



Times of Harvest

Fall 2016
Newsletter

Harvest House Missions 381 N. Oregon St. PO Box 877
Ontario, OR 97914

www.harvesthousemissions.org

ATTENTION:

Meeting to Discuss Possible Solutions for Continuation of Meal Site and Day Shelter

When: Tuesday October 25th at 12:00 noon OR 5:30 pm
Choice of two times to accommodate those wanting to attend

Where: Harvest House Missions 381 N. Oregon St. Ontario

Discussion: Brainstorming ideas to keep Meal Site and Day Shelter Open

Who: Anyone interested in this topic and the implications of ending these services

Light Refreshments Served



Pumpkins from SRCI

Utah's New Program May End Homelessness

Despite drug treatments, mental therapy, and outright [criminalization of homelessness](#), the number of homeless people continues to grow each year across the country. Utah seems to have found the answer.

In 2005, Governor Jon Huntsman launched “Housing First,” a program brainstormed by his predecessor, Governor Olene Walker. The program took 17 homeless people in Salt Lake City and put them in apartments. The homeless could live in them permanently. The only condition was that they had to be



good tenants, but no other strings were attached. The new tenants weren't charged [rent](#). The former homeless were given caseworkers who were to help them become self-sufficient, but if the homeless failed the treatment programs, they could still live in the apartments. At first glance, Housing First looks like a welfare program that rewards people for being homeless. Housing First is a welfare program – but at least it's a welfare program which saves money. According to a state study in 2005, Utah spent \$16,670 per homeless person for emergency services and jail time while it only costs \$11,000 to house each of them, a \$5,670 difference per

person.

More importantly, Housing First is actually working. The program started in 2005 with 17 people. In 2012, the program expanded to 2,000 people. Utah's officials estimate that there has been a 74% reduction in the number of homeless people living in Utah's streets. The state predicts that chronic homelessness will end by 2015. If Utah does solve its homeless problem, it would be the first state in the country to do so.

If Utah is giving away free housing, what incentives do people have to rent or purchase housing for themselves? First, about 30% of the former homeless have found work to pay for the apartments they live in. Second, the apartments only have a bed, a sink, and a bathroom.

Sometimes they will have a table or a chair, but these apartments are hardly the life of luxury. If people want a condo or a mansion, they still have to work for it. Finally, only people who have a [disability](#) and have been homeless for over a year or who have had four “episodes” of homelessness will qualify for the program.

Utah's program of housing homeless people has been so successful that Wyoming is considering adopting the program. Housing First marks a fundamental change in how conservative states view homelessness. In solving “chronic homelessness,” Utah is treating homelessness like a disease rather than a social status, the same way we treat alcoholism as a disease today. This is surprising, given that Midwestern states like Utah and Wyoming often treat welfare programs with disdain. (Article reprinted from <http://lawblog.legalmatch.com/2014/01/02/solution-for-homelessness/>

If you would like even more information about this program, please consult the larger article at:

<http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2015/02/housing-first-solution-to-homelessness-utah>

Misconceptions about the Homeless:

Misconception #1- "The homeless are those people you see pushing shopping carts down the street"

I currently have 17 literally homeless young people (ages 16-24) on my caseload. 60% of these youth are working and 2 others are finishing their GED's. They are living on the street, in cars and in a stacks of pallets behind a local onion shed.

They have many barriers to housing that must be addressed, but lack of effort and a lifetime of bad choices is not the problem.

Misconception #2- "The homeless are just lazy". Most of Ontario's homeless are working. Many jobs are seasonal for the simple reason that with competition in the job market the homeless are some of the last to be hired. It is difficult to maintain a job when you are dirty, have no way for an employer to contact you and no transportation to work. The longer a person remains homeless, the more difficult it becomes to be employable. Many spend their days "canning" for recyclables.

Misconception #3- "The homeless are all alcoholics and drug addicts". Certainly there are segments of the homeless population who are addicts of some sort. But it is much more prevalent for the homeless to be mentally ill or developmentally delayed. Let me say that again... many of our homeless have significant cognitive delays. Some were born delayed and some have had traumatic brain injuries. Many have dual diagnoses of mental illness and delays. Alcohol and drug use is often a result of these conditions and the despair experienced due to homelessness.

Misconception #4- "They are just looking for a hand-out". While they certainly receive many things free from Harvest House Missions, most of the homeless will give the shirt off their back to someone else. They have a strong, if somewhat dysfunctional community that looks after one another and anyone else who is experiencing need. The number one problem that programs have when they get a homeless person a house or apartment is that they move others in.

Although we usually think that God destroyed Sodom due to the rampant sexual immorality of that day, this verse in Ezekial 16:49 tells a different story-

*"Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were **arrogant, overfed and unconcerned**; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen."*

Wow! Really hits home for me. God hates our indifference to the suffering of others, no matter how 'worthy' we believe they may be.

From the Director's Chair...



As I have been contemplating the possible closure of Harvest House Missions, I have really been trying to listen for the voice of God, so that I don't miss what he has to say about this situation.

God has consistently provided miracles for Harvest House since its inception. The fact that it even exists is a miracle. Lillian Titus and I had an idea to start a non-profit to help the homeless...but no experience, no expertise, and no chance of it happening if we were in charge. But it did, because God knew what he was doing.

The first Thanksgiving dinner we prepared and served had about 30 people in attendance and we had a lot of leftovers, so we decided to take them to the homeless. At that time a group was staying down by the Snake River near where Walmart stands today. We headed down there with our containers of food to see who we could feed. Although we were greeted and thanked heartily, they also warned us not to come down there alone again. One of the gentlemen showed us a 4-inch fresh scar across his neck where a mentally ill transient staying down there had tried to slit his throat.

There are numerous people who have supported Harvest House over the years and we certainly appreciate their generous donations of time, money and expertise. But there are many detractors also. Sometimes, myself and my board have a difficult time hearing negative things about our ministry. But we try to listen to valid complaints and pray and discuss those things.

But when it comes right down to it, I quote from the movie God's Not Dead 2 "I'd rather stand with God and be judged by the world, then stand by the world and be judged by God". We try to handle everything in a way that glorifies Him. So, here we are at this place and situation. I still don't know what's going to happen. But I know the One who does and that's what counts.

Renee

We have been blessed this summer and fall by the abundance of fruits and vegetables donated by some awesome gardeners. We have prepared them at every meal and have still been able to share with our neighbors! Thank you to all who donated.

Volunteers Alex and Jerry box up a donation of Butternut Squash

