



flourish.

a quarterly publication from watered gardens ministries

FALL 2020



John Doe
123 Street
Joplin, MO 64801

RECENT EVENTS

FORGE FIREWORKS STAND RAISES OVER \$7,000

July 1- 4 | Forge Center for Virtue and Work

Celebrate with us as proceeds from the Forge fireworks stand increased by a whopping 65%! We are truly thankful for so many in the community who chose to shop with us to supply their Independence Day festivities.

NINE FORGE STUDENTS ADVANCE OR GRADUATE THIS QUARTER

Friday, September 25 | 7pm | Outreach Center

At our latest Forge graduation, eight students moved from one phase of the program to the next, and one student, Jamie Vera, finished the program entirely. It's such a joy to see these men walking strong.



Jamie Vera | Forge Graduate

Join us for our traditional chapel service and meal at the Outreach Center to celebrate the immeasurable goodness of our loving Father and Savior, Jesus Christ.

THANKSGIVING FELLOWSHIP

This 8th Annual event provides you with a serving of soup in a keepsake bowl from regional artisans for a minimum \$20 donation. For the best bowl selection and just \$10 extra, you can buy in advance at Joplin Greenhouse and the Coffee Shop. For more information, visit wateredgardens.org/emptybowls.

EMPTY BOWLS

For the first time ever, this 7th Annual event will be COVID-19 conscious while giving everyone a virtual tour of all four campuses. Tune in on TV or online, and don't miss the online auction either! For more information, visit wateredgardens.org/evening-of-hope.

UPCOMING EVENTS

EVENING OF HOPE

Sat., November 5pm on KSN, 6:30pm on KOAM 7 and Fox 14.

VOLUNTEER NEEDS

OUTREACH CENTER

- Kitchen Asst – Tue & Thu
- Mission Market – Tue, Fri
- Front Office Asst – Mon, Thu, Fri
- Care Coord. – Mon, Tue, Fri
- Maintenance Asst – Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri
- Overnight RAs
- Breakfast & Dinner Crews

WORTH SHOP

- Craft Asst – Tue, Thu, Fri
- Recycling Supervisor – Mon, Tue
- Worth Shop Asst – Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri
- Inventory Sorting – Tue & Fri

WASHINGTON FAMILY HOPE CENTER

- Afternoon Childcare – Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri
- Morning Host – Fri (weekly)
- Evening Host – Wed (weekly)
- Evening Host – 1st Sat (monthly)
- Dinner Crews

To get involved, contact:

Darlynda Patrick
Volunteer Coordinator
darlynda@wateredgardens.org
or visit
wateredgardens.org/volunteer

EVENING OF HOPE

Make plans to join us virtually on Saturday, November 7th for the 7th Annual Evening of Hope. This year's half-hour TV special will be broadcast at 5 PM on KSN 16 and at 6:30 PM on KOAM 7/FOX 14 and YouTube.

Tune in as our Co-Founder and Executive Director, James Whitford, joins Howie from Good Morning Four States to highlight each Watered Gardens campus through virtual tours and powerful testimonials. Then hear some exciting updates and future plans from James.

Our auction will be held online where you are sure to find gorgeous holiday home decor, locally handcrafted items, and maybe a little something for yourself. For more information, visit wateredgardens.org/evening-of-hope.



EMPTY BOWLS

The bowls are back! Local clay artists, crafters, restaurants, and sponsors have united again to bring you the 8th Annual Empty Bowls. For a gift of \$20 or more, you'll receive a handcrafted bowl, enjoy a serving of soup to go, and help fight hunger year round. This year's proceeds go to four organizations that feed people and are 100% voluntarily funded—Mission Joplin, We Care of the Four States, Watered Gardens, and Hope Kitchen!

Our presale is already underway at Joplin Greenhouse & the Coffee Shop where you can give a little extra—\$30 or more—to get first pick of the bowls. Whether you buy in advance or not, please stop by the main event on Thursday, November 19th from 11 AM to 7 PM at the Joplin Empire Market.

Hope to see you there. For more information visit wateredgardens.org/emptybowls.





NEW CHALLENGES CREATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES

By Travis Hurley, Director of Advancement

It's the last quarter of 2020, and you may agree with many people who are eager to turn the page on this historic year. There have definitely been unique challenges for all of us, and the need for flexibility has been essential at Watered Gardens where we've had to adapt spaces and adjust programming to accommodate for COVID-19 issues alone. But each new challenge we face is an opportunity to stretch faith, unleash creativity, and glorify God.

