

Good Samaritan Outreach Ministries

Newsletter for the month of March 2023

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

Hello to all our friends, neighbors, and supporters,

It is hard to believe that a quarter of the new year is already gone. Here at Our Place, we have been busy and continue to grow and improve our program. First off I would like to welcome Ramah McDonald-Vulles as the new Peer Support Specialist here at Our Place. We look forward to the knowledge and lived experiences she brings. I want to thank Ramah personally for jumping right in and taking the bull by the horns, so to speak, bringing innovative ideas and concepts that will allow us to grow and expand Our Place and its mission to reach to so many clients dealing with a myriad of issues. I would also like to thank Kayla Morris, Supervisor of Community Based Services of St. Peter's Health, and the students from Carroll College for bringing in the focus group and speaking with our clients. We were also honored to be visited by Dr. Kyle Moore of St. Peter's Health group. Dr. Moore works in addiction medicine and came to see our program and tour the facility. A sincere thank you to the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) students for coming in to learn about Our Place and getting some firsthand experience in speaking with many of our unsheltered population. We continue to work with and welcome one on one interaction with Lea Wetzel, CBHPSS and Bill Deavel, CBHPSS from Montana Peer Network. We were also incredibly happy to have Emily McVey, Executive Director for United Way of the Lewis and Clark County area, come and present to our clients who and what United Way does for the community.

Mark, Ara, Ramah, Theresa and Myself and Housing Navigation were extremely pleased and honored to be able to have the opportunity to present our programs to Amanda Casey, from Senator Jon Testor's office. Amanda was extremely interested in not only what our Outreach Ministries do, but also, wanted to know about our struggles and the difficulties that those we serve face on a regular basis. Thank you so much Amanda for taking the time out of your busy schedule to interact with us. We, the Good Samaritan Outreach Ministries team were very appreciative of the opportunity to present our programs at March's Hometown Helena meeting. Many leaders from the community were there given a synopsis of each of our programs, the work we do and an idea of the number of clients helped by our programs. Again, we want to thank Hometown Helena for having us and Emily McVey of United Way for leading the meeting.

Here are the numbers for the month of March:

- **Client Count: 681**
- **Targeted Peer Support Hours Provided: 149**
- **Veterans Served: 10**
- **Peer Assistance for ID's/Drivers License, Medicaid, SNAP, Social Security Cards and Benefits, and Birth Certificates: 14**
- **Emergency Food Packs given out: 90 (Number given out is based on the Street Outreach Program and Our Place) These packs are donated to us by Helena Food Share.**

Successes:

Many of the clients that we assist in our programs come from various backgrounds and walks of life. Unfortunately, many of our unsheltered struggle with mental health issues and/or substance use issues, often times using substances to self-medicate undiagnosed mental health issues. For many of these occurrences they become trapped in a system that has yet to catch up with the rest of the medical field. One of our longtime clients was just such a case. This person had been in and out of the ER and the VA Hospital, often losing his housing due to issues related to his mental health, thus causing him to end up living on the street. Many of us had collaborated with this person for quite some time, the team consisted of Ara Babcock, Assistance Coordinator and Mark Nay, Street Outreach Coordinator from Good Samaritan, Anthony Snell, Case Manager at the VA Hospital, Ramah McDonald-Vulles, CBHPSS and me, Alton Talley, CBHPSS Program Coordinator at Our Place. We worked together over many months to get this client the assistance he needed, this person was unable to care for himself so far that he could not even perform many of his activities of daily living, also known as ADL's, was unable to manage his medication, (which often times resulted in substance use), had nutritional issues, etc. Due to the persistence of the team and with help from Helena Police Department, I am happy to say that this client is no longer on the street and has been placed in a long-term care program that will help to meet all his needs.

Here at Our Place, we continue to strive to grow and improve our recovery, wellness and resource program. At times it seems as if what we teach is landing on deaf ears, we are rewarded when a client who has been coming since the inception of our new program announce to us that after having listened to our life experiences and words of encouragement during group they are going into treatment. We had one such client do just that. This particular young lady was often in groups, listening to and participating in the various activities offered here. Many times, she would come in, sometimes after a few days, unhappy and upset with herself because she had wanted to get clean and sober yet found that she had slipped. Each time she was welcomed back with open arms and encouraged to come back and keep going, just loving her where she was. This person had been unsheltered for years, being stuck in the vicious cycle of substance use. Several times she planned to go into treatment, but, at the last minute would disappear the day she was to leave, due to the fear of not just the unknown, but the fear of facing the pain of traumas from her past. She kept working with Mark Nay, our Street Outreach Coordinator and Erica Durham, CBHPSS of Colman Community Services and with the assistance of Marvin Colman from Colman Community Services, completed her Chemical Dependency Evaluation and went into treatment. She is currently doing well in the treatment program, and we look forward to working with her to start putting the rest of her life together when she gets out.

