

FALL 2020



WORD ON THE STREET

OPPORTUNITY HOUSE NEWSLETTER



A MESSAGE OF THANKSGIVING FROM JIM

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ (Thessalonians 5:18 NIV)

This has to be the strangest Thanksgiving ever. We find ourselves engulfed in a great pandemic, children are not able to attend school, churches remain closed, and much of our economy is at a standstill. The developments of the last nine months have understandably placed a great strain on many of our neighbors.

WHAT'S NEW?

OUR CLOTHING CLOSET HAS
A NEW LOOK

INTRODUCING THE
CABARRUS COUNTY
COMMUNITY HOUSING
PROGRAM

FALL QUARTER NUMBERS

JIM HOOD CONT'D

But even in the midst of all of these circumstances, we at Opportunity House are extremely thankful for all of the blessings that we have received. We are thankful that we are able to provide critical services to those in our community who are often overlooked. We have remained open and have continued to provide two meals each weekday, showers, laundry, clothing, and (especially important right now), healthcare services through Laura Tolbert, our Faith Community Nurse. Because of these services, our neighbors who are experiencing homelessness or struggling, as well as all of us who live in the Concord and Kannapolis area, are healthier and safer.

We are thankful that we are COVID-free. Because of the strict protocols that we have implemented and because of the compliance of our guests, volunteers, and staff, we have not experienced a single positive case.

We are thankful for the faithful support of all of you. Churches, businesses, and individuals have stepped up and have provided a bounty of food, supplies, clothing, and financial support. In particular, I want to give a shout-out to our City of Concord governmental leaders. They recognized the critical role that Opportunity House is playing in keeping our community safe, and they have provided significant ongoing support. In this time when so many are complaining about the government, we are blessed that we can brag on our City leaders.

Finally, I am thankful to God, who watches over us, and provides all of our needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. I know that the burdens of this pandemic have not been borne equally. Some of our neighbors have suffered more than others. With your continued help, we at Opportunity House will strive to continue to minister to those in greatest need. We thank you for all that you have already provided, and for all of your support in the future.



CHANGES IN THE CLOTHING CLOSET

Our Clothing Closet looks different and it's thanks to some pretty amazing volunteers! They have been great with sorting, staging, and organizing clothing and shoes for Opportunity House Guests.



Volunteers Sharon, Connie, Hannah, and Dez have gone the extra mile to organize clothes



CABARRUS COUNTY COMMUNITY HOUSING PROGRAM

BY LAURA TOLBERT

We are so excited to introduce you to our latest program at Opportunity House! We call it the Cabarrus County Community Housing Program, it was a natural extension of our Re-entry Program. We have partnered with AYA House for housing and administration of the program, Cooperative Christian Ministry for providing facilities and programming, S&H Youth and Adult Services for providing mental health/substance use and Peer Support services, and many other community partners that help to ensure success for our participants.



The purpose of our program is to reduce homelessness and end cyclical homelessness in Cabarrus County by combining both public and private community resources. We believe this can be achieved by identifying the root causes of homelessness, creating and implementing a plan to address these causes, providing support needed to sustain housing once obtained, and maintaining post-graduation follow-up.

In creating this program, we have met individually with each of our partners, closing the gap between agencies to ensure seamless navigation for our participants. This is a community-wide program, drawing on the strengths of each partner to best meet the needs of all participants.

We have feedback and evaluation steps in place to assure care is consistent throughout the process. We have begun to reach out to landlords and rental agencies to create relationships in the search for affordable housing. We hope to build on these relationships as our program grows. Currently, there are NO Transitional Housing sites for single women who are justice involved or coming out of treatment in Cabarrus County. We are seeking locations to offer our program to women. We hope to remedy this situation with our program.

The program includes providing for physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health assessment (including evaluation of substance use) with referral, treatment, and support as warranted. We have participants in our Apartment Preparedness Certification class, which offers education on apartment living skills (led by RCCC Occupational Therapy Assistant students), financial/budgeting, communication skills, and from the R3 program, soft skills (to improve employability). They will take part in the Getting Ahead in a Just Getting by World workshop. Trauma Informed Therapy group and Substance Use group will be offered weekly, and hopefully soon, twice weekly. Participants will be offered job training at RCCC for a variety of certifications to move from job to career.

Probably the single most important aspect of our program is Peer Support.

Each participant will have a Peer Support Specialist (PSS) to help hold them accountable, help keep them moving forward, and guide them through the process of coming out of homelessness, addiction, and/or incarceration.

We are seeking grant funding to be able to provide these services for up to a year for each individual in our program. There is so much good research about the successes of individuals supported by a PSS, we are really excited about how this will impact the lives of our participants.

The Cabarrus County Community Housing Program is a collaborative community partnership initiative that involves several agencies throughout the county. **For more information on how to get involved and to support this program, please contact Laura Tolbert at nurse@opphouse.net.**

WE ARE ROCKING!

BY THAD BROWN, DIRECTOR

As we look at our numbers for the 3rd quarter in comparison with our October numbers one thing is certain, we are rocking. Our **total clients for the month of October is up by 42%** versus our numbers for July, August and September. **Breakfasts are up 28%** (176), **lunches-in up 16%**, **lunches-to-go up a whopping 93%**. Laundry is maxed at about **100 loads a month**. Our **Clothing Closet activity is up 23%**.



This number typically increases from October through the end of February

Showers are steady with around **330-350 per month**. Oh, and a new endeavor for us, weekend food bags passed out on Fridays. These are designed to have enough food for a person to feed them through the weekend. We are averaging **25 bags per Friday or 100 bags per month**.

With numbers like these all we can say is thank you. All of us here at Opportunity House are thankful for your participation in our ministry. We need you. Whatever your contribution, thank you. We appreciate and love you all. We are praying for you, just like we are praying for our clients.

CURRENT NEEDS

Tents, sleeping bags, backpacks, gently used coats, hoodies, sweat shirts, insulated clothing, ski bibs, jeans, and underwear, all sizes, men and women. Boxers only for men please.

We are still trying to maintain our covid bubble with protocols. So, any extra personal protective equipment, paper towels, toilet paper, cleaners and lysol type products are a blessing as well.

This Thanksgiving, as you celebrate with those you love, please know that you are loved and appreciated by all of us here at Opportunity House. We wish you and yours, a safe, happy and blessed Thanksgiving.

Sincerely,
Thad Brown
Executive Director

WINTER CLOTHES NEEDED

It's fall y'all! That means winter is right around the corner. As the weather changes and temperatures continue to drop, staying warm becomes extremely important for individuals currently experiencing homelessness.

If you are shopping for new winter clothes and shoes, please consider donating new or gently used items to Opportunity House!



GET INVOLVED

There are many ways that you can help our neighbors in need. Whether by volunteerism or donating, we are always happy to receive assistance! For more ways to get involved, please visit our website.

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.

72 Corban Ave., SW Concord, NC 28025

PH: 704-786-4020

www.opphouse.net