

Ways to Connect with Overcoming Homelessness

"The truth about it is, whether we is rich or poor - or somethin' in between - this earth ain't no final restin' place. So in a way, we is all homeless, just workin' our way toward home."

- Denver Moore, co-author of Same Kind of Different As Me

Make a Difference through Prayer

- Pray that homeless families will have the hope, courage, ability and resources to experience a significant life change.
- Pray that homeless persons who do not know Christ would have the opportunity to receive the good news, and that God would restore everything that has been destroyed.
- Pray for individuals and families now living on the edge that they will not to fall into homelessness.
- Pray that God would continue to provide the financial and volunteer resources for organizations to accomplish their mission of helping to end homelessness.

Make a Difference through Your Life

- Don't assume homelessness is a choice or a result of poor decisions. Meet people where they are without judgment.
- In encounters with homeless persons, affirm their dignity and sense of personal worth.
- Work toward helping in ways that can contribute to overcoming homelessness, rather than meeting temporary needs.
- See the Compassion Coalition website for tips on how to give wisely.
- If you feel called to address homelessness, make sure your ministry complements and coordinates with the good work many others are already doing.

Make a Difference through Your Church

- Put together "Move in Kits" for individuals who are moving into housing, by stuffing a laundry basket with dishes, linens, toiletries, paper and cleaning products, and non-perishable food. The CAC Homeward Bound Program (865-546-3500) and VMC (865-524-3926) collects and distributes starter housekeeping packages and personal care packages to formerly homeless individuals who are moving into their own apartments.
- The CAC Homeward Bound Program (865-546-3500) needs help with moving individuals into their new apartments or picking up furniture to take to their new apartments.
- Develop an ongoing relationship with a homeless shelter to provide meals, facility improvements, fundraising events, special activities such as birthday parties, counseling, Bible studies and spiritual nurture for residents and staff, transportation to worship services, and other forms of support.
- Organize a study and advocacy group to better understand homelessness and to work toward beneficial public policies (such as improved access to mental health services).
- Family Promise (865-584-2822) needs more host churches and support churches to join their network in serving homeless families. A host church offers space for the families to live in temporarily, as well as volunteers to sleep overnight at the church. A support church brings meals for the families and provides volunteers to interact with the guests.
- Compassion Coalition invites churches to participate in Circles of Support, a faith-based mentoring program that is a key part of the coordinated effort to end chronic homelessness in Knox County. Teams of 4-6 volunteers are matched with formerly homeless neighbors who have been placed in permanent supportive housing. Mentor teams partner with professional case managers to provide an empowering, nurturing network with regular contact to help their neighbor achieve stability and integrate into the community. Mentors are provided training and supervision. To learn more about this exciting ministry opportunity, please call 865-251-1591 x 8, email jessica@compassioncoalition.org, or visit www.compassioncoalition.org.

Make a Difference as a Volunteer

Connect with the following organizations that help people overcome homelessness:

Angelic Ministries: 523-8884, www.angelicministries.com

Extends the love of Jesus to those who are poor and struggling, through food, clothing, furniture and household items, counseling services, vocational training, haircuts, and other forms of assistance, as well as opportunities for Bible study, prayer and worship. The Redemption Recovery Ministry provides housing for those in recovery. Most of the men who live in the home came to us first as clients from the mission and off the street. They work a minimum of 40 hours a week in our warehouse.

- Work in the warehouse sorting donations, stocking shelves, keeping things clean, and serving clients.
- Serve as a mentor for residents who are in the Redemption Recovery Program.
- Families and groups: Collect items for Cleaning Starter Kits (buckets filled with home cleaning supplies), Kitchen Boxes (kitchen and house ware items), or Food Boxes.
- Help lead or just share in weekly worship services, help with the meal following the service, or provide transportation to services (with class B license).

Family Promise of Knoxville: 865-584-2822, www.familypromiseknoxville.org

A network of congregations and social service agencies cooperating to provide food, shelter and social services to homeless families working toward self-sufficiency.

- Organize drives for clothing suitable for interviews or necessities such as diapers, batteries, or laundry soap.
- Families: Spend an hour at the day center reading to children, leading an arts and crafts project, or teaching a class.
- Groups: Help with yard work, home maintenance or organizing the basement.

Highways & By-Ways Ministry: 865-577-3939, www.highwaysandbywaysministry.com

Ministers to those who are homeless or working poor by practicing unconditional love, providing basic necessities, and offering hope and an improved way of life through Jesus Christ.

- Help with administrative needs.
- Provide transportation to medical appointments, meals and other practical assistance.
- Offer food, water, blankets, socks, hygiene items, medical attention, and the love of Jesus to those at campsites and shelters.
- Donate items to be distributed, as well as gift cards to pharmacies for prescriptions, and gas cards/bus tickets to help people get back home once they are off the streets.
- Families or groups: Provide music for the weekly worship service, assist with the meal that follows, or distribute clothing and other items to attendees.