Peer Support and Case Management: Although we here at Our Place are not professional counselors or licensed therapists, we do have many years of life experience in recovery. Here at Our Place our years of experience allow us to understand firsthand what our clients are going through. The situations that each of us has been through may not be exactly the same, however, the feelings and issues are extremely similar allowing us to empathize and sympathize with each

individual that comes through our door. Our Place staff continue to love and support each individual regardless of where they are in their life or recovery process. This I have been told is something very rare for many of them, especially those of our unsheltered clients. Here they are given a sense of value, a place where staff know their names and take the time to learn their stories without judgement, even accepting them when they have slipped. Many tell us this is one of the many reasons they continue to return, we care for and treat them as our equals.

As we strive to better serve people in the community, I would like to recognize and applaud the other organizations who have stepped up and joined with us, recognizing that each of us, although separate entities can only achieve success when we work together. All of us see that the only way to truly assist those in need is when we put aside our desire for individual recognition and join hands to provide better services to those whom we serve. These agencies include, but are not limited to: St. Peter's Health, FUSE, Boyd Andrew, Helena Indian Alliance, Many Rivers, AWARE, MCDC, Rimrock, Colman Community Services, the Montana State Hospital and many others who often work behind the scenes to help improve lives of individuals. I would like to just say thank you again to all of you for the time and hours you have committed to the betterment of Helena.

Again, I would like to thank businesses and partners in the community for their time and donations to Our Place. As we continue to provide services and seek new ways to incentivize our program, we ask for the continued assistance of community businesses to provide donations to Our Place. We continue to seek items such as: gift cards to local stores and businesses so that clients can purchase food and personal items, such as: shoes (as many of our clients walk many miles a day), tents and sleeping bags, gift cards to area restaurants, small gift baskets that would contain items such as gloves, hats, handwarmers, socks, nail kits, deodorant, etc. Another area we are always seeking assistance with are items for our coffee cart, such as: coffee, sugar, creamer, Splenda, hot cocoa, and spoons/stir sticks. Again, thank you to each and every one of you for your continued support and contributions.

If anyone has questions or would like to know more about Our Place please feel free to contact me.

Alton Talley, Jr. CBHPSS

Program Coordinator -Our Place

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STREET OUTREACH A CONTRACT WITH EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT

Hello again Helena, Mt, and hello community partners. As the weather warms, and as MERA is ending, we are starting to see a slow increase in the unsheltered population in and around the Helena area. Lack of affordable housing options continues to be a significant barrier to finding housing placement for our unsheltered populations. Housing lists are full and wait lists are long. With that being said, I am proud to be part of Good Samaritan Ministries and proud to work with our community partners in seeking solutions for a growing population in need of help.

In March, Street Outreach served **47 unsheltered clients** assisting in a wide range of needs including clothing, tents, sleeping bags, hygiene, food, ID replacement, Medicaid/Food Stamps, and connection to a wide range of services within the Helena community.

Our Street Outreach program was able to collaborate with other local providers to help 4 unsheltered clients get to various inpatient treatment facilities and help 3 clients find permanent housing placement.

Street Outreach is in constant need of donations. Common items needed to support those living on the streets include sleeping bags, blankets, tents, clothing, SOCKS!!!!, any older camping gear collecting dust. I can find a use for about anything. As spring cleaning is upon us, please consider the needs of our unsheltered.

Feel free to contact me with any concerns, questions, or client referrals. I am grateful to help.

Mark Nay
Street Outreach Coordinator
Good Samaritan Ministries
406-558-9946

ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR

FUNDED BY GOOD SAMARITAN MINISTRIES SERIES 900 LLC

Good Samaritan's assistant, ministry has been moving like crazy through March. The need in our community is great, and we are only seeing more and more need as each day passes. The struggles coming through our door range from the most severe cases of homelessness to those of families who were normally stable, but until recently, the rising costs of inflation have caused the need of many to seek new resources, from those that don't normally seek or need to ask for assistance.

We were able to assist a single mother and her five-year-old daughter get into a new apartment with five days left before her section 8 voucher would have expired. After being homeless for over a year and looking everywhere for housing, staying on multiple couches and living a life of homelessness, which is so difficult when you have a small child, the mother found an apartment that was available. Our assistance coordinator has worked in the past with that landlord and made a call to him to advocate for her client. As it Happens, he had just gotten another call from a tenant who is vacating his apartment. And with only five days to go on her voucher, everything worked so smoothly, and the voucher was granted for her apartment. With all of our clients'

belongings in storage units in East Helena. We reached out in collaboration with Instar services, which is a facility that houses men in their recovery journey. I 10 of their men living in the transitional facility came on a Sunday afternoon at 4 PM or and had all of her belongings from the storage unit to her apartment and inside of her apartment in three hours! Upon seeing 10 guys there to help her move, tears ran down her cheeks in absolute gratitude. And her new life journey begins.

Our assistance coordinator would like to thank the Helena community in all collaboration endeavors. It has been incredible working with the other entities in Helena to help those in need more efficiently. Together we can get each other through these challenging times and treat everyone with the dignity and respect we all deserve in life.

ARA BABCOCK

Assistance Coordinator

HOUSING NAVIGATION

A CONTRACT WITH CITY OF HELENA & LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

We would like to welcome Denise Mergenthaller as our newest team member. Denise is taking on the role of Marketing Coordinator, she will also be training in Housing Navigation. However, due to staffing issues Housing Navigation will be suspended starting Friday, April 28, 2023. We look forward to working with you Denise and all that you bring to Good Samaritan Ministries.