

Good Samaritan Outreach Ministries

Newsletter for the month of February 2023

*From: Our Place: Recovery, Wellness, Education and
Resources*

Top of the morning to you all!

First off, I would like to thank Theresa Ortega for stepping in and running Our Place while I was out on bereavement leave. Her assistance and help have been and continues to be invaluable to myself, the staff and the clients. With February being a shorter month the total number of clients that visited appears to be smaller than previous months, however, we are still averaging about 30 clients per day. Due to my absence fewer clients were assisted with ID's, Birth Certificates and other resources normally provided at Our Place. There are still a steady number of clients coming in to attend groups and client participation increases as they become more comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas. We are also really proud of the many clients who have really started pitching in to help clean up at the end of the day and help keep the place looking neat.

The goal and focus of Our Place over the last 8 months have been and continues to be to educate and support clients with Mental Health issues and/or Substance Use disorders. That being said, we are beginning to see the impact that the recovery and wellness groups are having on the Our Place population, as more clients are either seeking or inquiring about not only getting sober, but, showing an interest in getting into a treatment program.

Due to a staffing shortage during the month of February, Our Place hours of operation were Monday – Friday from 8:00am to 3:30pm (winter hours). We are temporarily closed on Saturdays until more staff come on board, which is happening in March, at which time we will start being open on Saturdays as well. With the hope of nice weather coming our spring time hours will once again be Monday to Saturday from 9:00am to 3:30pm.

Here are our numbers for the month of February:

- **Client Count: 570**
- **Targeted Peer Support Hours provided: 110**
- **Veterans Served: 6**
- **Jobs Found: 5**
- **Peer assistance for ID's, Medicaid, SNAP, Social Security and Birth Certificates - 26**
- **Emergency food packs given out: 100 (Number given out is based on the Street Outreach Program and Our Place) These packs are donated to us by Helena Food Share**

Successes:

Although a few clients have had setbacks, or a slip as we call it in recovery, all those who are clients of Our Place continue to return to start again. Recovery and wellness is an ongoing process, as they say in the 12 step programs, "Progress not Perfection". It is encouraging that those who come back do so because they state that they get something out of our groups and that they feel this is a safe environment for them where they are not judged because of who or what they are or were in many cases.

One client in particular has struggled with anger management and sobriety, not being able to stay clean for more than a day or two at a time. This particular gentleman, who does attend groups, receives peer counseling and support, has gotten sober, is really learning to control his outbursts and has gotten a job. Although we are proud of the part we have played in helping him to attain his goals, it is by his own footwork, determination and goals that he has reached this point with the support of a no judgment, safe place to go.

The program at Our Place has come to a point of rebranding due to the dual populations and grant requirements, through the Behavioral Health Disorders Division. Our Place Drop in Center is funded and structured to serve those actively working on recovery, and mental health needs... recovery, resources, and education. It is not a place for active use. People come in high, drunk, smoking weed, and with extreme untreated behavioral health behaviors. Sadly, this limits the people who need and want groups and a safe place without "triggers". Although we have seen extraordinary changes in those coming and attending groups consistently, getting jobs, starting out volunteering at Our Place and taking on pay opportunities, we'd like to say ***thank you to NAMI and CSAA***, for funds to run a pilot job training program. This population needs a progressive level of support. For example: from God's Love to Our Place, to a rebranded Drop-in Center, which would then lead to employment, in many cases to Good Sam's Thrift store or office positions. This would then lead to Housing Navigation and Assistance that collaborates to provide rental assistance through the Hunthausen grant/loan program, allowing them to get off the street and into a place of their own. As we have watched these steps play out, we have seen individuals starting to stabilize and talk about personal addictions and a life without these challenges...step by meaningful step we see lives change and hope restored to person who at one

time thought there was no hope. In the past two months, we have assisted three with jobs and one successfully housed from homelessness. As we continue to build our recovery and wellness program slowly we are seeing individuals who many thought would never become clean and sober express a desire to change. But most important to these successes is that our 9:30 and 1:30 groups are full! It's safe to say a community is developing and lives are changed with peer support-client and staff peers. –Theresa Ortega an outside observer.

Peer Support and Case Management: Though not professional counselors or case managers, we continue to assist clients with paperwork, such as: getting ID's, Birth Certificates, Social Security Cards, as well as work with clients to attain SNAP, Medicaid and Social Security. The goal of the Peer Supporter is to assist clients by sharing our lived experience that they know that someone sympathizes and empathizes with their situation and that recovery is possible. Another positive role of the peer support specialist is it shows people who are just starting out on their recovery journey is that there is hope, hope that it does get better.

Our place continues to work with other agencies in the pursuit of improving the lives of those in need of recovery or who are in recovery, many of whom are homeless. These agencies include but are not limited to: Boyd Andrew, Rimrock, MCDC, Many Rivers, AWARE, FUSE, Instar Community Services and the Montana State Hospital.

Continued Success Story:

In a previous newsletter I talked about one of our clients who had a desire to get clean after coming to the groups offered at Our Place. Once she was clean, she was the first person to take advantage of the pilot program we were offering at Our Place through the NAMI and CSAA funding program. I remember getting a call from her after she received her first paycheck, she was crying with joy saying she had not had that much money in her hand in almost five years. She proceeded to tell me how grateful she was that we believed in her and was thinking of being able to finally make repairs to her van. As of this writing this amazing woman has been promoted within the Good Samaritan organization to being the new full-time receptionist at GSM. She has moved out of her car and now has an apartment. She continues to grow and blossom in leaps and bounds. She has become such a valuable asset to our organization, proving that there is hope. It is stories like this that we strive to achieve.

