates in this program through Front Steps at the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH). FUMC provides shelter for up to 25 women on Tuesday nights when the predicted overnight low is expected to be 35 degrees and wet or 32 degrees and dry. We have shifts to welcome and greet our guests, provide/serve dinner, and serve as overnight hosts. To volunteer, sign up on our website.

• Family Promise - Next Opportunity December 13-19

Family Promise is a shelter program of Foundation for the Homeless that provides transitional shelter for families experiencing homelessness. The goal of this program is to assist families, through case management by licensed social workers, in finding housing and employment. Four to five times each year, FUMC provides a place for families experiencing homelessness. To volunteer, sign up on our website.

• "Feed My People" Breakfast - Next Opportunity on November 24

Each Tuesday and Thursday, the Great Hall in the Family Life Center is the site for a breakfast that feeds 250-300 hungry people. On the last Tuesday of the month, First church provides the food, prepares and serves the breakfast. Each Thursday, at 6:30 a.m., the Pastor Cathy Stone leads a worship service for those at the breakfast.

• Food Drive during November

FUMC is hosting a food drive benefiting the Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB). Donations may be left in the collection bins located in the foyer and Family Life Center through the month of November.

• FreeStore - Next Opportunity on December 5

FUMC will be serving at the FreeStore on Saturday, December 5 (rather than our usual 4th Saturday). The FreeStore connects people who need and people who need to give, through weekly opportunities to shop for free clothing and household items while creating opportunities for all people to live in community with one another. Volunteer shifts are from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. or 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. To volunteer, sign up on our website.

• Harvest Sunday on November 22

FUMC will join with the other United Methodist congregations in the Rio Texas Conference in a special offering for hunger projects in the Rio Grande Valley and Mexico.

• Mobile Loaves & Fishes

Each day, teams prepare sandwiches in the kitchen off Wesley Hall and take them in the Mobile Loaves & Fishes Truck to hungry people in Austin.