



Samaritan Center
Interfaith Agency

The Light

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TAKING STOCK OF A YEAR BEHIND US

A new year has come to Mid-Missouri with new promises and new challenges. When formulating the outlook for the future in any matter, it is most successful to look to the past, observe history and what trends it presents. Clairvoyance is not needed to achieve a reasonable forecast of what is to come, unfortunately since the sight into the future is not an ability possessed by man, none of us can be completely accurate in our predictions. In the case of the Samaritan Center and the services provided by it, there is a comfort in the accuracy of historical fact.

Numbers are on the rise, there can be no argument of that. In 2004 the Center averaged 1,020 families a month for services, up from an average of 866. 154 more families a month on average, an increase of 15%, how many area businesses achieved a 15% monthly growth in clientele last year? This growth in families seeking services can be attributed to many things; a slow economy, more single parent families due to deployment of the armed forces, increase in energy costs, and expansion of services offered are examples. The common threads between those three being this, more people come to the Samaritan Center for services and fewer donations are available to cover growing costs.

Many persons coming for aid today are the paycheck-to-paycheck families who just cannot make ends meet any longer. The mom who comes in with her daughters may have been a donor last year but now her husband has been overseas in the military for over a year and she just cannot make ends meet on her own. The money saved by getting food from the Samaritan Center will help her keep her bills current. A visit to Santa's Workshop allows her girls a better Christmas than she could have provided through her own means. People look at her funny, she drives a late model car, her little girls and herself in newer clothes, she does not fit in with many of the persons coming for services. There are hushed discussions that she must not really be in need. She and so many just like her, who fill the ranks of the working poor, constitute many of those served by the Samaritan Center, and with the current situation of economy and National Policy it stands to reason persons in need such as her will increase before the situation improves.

In a year where utility usage was down due to mild weather, the increase in utility cost offset any gains which could have been made. In 2003, \$110,895.30 of Samaritan Center funds were directed to energy assistance with gas and electric 2004 saw an increase to \$135,042.42. In this case, the increase in expenditure is dwarfed by the increase in need. Daily, families seeking utility assistance must be turned away due to lack of funds. All of us feel the pinch of escalating energy costs, and some are better prepared than others to deal with it. For those living in older inefficient homes, who cannot find newer places to live, these price hits can be devastating to an already fragile budget. Having to choose between warmth and food is a decision no one wants to face, yet people in Mid-Missouri do it every day. There are two constants seen at the Samaritan Center, the great need that is all around us in Mid-Missouri and the great generosity of those living here, who allow the Samaritan Center to carry out the mission set in front of us, to meet the emergency or crisis needs of the people in the Mid-Missouri area, to better the lives of our neighbors in need.

Every year the Samaritan Center has grown in expenditure and services rendered to the public of Mid-Missouri, without a doubt 2005 will be a year of continued growth in need, history shows as much. The chart on page 2 shows some of the services rendered to the public in 2004. Without the hours of donated time by volunteers and the financial contributions of our donors, none of what has been done or what will be done is possible. You truly are the Samaritan Center.

Services Provided January 2005

Average number of Households
Average number of People
Units of Service/ <u>Households</u>
Units of Service / <u>People</u> who
Dental Clinic Treatments
Medical Clinic Treatments
No. of new clients (families)
Car seats
Cribs

MARYLYN'S MESSAGE

Believe It!

Time flies when you are having fun. As we reflected a bit on the New Year, images of years past march in my eye's mind. We can hardly believe that we are wrapping up our eighteenth year of service and starting on nineteen. So much good has been accomplished by the Samaritan Center over those years. Many of you, who started down that road of support in 1987, are still with us, still saying "Yes" to God's call to help and to serve. It was in 1987 that we helped fifteen families. In 1993 the great flood hit us and we reached out to even more in need. Many of those families have become our donors since they recovered from their loss. In 1999 we moved into this beautiful debt free building because of the generosity of so many of you. We ended 2004 serving 1,200 families monthly who are in crisis for food. As we enter 2005 we know that the need is great. We also, know that because of God's blessing that this year will be an outstanding year of goodness and grace for all of us. Our needs are tremendous; all of you realize the need and are constantly at our side with help. We cannot express enough our gratitude for all you prayers, time and treasure. We hope for you all God's richest blessings in this year of 2005. Please remember us in your prayers as we remember you in ours.

