



WORD ON THE STREET

OPPORTUNITY HOUSE NEWSLETTER



VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION

Word on the street is that we've had visits from amazing volunteers during this quarter. We are extremely grateful for your support and we'd like to show it! In this edition, you'll find numbers that paint the picture of the need in our community and the good work being done by volunteers and our team to address it. We are growing as an agency and with that comes a few good changes. Welcome to Word On The Street!

WHAT'S NEW?

OPPORTUNITY HOUSE: THE PIVOTAL POINT

VOLUNTEERS HAVE BEEN AWESOME DURING THE PANDEMIC

END OF THE QUARTER REVIEW

THE PIVOTAL POINT FOR THE RECENTLY RELEASED

BY LAURA TOLBERT, NURSE

Opportunity House has been working in partnership with Cabarrus County, City of Concord, City of Kannapolis, Atrium Health, Daymark Recovery Services, Cardinal Innovations, AYA House, Rowan Cabarrus Community College, NC Works Career Center, Cabarrus Health Alliance and other community providers to create a plan to streamline services for individuals recently released from jail and prison to help with reintroduction into productive society and reducing recidivism. We call this process “Re-entry,” and it also applies to individuals being released from mental health and rehabilitation facilities.

Because of our location, the services we already provide (meals, clothing, hygiene, laundry), and case manager on site, Opportunity House is the ideal agency for first contact to meet critical needs.

We are able to refer for medical and mental health care, substance use counseling and rehab, education and employment support, and housing. We have fluid relationships with agencies to be able to expedite these services on their behalf. At Opportunity House, we want to make sure we care for the physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of everyone we serve, and this program is one way we are able to do that well.

To better serve individuals recently released, Cabarrus County Detention Center will, in the near future, institute a peer counseling service for inmates while they are still in jail. The Peer Counselors are provided through S&H Adult and Youth Services and will meet with inmates before release to start working to reduce barriers to success. They will then continue to follow them after release to support them as they navigate their re-entry process.

Some key partners are AYA House, RCCC, and the Stepping Up Program. AYA House is transitional housing for individuals post release from correctional and rehabilitation facilities who are in need of a supported, sober living environment. They help connect their residents to education at RCCC, employment and sobriety support groups. RCCC provides programs, some at no cost, for certifications in areas such as manufacturing, truck driving, landscaping and construction. For those who qualify, the Stepping Up Program provides services to help develop a transition plan following release from incarceration and post release services to reduce recidivism.

We are already making these referrals! Last month alone, we connected 5 individuals to services, and are anticipating great outcomes. Having these services available and encouraging participants in God’s love as we make these connections really helps to bolster self-confidence and a feeling that someone believes in them, despite their past. If you are interested in joining us in this mission, please contact Laura at nurse@opphouse.net. There are many ways we can surround these individuals with God’s love to keep them moving forward in their lives.

THE BEST VOLUNTEERS!

Our volunteers have been nothing short of amazing during the pandemic. They understand that the need is now greater than ever and have stepped up to the challenge.



Volunteers from Elevation Church and Factory Church preparing breakfast during Love Week

The last week in July capped off this year's LOVE WEEK from Elevation Church. We were delighted to have them and Factory Church visit us on Tuesday and Thursday morning to help prepare and serve breakfast.



Volunteers serving meals during Love Week

END OF THE QUARTER REVIEW

BY THAD BROWN

In the Spring edition of Word On The Street, Jim wrote about all the changes that were confronting us as a result of the Covid-19 virus and how Opportunity House was still open and would remain so. Those changes and protocols are still with us today. Nothing has changed. Opportunity House is open and I thought now would be a good time to share our 2nd Quarter numbers:

1370 LUNCHES	1287 BREAKFASTS
856 SHOWERS	286 NURSE REFERRALS
259 TAKE OUT LUNCHES	229 CLOTHING CLOSET VISITS
221 LAUNDRY LOADS	115 BAGS OF FOOD
76 NURSE ASSESSMENTS	18 COMPUTER LAB VISITS

We have much to be thankful for. Without you, we couldn't do what we do. On behalf of the staff of Opportunity House I want thank you for allowing all of this to take place. Thank you for your time, your donations, and your prayers.

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

BY THAD BROWN, DIRECTOR

We have been giving you a great quantity of numbers that help to measure what we do here at Opportunity House. I think it would be a great time to tell you "the why." First of all, unless you look for people experiencing homelessness, you won't see them. To the average person they are invisible. They prefer it that way. It's less trouble and hassle for them. But please realize, they're there. Just because you don't see them doesn't mean they're not there. We have had 214 unduplicated individuals experiencing homelessness come through our doors. That puts us between 800-1000 unduplicated people experiencing homelessness for the year, our steady average for the last few years, just in Cabarrus County.

It seems like homelessness just happens, but it doesn't. There are root causes to homelessness. Some more whys: alcoholism and addiction, mental and physical health issues, domestic violence, past criminal records and parole issues, need for job training, and the key problem to all of homelessness, the lack of affordable housing.

The why for all of us here at Opportunity House is this: God has called each of us in a unique way to serve individuals in need. God compels us through his Spirit and what we do is for God's glory, not our own.

Our job is to keep people alive and healthy until we can help them to find the resources, medical and support agencies needed to help each individual solve their own combination of root causes that they are struggling with. We need your help.

EXCITING NEW CHANGES

BY KIMANI VARNER

We are ecstatic in announcing new changes headed your way! For starters, we're updating the Opportunity House website. It is important for our website to show who we are and how you partner with us in helping the Cabarrus County community. As we move toward the future, we'd like to share the impact that our volunteers, donors, partners, and supporters have made in the lives of so many.

CHECK OUT
THE NEW

OPP
HOUSE.NET



Our new site will include success stories from Opportunity House Guests as well as stories from our volunteers. We've added a blog from our director, Thad Brown, that delivers a message of hope weekly for all of those in need. We call them, "Thoughts from Thad." And we've added and updated our safety protocols which help to keep our facility healthy during the pandemic.

Now, we're working on ways to help you to show off your "Opp House" love in the community.

SAFETY FIRST

That's right! Just because it's a pandemic, doesn't mean that the need for great volunteers has diminished. The need is greater now more than ever and we've taken extra precautions to make sure that our volunteers are safe. We were happy to have members from Factory Church come in and serve a chef cooked breakfast for Opportunity House Guests.



GET INVOLVED

Donations are currently being accepted and the greatest needs are: tents, canned goods (with pop tops), sleeping bags and toiletries.

Continue to help us serve individuals and families in our community.

Thank You!

Because of your support, our neighbors in need are provided the opportunity to access daily chef prepared meals, a safe space to shower and wash clothing, vital access to healthcare, and resources needed to find jobs and housing.

Your generosity also helps to provide clothing and canned goods for individuals and families who've been put out of work due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Thanks to you, **Opportunity House** is able to meet the needs of several members in Cabarrus County, providing 'hope for a better tomorrow' and the assurance that there are people in this community who care.

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