

2024 Annual Report



Watered Gardens

Ministries

In 1950 only 1 in 30 men between the ages of 24 and 55 were unemployed. For 75 years, that statistic, known as the labor force participation rate, has been consistently worsening. Today, about 1 in 10 men in the same age-range are not employed. In parallel with that trend has been an increase in the percentage of deep poverty – those with an annual income falling below 50% of federal poverty level. In other words, although the overall poverty level hasn't changed for more than 50 years, more of those in poverty are in deeper poverty than ever before. The clearest manifestation of this is an increase in homelessness. Indeed, the Department of Housing and Urban Development recently reported the highest homeless number since it began tracking 17 years ago.

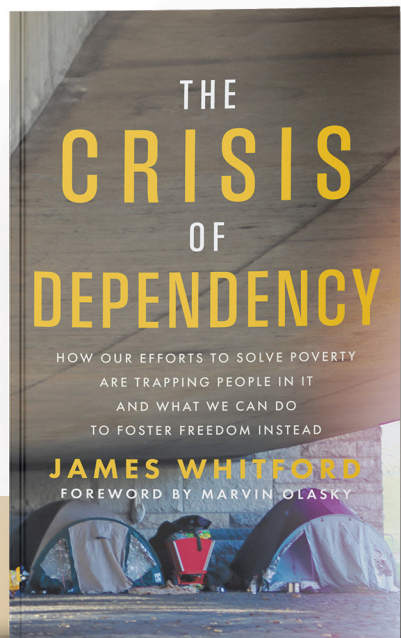
Although work is not a silver bullet to eliminate poverty or homelessness, it is the one common denominator required to escape it. No one escapes poverty without work. More than the primary route to prosperity, work establishes a sense of purpose, reawakens inherent human dignity, and restores personal agency. That's why the stories and metrics in this report point to our efforts toward helping people find a job.

Apart from work, there's only dependency. As millions today are being dissuaded from work through government and private handout charity, I believe our nation is in a crisis of dependency. It's what I titled my new book where I share from 25 years of experience at Watered Gardens revealing the dire consequences of dependency on individuals, families, and communities. I also share a route out of this American crisis through compassionate, Christ-centered, effective approaches to fighting poverty.

I am grateful for your partnership with our mission. Through our national initiative, True Charity, Watered Gardens Ministries is setting an example for ministries and nonprofits across the nation, inspiring others to transform their charity work into something that truly transforms lives. I hope you're blessed to be a part of that great work.



James Whitford, Co-Founder
& Executive Director



*Learn more about James' new
book at truecharity.us/crisis*



A front-line ministry to those needing food, clothing, and a place to lay their heads, the Outreach Center provides over 50 beds for men and women, including a respite shelter for those needing additional time to recover after leaving one of our local hospitals.



“I never lost faith, but I had lost heart. I honestly thought no one cared—until I came to Watered Gardens. God has put people and resources here to show His love. If someone wants to get better, Watered Gardens will help. I’ve found healing for my foot and my heart here.”

Jess Agan, Former Mission Guest

98

GUESTS
HELPED OUT OF
HOMELESSNESS

211

EMPLOYED
WHEN THEY LEFT
SHELTER

35

FAITH
DECISIONS
FOR CHRIST



Project Worth leverages the power of business to lift people out of poverty. We implement the principle of exchange, which affirms human dignity in our clients who learn work skills while generating revenue for the ministry through goods made and sold.



"I would pick Watered Gardens over any other place I could go. The amount of love I've gotten here is just insane. I'm surrounded by people who truly support me—want me to be better.

Many people in our community assume that homelessness is always an addiction issue, but for a lot of people, that's not the case. I've never taken drugs. I just got stuck, was alone, didn't know what to do, and couldn't do it on my own. I needed friendships, mentors—sisters—and I've found them here."