Knox Area Rescue Ministries (KARM): 865-673-6540, www.karm.org

Since 1960, KARM has sought to rescue the poor and needy of the Knox area by providing recovery services in Jesus' name. As many as 1,500 meals are served every day and every night more than 400 men, women and children find shelter. KARM also provides residential recovery programs, biblically-based counseling and addiction treatment, as well as job training initiatives. Volunteers are vital to the heartbeat of KARM. By helping to prepare and serve meals, register overnight guests and numerous other services, volunteers significantly impact the lives of hopeless, destitute, and homeless people in our community.

- Learn about the ministry, tour the facility, and learn more about current volunteer opportunities at “KARM Encounters,” which are held the 2nd Tuesday of each month from 5:30-7 pm. Call 865-633-7624 to register.
- Donate gently used furniture, clothing, and other goods to one of 6 KARM Thrift Stores in the community. Call 865-521-0770 to schedule a donation pick-up.
- Pray for the ministry of KARM to be effective in reaching the poor and needy of the Knox area with the love of Christ.

Lost Sheep Ministry: 865-688-9636, www.lostsheepministry.org

A Christian mobile ministry that serves homeless persons and at-risk youth. Each Wednesday evening under the McGee Street Bridge, the Homeless Bridge Fellowship Program feeds 450-500 people.

- Distribute food, drinks, clothing and hygiene products via the street ministry program.
- Provide administrative support or drive a ministry van.
- Families or groups: Sort clothes, wash vans, restock the distribution center, and assist with food preparation at the ministry site.

The Next Door: 865-360-6701, <http://www.thenextdoor.org>

A transitional living program that provides assistance to women who are re-entering society from incarceration. Addresses the physical, mental and spiritual needs of women in crisis—equipping them for lives of wholeness and hope. The program consists of a six-month planned curriculum of recovery support services to address the issues of the co-occurring disorders of addiction and mental illness.

- Answer phones and direct visitors at the front desk.
- Serve as a special events assistant, job coach, dinner volunteer, or help the women with transportation needs.
- Serve as a prayer partner, encourager, and mentor to a former offender.
- Families: Children can participate with their families in cooking dinners, being prayer partners and encouragers, and in any other way their parents deem appropriate.
- Groups: Host a supply drive to collect items for welcome baskets that provide necessities to new residents. Many of those coming out of incarceration lack even basic clothing and personal items.

PleasantTree Apartments (Child & Family Tennessee): 865-524-1312, <http://www.child-family.org>
A permanent residence with daily living support for formerly homeless and mentally ill women and their children.

- Become a mentor to help families with daily living skills, socialization, support and greater self-determination.
- Assist with the upkeep of the housing complex by painting apartments, changing door locks, installing appliances, and doing other minor repairs.

Runaway Shelter and Transitional Living (Child & Family Tennessee): 865-523-2689, www.child-family.org

Provides a safety net of runaway prevention, crisis intervention, safe shelter, housing, and counseling services for runaway and homeless teenagers and young adults.

- Spend time with teenagers in the short-term emergency shelter, or make a longer-term commitment to mentor older teenagers as they transition into adulthood.
- Offer assistance with yard care, gardening, or facilities maintenance.
- The shelter's advisory council welcomes volunteers to provide input and guidance on their programs.
- Families: Share activities with residents such as cooking a meal together, organizing a “game night”, going on a picnic, or planning other fun events.

The Thompson Center of Hope (Salvation Army): 865-525-9401, www.uss.salvationarmy.org

Provides emergency assistance with utilities, clothing and food to over 20,000 people annually to help prevent homelessness. Also operates five transitional housing shelters for homeless guests who are committed to working towards independence. As a major partner with the Knoxville/Knox County Ten-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness, Salvation Army provides employment counseling, training and placement for chronically homeless individuals.

- Work in the thrift store warehouse.
- Assist with maintenance needs such as cleaning, painting, and landscaping.
- Families or groups: Help in the kitchen, where three meals are prepared each day, 365 days a year.
- Families: Participate in the annual Christmas programs including the Red Kettle Campaign, the toy warehouse, and food distribution.

Volunteer Ministry Center: 865-524-3926, www.vmcknox.org

An interfaith nonprofit working to restore dignity and productivity to the lives of the homeless and the working poor of Knoxville. VMC's role is to provide Permanent Supportive Housing and case management. VMC reintegrates formerly chronically homeless individuals into community life through a "Housing First" model that provides stability through permanent housing with around services. VMC also works to prevent homelessness for those at risk and can offer some direct assistance to help with rent, utilities, eyeglasses, prescription medications. The VMC Clinic, located within the Broadway Clinic in the VMC building, also offers dental care to the homeless.