STREET OUTREACH

A CONTRACT WITH EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT

Hello again Helena. What a wonderful gift it is to work in our community. And what a gift it is to work with so many beautiful community members. Sadly, far too many are faced with obstacles in obtaining and securing available and affordable housing.

We are finally reaching the end of winter.....hopefully. Winter months pose many difficult challenges to those that are living unsheltered. God's Love has done a tremendous job in providing a warm place for many to sleep during these cold winter months. Thank you!!

Our Place has been hopping!! Alton, Tina, and Theresa have done a magnificent job in serving our critical population. Our Place remains committed to supporting individuals working on recovery from mental health and substance use. Our Place continues to develop programs which support that vision.

While there seem to be a growing list of challenges for individuals experiencing homelessness, the month of February was a month of several victories. In the month of February, with the help of several community partners, we were able to assist three unsheltered clients in securing permanent housing. As well, four individuals living on the streets made the decision to address their substance use and were able to secure beds in treatment facilities. Two of these individuals completed inpatient treatment and are now housed in sober living facilities. Amazing!!

As the Street Outreach Coordinator for Good Samaritan Ministries, both the unsheltered individuals and I are dependent on our community providers and the generosity of those that continue to give. Thank you for all that you do.

A special thank you to Alton and Tina at Our Place. Another special thank you to the entire Good Samaritan team. It is such a joy to work for an organization that's purpose is to serve those in need.

And lastly, thank you to our community partners who all work tirelessly to meet the needs of all. Pureview, St. Peter's, United Way, Boyd Andrews, Colman Community Services, Helena Food Share, God's Love, Office of Public Assistance, Salvation Army, Instar Community Services, YWCA, Helena Housing, VOA, Many Rivers Whole Health, AWARE.....and the list goes on. It really is a team.

Mark Nay-Street Outreach Coordinator

MARK NAY

ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR

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Approximately 57 individuals/families of the community were given financial assistance through the Assistance Ministry at the Good Samaritan Ministries (GSM). The types of assistance given to these clientele consist of mostly financial assistance. The types of financial assistance include. rental, bus tickets, auto repairs, phone, phone cards, daycare costs, transitional housing,

treatment, and motel funding for temporary stays. Other types of assistance given by the assistance coordinator/receptionist consist of clothing, furniture, and house-hold items. Rental assistance is provided to those who are actively facing housing eviction. This helps to prevent homelessness and create stability in their lives. A total of six bus tickets were issued to help the individual get to a treatment center for substance recovery and to receive professional treatment. The remaining bus tickets provided, were to help people who needed to leave Helena, where they have the option of living with family or friends in which is verified by GSM staff. Motel assistance is provided for a temporary shelter option. Motel assistance is only given for a short-term stay ranging between 2-5 days. This allows people to have a warm and safe place to stay temporarily while they create a stabilization plan with GSM as well as other community partners in the Helena area. GSM also receives a grant through Lewis and Clark County Human Services to help those getting released from a hospital needing a few more days of a clean place to recuperate.

The assistance coordinator has helped to relieve stress as well as help to stabilize many who had few resources and/or options for sustainability. The assistance coordinator can only accept walk-ins for clothing, furniture, and house-hold items. All other assistance needs to be scheduled by Ara Babcock or the GSM receptionist. They can contact the GSM at 406-442-0780 or ara@goodsamministries.org to schedule an appointment and/or for more information.

ARA BABCOCK

HOUSING NAVIGATION

A CONTRACT WITH CITY OF HELENA & LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

FEBRUARY 2023

A total of five clientele were able to secure permanent housing within the month of February with the help of the Housing Navigation Program (HNP). Three families consisted of females who are either currently pregnant or have a newborn infant. One family had been living in a temporary shelter for almost a month waiting for an available rental unit to open with a property management company they had been approved with. Two single individuals were either elderly and/or had a documented disability. They were both staying at a temporary shelter. The two single individuals are now in their own home and can maintain it long-term due to it being income-based housing. They were all able to get furniture and household assistance at the Good

Samaritan Ministries (GSM) to help reduce the overall cost of moving expenses due to the assistance programs available.

The HNP provides community outreach every Thursday from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM located at Our Place at the Community Resources Group. The Housing Navigator can accept walk-ins and appointments to help people who do not have transportation to the GSM store located at 3067 N. Montana Ave Helena, MT 59601. There have been several people staying at the God's Love shelter nearby to Our Place, who are employed and having a challenging time finding stable permanent housing. Many of the people being seen by the HNP are struggling to maintain their shelter due to the increased rental market and a decrease of hours at their work due to the pandemic and the variables it has presented to be challenging.

The HNP receives several referrals during the month of February for people in the Helena community needing housing navigation resources and help. Some community partners include but are not limited to God's Love, Our Place, Boyd Andrew, Pureview Health Care, St. Peter's Health, Family Promise, and the Rocky Mountain Development Council Head Start Program. The HNP stays with the client until they have found suitable and permanent housing, unlike other housing programs in the Lewis and Clark County. Lasting community partnerships help to create a community of connection and stability.

SHANNON DINSDALE – HOUSING NAVIGATOR