Holly, Former Mission Guest and Project Worth Partner

12,555

BASIC NEEDS
EARNED

\$67,945

REVENUE
GENERATED

131,112

LBS. OF MATERIAL
RECYCLED

A long-term residential recovery program, Forge Center for Virtue & Work welcomes men coming from poverty, addiction, and incarceration into a 16-month focus on character development and work readiness. Graduates are full-time employed, self-insured, off of all government assistance, and active in a local church.



“Forge...saved my life. I was homeless on the street with a hole in my chest. I'd never done anything but do and sell drugs. I used to wake up and have to put a needle in my arm first thing...Now I wake up and talk with God. And I have so many people I could call on, too. Forge introduced me to a faith community that's taught me lessons I'll hang onto for the rest of my life.”

Gabe, Forge Graduate

47

STUDENTS
ENROLLED
FOR THE YEAR

6

STUDENTS
GRADUATED
FOR THE YEAR

47

STUDENTS
EMPLOYED SINCE
PROGRAM START



A 4-year-old campus designed to keep children with their mothers in times of crisis or chronic homelessness, Washington Family Hope Center currently provides 15 family units, each able to house a mom and up to four children, while the family re-stabilizes and sets a new course for holistic flourishing.



“Washington Family Hope Center is so needed in this area. A lot of women are staying in bad, abusive relationships because they have no place to go without being separated from their children. All the women who come here are wounded in some way, and it’s like a spiritual hospital where we and our kids can get fixed up and recover together.”

- Melissa, Former Washington Family Guest

86

**INDIVIDUALS
SERVED**
(41 Moms, 45 Kids)

3

**FAMILIES MOVED
TO INDEPENDENT
HOUSING**

33%

**INCREASE
IN SOCIAL
CAPITAL**



CareCoordination

Serving all campuses and neighbors in need, the Care Coordination staff and volunteers meet regularly with guests and friends in the community to set and achieve goals toward health, wellness, and self-sufficiency.



"It took a little while to get into the groove, but once I did, things started working slowly but surely. I met Beth, Carolyn, and Anna, the care coordinators. These three powerhouses make sure the care is felt by every person living under the roof of Watered Gardens. The resources they offer are nothing short of amazing.

I've been out of Watered Gardens for almost a month now. I'm living in my own place. I've started a new church, and I've made many many new and dear friends. None of this would have happened if not for Watered Gardens."

Shannon, Former Mission Guest

237

PHYSICAL
WELLNESS
CHECKS

237

MENTAL
WELLNESS
CHECKS

149

WELLNESS
GOALS MET
BY GUESTS



Volunteer Update

With a ministry designed to serve the Church in its mission to help the poor, Watered Gardens only has 24 full-time employees across all ministries, relying on the church to provide volunteers who love Jesus and are ever-growing in their understanding and administration of effective charity.



"Like the first son in Jesus' Parable of the Two Sons, I hesitated, delayed, and stalled the call of God in my life until an indescribable experience with Him changed my heart. Suddenly I knew what I was supposed to do and where I was supposed to be. Now, when I see guests getting a job, or an education, and then coming back and being grateful, it brings a satisfaction that I'm actually in God's field, working and accomplishing His mission."

- Troy, 9-Year Volunteer

107

NEW
VOLUNTEERS

31

GROUPS FROM 4
DIFFERENT STATES

974

VOLUNTEER SHIFTS FILLED ON AVERAGE
EACH MONTH BY 251 DIFFERENT
VOLUNTEERS (89% of the 1151 Shifts Needed)

98%

VOLUNTEER
RETENTION

Advancement Update

As a 100% privately funded organization, Watered Gardens has never received a government dollar and relies solely on the generosity of individuals, churches, businesses, and private foundations.

\$2,718,689.67

TOTAL GIVEN, MEETING THE BUDGETARY NEED

69%

DONOR
RETENTION

1795

TOTAL
DONORS

6

NEW CHURCH
FINANCIAL PARTNERS
(16 Returning Partners | 85 Total)

22

NEW BUSINESS
PARTNERS
(19 Returning Partners | 108 Total)

OneNight



1878

ONE NIGHT
MONTHLY PARTNERS
(82% of the Need)



The national educational subsidiary of Watered Gardens, True Charity provides workshops, online resources, and educational tools in an effort to make local, outcome-driven, privately funded charity the norm again in the United States.

