

John Doe
123 Street
Joplin, MO 64801

TAKING BACK A STOLEN VIRTUE
JUSTICE
RECLAIMING

Join us for this annual conference where church, charity, and nonprofit leaders and volunteers learn more about the principles and practice of effective, empowering charity. This year's theme, "Reclaiming Justice: Taking Back a Stolen Virtue," will feature Dr. Larry Reed and other experts in areas of economic, historical, social, and practical justice. Seating is limited. Register now at truecharity.us/summit.

Missouri Southern State University
Tuesday and Wednesday, May 18-19
True Charity Summit: Reclaiming Justice

Each quarter, we host a graduation for Forge students as they move from one phase of the program to the next or complete it entirely. You're welcome to attend and encourage these men as they transition back into a healthy, productive life.

Upcoming Events
FORGE GRADUATION

Friday, March 26 | 7 PM | Outreach Center Chapel



Recent Events

7th Annual Evening of Hope Raises over \$70,000

Saturday, November 7 | Televised Program

Celebrate with us as our televised Evening of Hope at Home aired on 3 local TV stations and online, reaching an audience of thousands. With an online auction, campus tours, and testimonies from people with changed lives, this year's event raised more funds for the mission than ever despite the challenging circumstances.



8th Annual Empty Bowls Raises over \$35,000

Thursday, November 19 | Empire Market

With a huge assist from the Joplin Greenhouse and The Coffee Shop which provided space for 6 weeks of pre-sales, this year's Empty Bowls surpassed last year's totals. Net proceeds of over \$28,000 were divided equally among Watered Gardens and three other local non-profits: Hope Kitchen, Mission Joplin, and We Care of the Four States. All of these organizations are privately funded and offer food services to those struggling in our community.



Key Volunteer Needs

- Overnight RA's at the Outreach Center (OC)
- Hosts at Washington Family Hope Center (WFHC)
- Meal Crews for both the OC and WFHC
- Daily Assistants at the Worth Shop

flourish.
a quarterly publication from watered gardens ministries

W I N T E R 2 0 2 1



Calling the Community to #GiveBetter

Maybe you've seen one of our new billboards, or heard a radio public service announcement, or seen one on TV. All are communicating one message: Let's be wise in our approach to panhandling. Realizing this is not a problem for our city government to solve, but rather the private sector, Watered Gardens has embarked on a months-long campaign to encourage the 4-state area on ways to #GiveBetter when you see someone flying a sign on a street corner.

Not that people with signs don't have needs. It's just unlikely their real need can be met with your money. And it's not that we want a community without compassion. We just want our community to join compassion with relationship and responsibility.

We can't do all three when we just drop change into a cup. But when we #GiveBetter, we become a community that puts struggling people on a new path of hope. John is a good example. He admits his addiction forced him back to his favorite corner

with a "will work for food" sign for years until he came to faith at the mission and found new hope and a new life through real relationships.

Or like Brett, who you'll read more about inside. He described his panhandling as a form of manipulation. Thankfully, he found forgiveness and freedom from begging through the compassion and inspiration of new Christian friends.

These are real people who once flew signs but do so no longer. Their change didn't come from a cup. It came through the good

news of Jesus along with the time for challenging conversations, constant encouragement, and steadfast accountability that characterize genuine friendship.

Let's change the culture about panhandling in Joplin. When you see someone with a sign, get to know that individual or send him or her to Watered Gardens so we can. And when you have extra change or time on your hands, remember that giving to effective charities is a way to be a part of real solutions by engaging the poor and homeless relationally, responsibly, and compassionately.



NEITHER OF US WANTS ME ON THIS CORNER.





Committed to Our Vision Through Responsible Engagement

By Chris Hoyer, Director of Mission Operations

One of Stephen Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* is "always begin with the end in mind." It's a good habit of healthy ministries, too. At Watered Gardens, the end we have in mind is clear: to see the Church boldly engaged with the homeless and poor relationally, responsibly, and compassionately

Here are a few ways we are striving to be responsible both in ministry and as members of the Joplin community:

1. To promote safety, we are implementing many recommendations from a recent CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) survey and site audit completed for us by the Joplin Police Department.

