

United Methodist Open Door Homeless Resource and Referral Center

Access to Homeless Resources and Safety

Wichita, KS— October 7, 2021 — In response to the events that happened this week regarding the removal of homeless encampment sites by the United Methodist Open Door building located at 2nd and Topeka, Open Door would like to state that first and foremost, living on the streets is not easy and can be extremely dangerous. Homeless individuals and families are vulnerable to violence and bad behavior from others. The safety of our homeless friends is of the utmost importance to our organization; robberies, selling drugs and violence against the homeless is not tolerated. In recent weeks we have learned from our partners at the Wichita Police Department that violence has increased and we are deeply concerned for the safety of our homeless friends. We acknowledge that some of that violence is against the homeless-by-homeless individuals who lack untreated mental health and substance abuse disorders. The lack of acceptance to get and access for mental health and substance abuse services for these untreated illnesses is a deep concern. All homeless individuals deserve to be in a safe environment and treated with respect and dignity.

The homeless are welcome to access services at United Methodist Open Door's Homeless Resource and Referral Center, Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Our partners at Sedgwick County ComCare are on site to help those experiencing mental health issues. Agency wide, United Methodist Open Door served over 21,260 unduplicated individuals through our six community programs with the help from volunteers, 19 staff members, and 20 board of directors.



Homelessness is a very complex issue, not just for Wichita, but is a growing national crisis. When you factor in the impact of Covid-19 it is more devastating. (According to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD)

“We are truly all in this together. Working together to help our homeless friends is how we will address this growing issue, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.” said Deann Smith, Executive Director at United Methodist Open Door. Open Door collaborates with many partner agencies including but not limited to: Sedgwick County, City of Wichita, Wichita P.D/H.O.T team, other homeless service providers, churches, volunteers, and many stakeholders in our community to address the needs of the homeless, including the chronic homeless. We welcome all in the community who are passionate about helping the homeless to join us in helping them. We have many volunteer opportunities, such as providing a hot meal or sack lunch.

United Methodist Open Door Impact

In 2020 Open Door provided basic need services to 1,686 unduplicated individuals at the Homeless Resource Center. The day center provides a safe place for the homeless to go during the day, to escape the inclement weather conditions, access case management, access to showers, restrooms, laundry facilities, lunch, snacks, water, on-site medical treatment, assistance to housing for the chronic homeless, hygiene kits and help to provide referrals to overnight shelters and mental health and addiction services. We also refer the homeless and those experiencing poverty to our Klothes Kloset program to access free clothing, socks, shoes, coats, blankets, towels, and small household items. Through partner agencies, Open Door provides offers on-site



History

Founded in 1965, United Methodist Open Door (Open Door) has been serving the homeless community and those experiencing poverty for over 56 years with basic needs through six community programs by focusing on food, clothing and shelter. These programs include: Homeless Resource Center, a day shelter, Vision Quest homelessness prevention program, Family Rapid Re-housing, The Klothes Kloset, Community Food Ministry, and Commodity Supplemental Food Program that serves food to seniors in 11-Counties. To learn more about our services, volunteer opportunities, and community needs for our programs please visit our website.

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United Methodist Open Door is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization. *Our mission is to provide basic human needs, promote positive life changes. Restore hope and protect dignity.*

For more information, press only:

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