CLOTHING DONATION POLICY

With the New Year, the Samaritan Center is beginning a reinforcement of policy on clothing donation. The purpose of our clothing program is to offer clean, wearable clothes free of charge to those in need. The clothes distributed by the Samaritan Center help to promote self-esteem by improving the outward appearance of the individual. A proper wardrobe is essential for obtaining and holding employment. Often people will never get to the interview process because they do not have wearable clothes. By building people up through equipping them with the means to improve themselves we help them to help themselves and to break the cycle of poverty.

It is because of this theme and mission that we are selective in clothing distributed out of the Samaritan Center. Ratty, dirty, non-wearable clothes are of no use to our clients any more than they are to the person getting rid of them. These items are discarded or sent to other uses. Volunteers sort through donations sifting out the useable items. Clothing in need of laundering and or mild repair is handled as needed and the end result is a room of wearable clothes that will help the people wearing them feel good about how they look.

Clothing brought in boxes often has been stored in high humidity areas where mold and mildew thrive, also cardboard boxes are a favored breeding ground for insects, arachnids and other invertebrates that are highly unwelcome in a food pantry.

It is because of these reasons, and others, that all clothing must be on hangers when donated. If you have clothing and are in need of hangers, contact us and we can provide you with them.

Space is also a huge consideration with our clothing program. Warehouse space is a premium commodity, and there is not enough of it to store out of season items or to house bulkier items that do not move off the shelves as quickly.

We appreciate all donations offered to us and hope all understand why we must turn some down.

In summary here is our clothing policy:

- We accept clothes the first full week of each month, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 11:30a.m. and Thursday of that same week from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Drop Off around back.
- All clothes donated to the Samaritan Center must be on hangers.
- Seasonal (April through September – Spring and Summer; October through March – Fall and Winter)
- We will not accept shoes, belts, purses or underwear

THE TAXMAN COMETH

After the ball has dropped, the champagne popped and resolutions have been formulated then dropped, Americans turn their attention to everyone's favorite holiday season. Tax season! Tax season brings an extra level of service to the Samaritan Center via our Tax Credit Program. In the vein of self-help and growth the Samaritan Center volunteers work with persons to file Income Tax statements for the state and federal governments. Many people find that they are eligible for tax returns that they otherwise would have left unclaimed. A policy instituted last year calls for any individual seeking financial assistance through the Samaritan Center to first file for Tax Credits, no financial assistance will be given unless proof is shown of filing made elsewhere or filing is done through our program. Those in need are still eligible for food, clothing, medical, and other non-cash assistance. This policy is indicative of the holistic approach the Samaritan Center takes in assisting people. Not just a quick handout, an investment in the well being of the individual and assistance in improving self-esteem as well as self-sufficiency. Teaching people to help themselves first.

Many of the people taking advantage of this service are working families without adequate income. Senior-disabled citizens also are a large portion of those helped.

Last year, through Earned Income Tax Credit, Property-Rental Tax Credit, Child Care Credit, and other refunds Samaritan Center clients received \$43,380.00. That is money that the Samaritan Center was able to save from investing in those individuals, money placed back into the local economy, money in the hands of people in need.

OUR THANKS TO...

To the Governor’s Council on Junior Leadership that came to the Center and volunteered their time to help in the pantry and clothing room. There were thirty plus college students that were selected by their college or university president’s to represent their school from all over the state. These young leaders were very impressive and we told them before they left that we were energized by their interest in those who are in crisis and have great faith in the future leaders of our state.

To Helias High School and Jefferson City Senior High School for holding again this year the challenge to one another as to who can bring in the most food for the needy to the Center. At this printing we do not as yet know the “Winner of the Traveling Trophy”. We are grateful for all the food that both schools will bring to us this month.

DATES TO REMEMBER

<u>February</u>		<u>March</u>	
15	Rotary Art Auction	12	Boy Scout Food Drive
	5:30 Capitol Plaza Hotel	24	Holy Thursday, no evening hours
7- April 15	Tax Credit Program	25	Good Friday –Closed
21	Presidents’ Day –Closed	28	Easter Monday -Closed

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Hours of Operation

Open to Public: 9:30am-11:30am Monday-Thursday
 4:00pm-6:00pm Thursday
 Medical Clinic: 4:00pm-6:00pm Thursday
 Dental Clinic: by appointment Only,
 call (573)761-3473 for information
 Staff Office Hours: 8:00am-5:00pm Monday-Friday

