Care-A-Van

A few months ago, during the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions, (AGRM) annual conference held in Seattle, Washington, we were privileged to tour Seattle Rescue Mission. During the tour, we learned about their “Hope” vans that went out at night to meet the homeless where they live, and take physical and most of all Spiritual food to the homeless under bridges, in fields, or wherever they called “home.”

After returning home and discussing the idea with some of our Board members, we decided to “give it a try,” and Care-A-Van was born. About a month ago, Board members Roy Barile and Paul Dever, along with Mike Kustich and yours truly loaded up our Mission’s van, the Care-A-Van, with hot coffee, sandwiches, pastries, fruit, water, socks, toiletries, blankets, Bibles and Tracts, etc., and ventured forth.

We had made contact with Lila Omura who has a ministry of going out to places or campements where the homeless try to survive, and she invited us to meet her at a specific location. (see page 2) When we arrived, Lila, who seems to know, and who seems to be known and trusted by all these homeless people, introduced us to them as they came out of their sleeping places. Lila’s big pick-up trucked was loaded with clothing, and other homeless needs, and we were able to supply them with hot coffee and sandwiches etc, so we complimented each other with services for all.

We talked with them, handed out tracts and Bibles, gave out socks, blankets, as much coffee and food as they wanted, while Paul played Frisbee with one of the men. Afterwards the man thanked Paul over and over for taking the time to play Frisbee as he had not been able to play Frisbee in ages. Eventually our new friends returned to their hovels or the place they called “home”, and we moved on to San Pedro.

It took us a short time before we located our first encampment where we once again met a whole new group of homeless. Doing the same as before, we mingled with them and just chatted with them to let them know who we were and where we were from. This group told us about another encampment, who told us about another encampment.

From there, we returned to Wilmington where we went into some alleys that looked like we were in some other third world country. Homemade shelters made of wood, plastic covers, or whatever they could put together for protection and comfort; 5 gallon buckets used as toilets. Cold and ragged but they were so appreciative of our Care-A-Van. They drank the coffee, and ate up the last of our 55 sandwiches we had started with. We gave them the last of our socks, blankets, tracts, Bibles, bottles of hand sanitizers, and shared the Word of God with those who would listen. After seeing this epitome of poverty, we drove back to the Mission, praising God and already started planning for the next week. Closing our evening with a prayer of thanksgiving, we went home with the joy in our heart that only God can give ... a joy that surpasses all understanding, and a deep felt compassion and love for our new friends.

jhr
For non shoppers, Black Friday is generally a quiet day. About 1:00 PM, I received a call from Jerry Rilling, the Executive Director of the Beacon Light Mission. He said to me, "Kent you need to come down here and see what is going on. You need to meet Lila". My response was, "where are you"? He explained that he was in a parking lot near the corner of Lomita and Vermont where people were feeding the homeless. After a few minutes of confusing explanation, I decided to drive down and see for myself. What an interesting afternoon.

When I arrived, I found a makeshift kitchen consisting of 3 canopies, about a dozen tables plus chairs set up in a vacant lot. This spot was in a parking lot next to a canyon that runs for several blocks just west of the Harbor Freeway. They were there because this is where the homeless people live.

Jerry met me and introduced me to Lila Omura. She was in charge of an ad-hoc group of people that were getting ready to serve a Thanksgiving lunch to the homeless. Lila has been doing this for several years. She got started after watching the police clearing out a homeless encampment about 4 years ago. Her heart went out to these displaced people and just decided to see if she could help them with food and clothing. Through her facebook family, which numbers about 200 friends, she is able to collect food and clothing for the homeless. She and her group of volunteers go out about once a week and distribute what they get in the way of donations to the homeless in the Harbor City area.

While we were talking a number of the homeless had already gathered and were eating fruit and drinking bottled water that had previously been handed out. Shortly thereafter, they all held hands while grace was said prior to their lining up to be served. I later learned that the person saying "grace" was Phillip Rivera, who acted as the unofficial "Chaplain" for the group. While not ordained, he had been doing this type of ministry for several years. He met Lila after she started her ministry of helping the homeless. Victor has full time employment and spends most of his free time ministering to the needy in various ways.