The next couple of months will be no different. Privately funded ministries like Watered Gardens receive the bulk of their donor gifts in November and December, so it should come as no surprise that Evening of Hope and Empty Bowls, our two

largest fundraising events, are coming up. While these events will still happen, each will have a different look. The need for social distancing means attendees at the 8th annual Empty Bowls will be getting their soup to go from the Empire Market. And the 7th annual Evening of Hope will not be a banquet at an area church, but will be televised and online.

As we stretch in creating new ways to reach larger audiences with the amazing stories of God's transforming work in the lives of those struggling in our community, we also trust in God's faithful provision to sustain this work. He does it through the generosity of His people, like you. Thank you for giving a portion to this ministry from the resources God has entrusted to you. With your support, we can finish this

challenging year strong, to the glory of God alone.

To learn about ways you can give, visit WateredGardens.org.



EXTRAORDINARY TIME TO BE EXTRAORDINARY

By James Whitford, Executive Director

When's the last time you felt God tug on you to do something out of the ordinary? We serve an extraordinary God, yet it's easy to slip into a rote expectation of one ordinary day after another. Even the Covid-19 "new normal" is becoming a day-to-day expectation. I want to share a moment last month when God "tugged" on me, compelling me to do the unordinary.

I had just left our morning team devotion and was driving to my office at our Forge location. I noticed a man walking on the sidewalk with a slight limp. Nothing extraordinary. Strangely, I felt compelled to pull over and talk with him. I ignored it but as I began to drive by him, I felt the urge more strongly. I pulled over.

As I greeted him, I noticed his shorts were torn and he seemed exhausted and out of sorts. We

ended up sitting on the curb together and when he admitted an inability to get free from a long-standing addiction, tears welled up in his eyes. I asked him, "Where are you heading right now?" He had difficulty responding. With his head down, he found the words, "I was on my way to my brother's garage to hang myself." I put my hand on his shoulder. "Obviously God has a different plan for you today." Josh got saved that day, got off the streets, and is now heading in a different direction.

A month before that, the outcome was different. I had picked up some medication for Thor, a resident at our shelter. Thor had established a pharmacy in Branson as his Medicaid prescription provider and was unable to easily change to a Joplin location. Insistent that he

have his meds, I made the trip and delivered them, but they failed to be the cure-all for which he'd hoped. A few days later, Thor hung himself. In twenty years, we had never experienced that. It was a grievous and extraordinary event.

Worldwide, suicide death rates are keeping pace with Covid-19. I think it's fair to say we're in extraordinary times. I encourage you: keep pace. As God calls on you, be extraordinary. Extraordinarily listen. Extraordinarily serve. Extraordinarily love. It is how we will save many more lives than we lose.



WHERE DID ALL THE POOR PEOPLE GO?

By Nathan Mayo, Membership Director for the True Charity Initiative

"We normally see 30-40 clients a day," said the manager of a Joplin, Missouri, food pantry.

"Since the pandemic, we've seen a sharp decrease... sometimes as few as four a day."

This is not what I expected to hear. Yet their experience is not an anomaly. Some poverty-fighting organizations in southwest Missouri report a 50% or greater decrease in clients, which is particularly puzzling given the national unemployment rate vaulting over 11%. Where did their clients go?

Consider the US Department of Agriculture's \$19 billion COVID response program, which purchases and distributes food for free through private foodbanks. This was in addition to other means-tested food security programs that America already pays \$68 billion a year to operate. Typical SNAP benefits (food stamps) have also temporarily increased by 40%. Add to these programs stimulus checks and expanded unemployment benefits— which led to 68% of Americans receiving more income from unemployment benefits than they ever received when they were employed.

Government-fueled, indiscriminate assistance. That's where the poor people went. Development-oriented nonprofits draw clients in by meeting immediate needs and then engaging on deeper issues, gradually moving people from vicious cycles to virtuous ones. As they are seeing a decrease in clients, other nonprofits and churches adjusted to the truckloads of perishable USDA-supplied food by giving it out with no questions asked. It is now common practice to distribute food to people in their vehicles with no interaction to determine whether they even need the food or whether they have deeper needs.

This geyser of well-intended but poorly-directed aid is crowding out true development. We can do better. Our national fervor to "do something" is undermining the efforts of skillful, well-stocked nonprofits dedicated to the long-term success of impoverished Americans. Those Americans need more than a handout; they need to know someone who cares.

For the full op-ed originally published in the *Washington Examiner* on August 6th, 2020, visit truecharity.us/category/blog/.