2. To respect public property and business neighbors, Outreach Center Director Doug Gamble requires that clients and residents refrain from sitting or camping on the parking lot and sidewalk. Services are lost for 30 days if a second incident occurs.
3. To encourage good citizenship, mission services are restricted for those with multiple arrests or for continued panhandling.

4. To proactively love and meet needs, "Rescue Teams"

of church volunteers go out Mondays, 6-9 PM, ministering to the homeless and encouraging them to come in and off the streets.

May we never lose sight of the relational and compassionate elements of our engagement, too. They are essential to avoid misunderstanding our efforts to be responsible as anything other than an effort to love well. To learn more about our services, to volunteer at the Outreach Center, or to get involved with Rescue Teams, visit WateredGardens.org.



Know Better to Give Better

By James Whitford, Executive Director

The origin of the word "panhandler" is a mystery. It may refer to people living in a state's geographic panhandle, or derive from the Spanish "pan" meaning "bread," or simply denote the tin pan extended by a beggar on a sidewalk.

More interesting is that panhandlers don't use the term. They don't "panhandle." They "fly-a-sign." This refers to a piece of cardboard with a short message like, "Anything helps" or "Will work for food" to grab the attention of a passerby. The fact that the giver and the recipient use different terminology is itself a sign of a deeper problem: the ones who give aren't close enough to really understand the need. If they were, they would do something more meaningful and less harmful than hand cash out a window.

Harmful? Yes. Consider these words from Brett (*pictured below*), who used to fly-a-sign in Joplin before coming into our ministry. From a recorded interview, "I'd go out there... look really rough and fly a sign and get money off of people... I was manipulating people - 'will work for food' - but my main thing was to get money in my pocket so I could get a drink. They didn't know me from Adam and Eve. If they'd have



just pulled over, sat down and talked with me, they would have known better why I was doing it. You've just got to get to know a person. Am I really helping him or am I enabling him to stay in his addiction?"

It's important to have compassion for those who have less. More important, though, is to steward that compassion beyond thoughtless charity based in shallow pity. God has given us compassion to do just what Brett suggested - pull over, sit down, talk, and know better. And if we're going to give better, we've got to know better.

Thank you for joining us in this new movement of effective compassion. #GiveBetter!



Researchers Gave \$5,700 to Homeless People. Misunderstanding Ensued.

By Nathan Mayo, Membership Director for the True Charity Initiative

Headlines brimmed with optimism about the results of a study by the New Leaf Project. The Canadian study gave \$5,700 to 50 homeless people, most of whom used the cash responsibly. Nearly every news outlet concluded this was proof we should give more money directly to homeless people—be it through charity, government programs, or dropping it into their Styrofoam cups.

Unfortunately, this is a tragic misreading of the facts; a cringeworthy—and destructive—distortion of reality.

The root problem is that the study participants do not resemble the average homeless person on a street corner. Project New Leaf's website is very forthright: "Project participants were carefully screened for program eligibility to ensure the highest likelihood of success." This means they selected participants who were adults, newly homeless, citizens or legal residents, and who had low risk of mental health challenges and substance abuse.

While a typical person associates homelessness with panhandling, panhandlers are only a fraction of the

homeless and are predominantly the chronically homeless with addictions that this study did not examine. There is nothing wrong with the New Leaf Project only testing a solution on a subset of the homeless population. Situations and solutions vary from person to person. Cash transfers may work for someone in a temporary crisis and may harm someone with a chronic addiction, destructive habits, or a mental disorder. Effective charity should offer different solutions for different situations.

However, that means that the findings of the New Leaf Project offer a policy option for a tiny fraction of the homeless. Thus, the study has essentially no application to the people you see on the street corner with a cardboard sign. Nine out of ten of those people will continue in their addictions until passersby stop enabling them and start connecting them with the real help they need.

For the full op-ed originally published by RealClearPolicy.com on December 2, 2020, visit truecharity.us/category/blog/.