We became aware of all this a few weeks back when a team from the Beacon Light Mission decided to start a new ministry of taking the van out, on Friday evenings, with coffee and sandwiches for the homeless on the street. This is where they met Lila and her group handing out clothing. Since then we have been helping Lila out with both food and clothing. We at the Beacon Light Mission are blessed with an abundance of both through your generosity.

Your donations are appreciated and always put to good use. What we cannot use is shared with other ministries located in the South Bay. Currently we have a sharing network which includes 10 other charitable agencies.

We are all working together to share God's Good News. 

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Kent Meyer
Board President
Beacon Light Mission
/Doors of Hope
November at Doors of Hope

Doors of Hope uses vacuum cleaners for our floors and carpets. The other day our little dirt devil stopped working and I knew I had to go and get another one. But in one of the donations that came on Tuesday, they brought the exact same little dirt devil to use. Isn’t God AWESOME! It is good for small vacuuming but we are in need of a bigger vacuum cleaner. I have been looking for a bagged Dirt Devil cleaner and the stores are out of them. So if you see one let me know. Thank you.

Today is Thanksgiving morning and the ladies are busy preparing breakfast for our shower guests. We did have a few ladies show up for clothing and showers and were very grateful that we were here. Even if it’s a holiday, the ladies still need showers.

Community Worship Center of Gardena came by with a LOT of bags filled with hygiene items (look how full our cart is) plus a couple of boxes of shoes, snacks, water, hats, gloves, gift cards and love for the ladies. Also when some of the ladies were leaving, they were able to pray for them. God is so good. Thank you Pastor Ruben for taking this special day with your members to give to others. Matthew 25:40 states; I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.

I was truly blessed and so were the ladies.

On Monday we had our open showers and had bags left from Thanksgiving to give to the ladies. They were so thrilled to receive their bags. And a couple of the ladies wanted the Community Worship Center to know they loved them and wanted to say thank you so much!

With Christmas just around the corner, we are in need of some items for our ladies and the shower ladies. One of the major items is ladies under pants. We go through about 30 or more pair per week. Other items are brushes and combs for the thicker hair, deodorant, small tooth paste, tennis shoes, 2ply toilet paper, laundry soap, bleach, (we do about 200 or so loads of laundry per month) and any cleaning supplies.

We are so grateful for all of you supporting The Doors of Hope. Thank you and God bless. Have a very blessed Christmas, the celebration our Lords Birth. 

Linda Stratton
Director of Operations

I Want to Serve

We at BLM/DOH are in a unique and blessed position. You, the donors, donate your monies, clothing, food, etc, to people who you will probably never get to meet. The recipients are very appreciative of the food, coffee, clothing, etc, that they get from people they will probably never get to meet or thank personally. We, the in-between servants of God, and we pray we are worthy of that name, get to see both. We see the joy you have in giving to the less fortunate, and we get to see the joy the less fortunate exhibit when they receive your gifts.

Perhaps you are saying, I would like to be this “in between person”; well, you can. You see, the “donations”, that our “Donor” has donated to us, i.e., forgiveness of sins, redemption, the Bible, transformed lives, kingdom of God, joy, love, peace, everlasting life with Him, hearing, free will, and the greatest of all, Jesus, just to name a few; all these can be given to the those who have not been “fed” yet...so feel free to spread His Word!

Our “Donor”, God, has entrusted His donations to us so that we are to take them out and share them with the homeless that is, those who will never get to go home unless they receive the gifts from God entrusted to us to share with them. So, we get to do both...to know the Donor and, those in need, and serve both. It doesn’t get any better than that. $€
DONATION DROP OFF
You may drop off your food, clothing or other donations any time between 8:00am-6:00pm for both Beacon Light and Doors of Hope. Just go to the back gate of the Beacon Light Mission and honk your horn. Someone will come out and collect your donations.

Financial donations on our websites:

Beacon Light
www.beaconlightmission.org

Doors of Hope
www.doorsofhopewomensshelter.org

Or by mail to:
525 Broad Avenue, Wilmington, CA 90744

MISSION STATEMENT
Our mission is to minister the love and grace of Jesus Christ to the homeless in the South Bay by providing a safe and nurturing environment where they can receive food, clothing, temporary shelter, discipleship and spiritual encouragement in their present life circumstances.

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I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
Philippians 4:13