- A variety of opportunities are available at VMC's Resource Center which offers hospitality during the day to Knoxville's homeless who are committed to a Case Management program which will result in housing. These opportunities include: Serving as a Life Skills Class leader, GED Preparation Tutor, Book and Movie Discussion leader, cooking class teacher, providing meal service, etc.
- The Refuge also needs volunteers who will be trained to work with the marginally housed to help prevent homelessness. All guests are seen in private interviews by volunteer interviewers. Additionally, receptionists are needed in this program.
- The Dental Clinic needs volunteer dental professionals as well as receptionists.
- Volunteers are needed to provide evening activities at VMC residential facilities. Activities can include serving a meal, conducting a bingo game, supervising a movie night or craft night, etc.

Water Angel Ministries, Inc.: 865-524-5194, www.waterangelsministries.com

An outreach that meets physical needs of those who are poor and homeless while encouraging a personal relationship with Christ.

- Tutor clients for GED preparation, help folks get into apartments, or assist with job training and job placement.
- Participate in the Shining Star Club, an outreach to homeless and inner-city children the first Saturday of each month.
- Groups: Provide personal testimonies and/or music at the weekly Sunday service.
- Families: Serve lunch together or work in the clothing room, the food pantry or the children's area on Sunday afternoons.

Other Volunteer Opportunities

These organizations are concerned with overcoming homelessness. Many of these organizations welcome volunteers. Ask about opportunities to help with meals, transportation, fundraising, donated items, administrative support, maintenance, prayer support, or relational ministry. If you have specialized professional skills—especially medical or legal—consider offering pro bono services.

Elizabeth Homes (Catholic Charities): 865-971-3570 ext. 108, www.ccetn.org

Assists families transitioning from homelessness to live as independently as possible through the provision of supportive housing.

Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Project (Volunteers of America): 865-546-4813, www.voa.org

Works with veterans to break down barriers to self-sufficiency; helps clients obtain employment by purchasing haircuts, work clothes, and needed tools.

Homeward Bound Program (Community Action Committee): 865-546-3500, www.knoxcac.org

Provides intensive case management, education, life skills training, budgeting and parenting classes, and housing placement services to help maximize a homeless person's self-sufficiency.

Legal Aid of East Tennessee: 865-637-0484, www.laet.org/

Helps the homeless with civil legal problems; ensures equal justice for elderly, abused, and low-income people through legal assistance and advocacy.

The Love Kitchen: 865-546-3248, www.thelovekitchen.org

Provides meals, clothing and food aid to homebound, homeless and unemployed persons.

Parkridge Harbor Apartments (Positively Living): 865-525-1540, www.parkridgeharbor.org

Permanent supportive housing for homeless men with any combination of mental illness, addiction, HIV/AIDS or physical disability.

PATH Homeless Program (Helen Ross McNabb): 865-637-9711, www.mcnabbcenter.org

Serves homeless individuals with severe, persistent mental illness.

PleasantTree Apartments (Child & Family Tennessee): 865-524-1312, www.child-family.org

A permanent residence with daily living support for formerly homeless, mentally ill women and their children.

The Restoration House: 865-300-6806, www.therestorationhouse.net

Helps restore formerly homeless single mothers and their children by providing supportive transitional housing, mentoring and a personalized plan.

Samaritan Place (Catholic Charities): 865-684-1880, www.samaritanplace.com

Provides an innovative set of programs such as emergency shelters, transitional housing, and supported housing that meet the needs of older adults in housing crises. Also provides overnight respite and adult day care to assist families who need caregiver support.

The Steps House: 865-573-7152, www.stepshouse.net

Breaks the cycle of homelessness for men by providing housing while addressing legal, medical, vocational, addiction and life skill issues.

Transitional Housing Program (YWCA): 865-522-9622, www.ymcaknoxville.org

Offers a transitional home for women working toward becoming more responsible and independent.

How to Learn More

- Read a report by Roger Nooe on Knoxville's homeless population, *Homelessness in Knoxville/Knox County: A Twenty-Year Perspective 1986-2006* (East Tennessee Coalition to End Homelessness, 2006). Download the report at www.ci.knoxville.tn.us/development/homeless20yr.pdf.
- Visit <http://knoxtenyearplan.org> to learn more about the Mayors' Ten-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness, which aims to move the chronically homeless into permanent supportive housing and help them reintegrate into the community. Quarterly meetings of the Ten-Year Plan Advisory Board are open to the public.
- The Knoxville Coalition For The Homeless (865-215-2120) offers a forum for the exchange of ideas and information about homelessness. The group meets the third Tuesday of every month at 9 a.m. at the LT Ross Building, 2247 Western Avenue.
- Legal Aid of East Tennessee (865-637-0484) gives presentations to staff and clientele of local agencies regarding their work to provide assistance to homeless persons on civil legal matters, including barriers to getting and keeping housing, domestic violence issues, debt collection and consumer issues, public benefits, and elder law.
- Visit the Compassion Coalition website (www.compassioncoalition.org) for practical recommendations on how to help homeless individuals you encounter, and for a downloadable reference card of area services for homeless persons.