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### Hope Center Agency Abstract and 2023 Program Report

The mission of Hope Center and the focus of Hope Center programs is to minimize the poverty risk factors that contribute to homelessness in Waukesha County by providing for the basic human needs for food, clothing, and simple furniture through direct services, partnerships, and community collaborations. (All services that are provided are free of charge to Waukesha County residents.)

**HISTORY:** In 2024, Hope Center celebrates **51 years of service** to people in need in Waukesha County. Hope Center was incorporated in 1987 and formerly named Cooperating Congregations of Waukesha County (1973 to 1987). Our first staff person was Rev. Lawrence Kratz; our Social Minister who administered a Good Samaritan Fund.

As Rev. Kratz counseled people he identified additional human and community needs that were not being met. Programs were added and today we have six different programs that addressing the basic needs for food, clothing, furniture and/or appliances, financial support for transportation and medical expenses.

#### **PROGRAMS:**

As established and ongoing programs the following is a brief description of each. **All programs and services are free and restricted to residents of Waukesha County** who are in low to low-middle income levels.

**Clothing Shop:** In 1989, the Clothing Shop moved from the basement of a local church and became a program of Hope Center. The Clothing Shop provides thousands of people with free quality clothing donated by supporting congregations and individuals. Guests use the Shop to stretch their budgets and cloth their families. We have everyday clothing, school clothing, and a section devoted to career type clothing. Our staff of volunteers assists our guests in selecting clothing. Basic household items and layettes for new mothers are also available.

**For the 2023 programming year a total of 2,970 unduplicated individuals made 25,733 visits to the Clothing Shop and received 7,370 articles of clothing. Additionally, 7,410 pieces of underwear and 9,720 pairs of socks were distributed. Approximately 38% of all visits were for children. 735 households received 2,449 household items and 18 layettes were distributed to new mothers.**

**Outreach Meals:** This program began in 1991 to address the issue of hunger in our community. Our guests include the homeless, those living in rooming houses or shelters, families trying to “make ends meet”, and elderly persons on fixed incomes; many of whom are physically and mentally impaired. Meals are served Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings

at Hope Center. We partner with St. Vincent de Paul, Food Pantry of Waukesha County, TEFAP, local restaurants, area congregations, and individuals to offer a hot nutritionally balanced meal three times a week. A major source of funding has been from the Waukesha County Community Development Block Grant. We feed approximately 90-100 men, women, and children at each meal. Cooperating with the Salvation Army, Waukesha residents can receive one hot, fresh, nutritious meal every day of the week. We also make our facility available to Loaves and Fishes for a Sunday meal.

**Day Center:** In conjunction with the Outreach Meal Program Hope Center maintains a Day Center. The Day Center is open Monday through Friday. During the winter season, November through April the Day Center is open 7 days a week, Monday through Sunday. Program hours are 8:00am to 4:00pm. A hearty breakfast and hot lunch are served daily. Job search assistance, medical and social assistance, as well as information and referral services are also available for those who might otherwise be socially isolated and alone.

**In 2023 the Outreach Community Meal/Day Center programs have served a total of 1,141 unduplicated guests who visited both programs 19, 540 times. Meals served during this period include 9,911 breakfasts; 9,003 lunches; and 10,318 dinners.**

**Project Move:** Identifying the need for “gently used” appliances, furniture and other household items for people that are relocating from a shelter or temporary housing, this program was re-instituted in June of 2010. Donated items are stored; inventoried; and delivered using Hope Center trucks. **The delivery of furniture and household items is an essential element in the success of Project Move. Those in need of furniture and household items are usually unable to transport the items without assistance.** Establishing a home is not only about a roof over one’s head; it is also about having a bed instead of an air mattress, a refrigerator instead of an ice chest, or a sofa instead of a lawn chair.

**During 2023 Project Move received and delivered 1,402 furniture items to 29 households.**

**Financial Assistance:**

**In 2023 841 Hope Center guests received \$23,3314 in Transportation Financial Assistance for employment and medical purposes.**

**Green Power Garden:** Each spring, along with the UW-Waukesha Extension and a host of volunteers, Hope Center plants several acres of land to raise fresh crops to be used in meals served to our guests.

**Legal Services:** Since 1990 we have partnered with Legal Action of Wisconsin to help people obtain free legal services to assist our clients with landlord-tenant questions, bankruptcy, Social Security, unemployment, and consumer issues.

**Outreach Healthcare:** Hope Center partners with various medical service providers, colleges, and universities to provide onsite services. Blood pressure checks, vaccinations and general medical information and service referrals are provided when appropriate.

**POPULATION SERVED:** Hope Center serves the homeless, W-2 participants, the physically and mentally impaired, people in recovery programs, the elderly on a fixed income and low-income families. **STAFF:** We generally employ 10 - 14 total staff with 6 being full time and the rest part time. More importantly, our programs employ hundreds of volunteers who work tirelessly to make sure the needs of our guests are met.

**COORDINATION & COLLABORATION:** Hope Center collaborates with over 125 county-wide congregations, St. Vincent de Paul, Hebron House of Hospitality, Carroll University, WCTC, Food Pantry of Waukesha County, ProHealth Care, University of Wisconsin Waukesha Extension, Waukesha County Health and Human Services, The Women’s Center, St. Joseph’s Medical Clinic, local businesses, Waukesha County Jail and Huber Facility, Salvation Army, local schools, We Energies, Waukesha Community Development Board, Interfaith Senior Services, FEMA, TEFAP, and most importantly, a multitude of individual donors and volunteers.

**VOLUNTEER & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:**

During the 2023 program year **1,120 volunteers**, students, and community service placements have provided **18,785 hours of service** to Hope Center guests.

**The measure of success for each of the programs cited above is the documentation of the number of women, men and children served by each program.** To determine this, Hope Center maintains a computer based, bar code, participant tracking system that reports duplicated/unduplicated counts; volunteer hours for each program; donations received by each program; and participant demographics by race and ethnicity.

**Community Eagle Award Winner**  
**Selected By:**



**FOREST COUNTY POTAWATOMI  
FOUNDATION**