"We so appreciate the work that you and your colleagues have done to produce such wonderful resources. We have all felt the inherent emptiness of repeated relief efforts and can see how the developmental model follows God's word. You and your team have given us definitions and directions that we may never have found on our own. We pray that God will continue to guide our efforts and bless our neighbors as we build these relationships."

Rebecca Phillips, Executive Director of Grace Place Community Outreach in Salem, AR



Trainings

5 Foundations Workshops
in 4 states, teaching nonprofits the fundamentals of effective charity.

8 Real Results Webinars
with 535 in attendance

19 True Charity Ambassadors
trained across 10 states to teach and advance TC principles in their communities

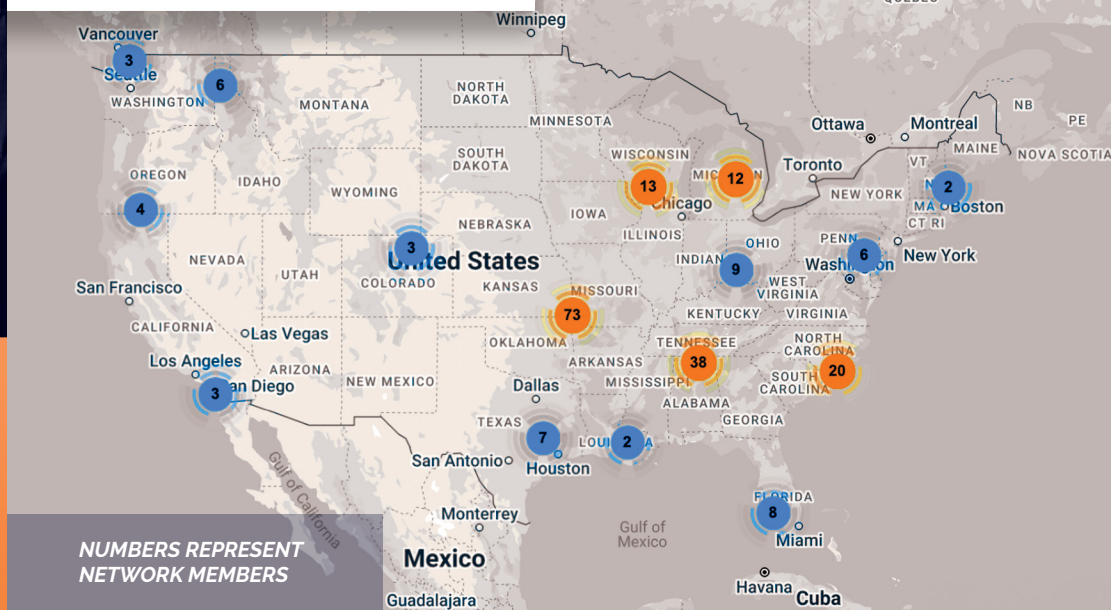
Summit

202 in attendance from 102 organizations

105 attendees were from out of state, with 36 states represented

89/90 respondents agreed to implement change to their charity practices

TRUE CHARITY — NETWORK —



NUMBERS REPRESENT
NETWORK MEMBERS

The True Charity Network is a national coalition of churches and nonprofits that serve people in poverty. We provide our members with extensive practical resources to operate their programs with excellence, connect with like-minded peers, and influence their communities. Visit truecharity.us/join to learn more.

209

Member Orgs
in 31 States

6.5

Member Orgs
Added Per Month

718K

Clients Served
by Members

34%

Increase of Member
Orgs Year Over Year
From 155 to 209

56%

Members
Reporting Changed
or Improved Practices

1044

Individuals with
Access to Member
Portal Resources
(50,000+ Views)



Let's do more than alleviate poverty.

Let's resolve it.

WateredGardens.org | 531 Kentucky Ave. Joplin, MO 64801 | (417) 623-6030