

# THE CURRENT

A little good news from the Center..... Summer/Fall 2015



## ~YOU CARED ENOUGH TO HELP~

### ~Thank You~



**Janis** needed clothing for a job interview with the possibility of part time employment. Center Clothing Room volunteer Shari Stephan helped Janis coordinate the perfect outfit to wear to the interview. Janis returned several days later to let us know that not only did she get the job but also found another part time job that worked perfectly with her schedule!



**Ms. Gunn** lives on \$700/month disability income and didn't have the \$15 copay needed for eye glasses as most of her income goes towards purchasing colostomy supplies. She also couldn't afford her gas bill and her water bill was \$2,600. Ms. Gunn lives frugally but medical needs take most of her income. The Center paid her gas bill and for the new glasses. We told Ms. Gunn to give us bids from plumbers and we would see how we could help with the repair bill. We will see if the water company will forgive some of the bill and establish a payment plan, and we provided community resource help for ongoing colostomy supplies.



**David's** smile lights up the room! He recently was laid off from his job due to a lack of business but was excited to have two job interviews scheduled. David needed assistance in getting eye glasses. He is 50 years old and hadn't had a new pair since high school. The Center helped David get new glasses and we also helped him with a utility bill.

The Center now serves 31 metropolitan Kansas City, MO zip codes with 5 of these zip codes in the Midtown area



Diana Kennedy,  
Director

(estimated population of 64,000 individuals). Our service area includes 16 of the top 20 zip codes having the highest level of poverty, and the top four zip codes having the most requests for assistance as reported by United Way's 2-1-1 Information & Referral line for people in need. The Center is the 2nd most referred agency used by 2-1-1 and we provide assistance for 8 of the top 10 most requested needs. We are also the only agency providing multiple assists to 31 zip codes from a single site. This significant service means individuals receive the help they need during one visit to a single agency. There is no need to take time off of work or spend money on bus fares in order to access multiple agencies for services. The Center is also the only agency consistently assisting with water, gas and electric bills year round, not just seasonal.

The Center provides over 1,900 client assists each month and we are incredibly grateful to the donors and foundations that make it all possible: United for Hope/ United to Help; Jackson County; United Way of Greater Kansas City; Massman Foundation; the Health Care Foundation of Kansas City; Brace Foundation; Reynolds Foundation, Curry Foundation; Laclede Gas Company; Kansas City Power & Light; William G. McGowan Foundation; DST Systems; FEMA; MAAC (Mid America Assistance Coalition); WT Kemper Foundation; Oppenstein Brothers Foundation; McGee Foundation; Cleveland Moulton Christmas Poor Trust.



### \$\$ Matching Opportunity \$\$

The William G. McGowan Charitable Fund is based in Chicago with representation in Kansas City. The Center applied for grant assistance and was notified that we would be awarded a \$40,000 matching grant when they received documented notification of donations/grants to the Center totaling that amount. We were very fortunate to be in a position that enabled us to submit the required grant/donation documentation. Brian McGowan personally delivered their check for \$40,000! This wonderful opportunity from the William G. McGowan Charitable Fund will enable the Center to serve even more individuals in crisis through our programs of assistance.

The 2015 **Feinstein Challenge to Fight Hunger** totaled \$24,488 in donations. Thank you to everyone who helped the Center fight hunger!

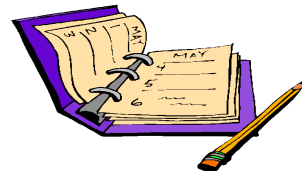


**Patrice Alarie and Andy Bracken** volunteer in the Center's Clothing/ Housewares Room and both are over

achievers! Patrice organizes her group of sorority sisters to do our bulk mailings, and Andy added improvements to the Clothing Room making it easier for volunteers to sort and hang clothes, and easier for our clients to find what they need!



*Serf...1999-2015...forever the Center's mascot.*



## Mark Your Calendars

- **March & April...**Feinstein Challenge to Fight Hunger
- **September...**Sock It To Poverty collection & raffle
- **October 11th...**CROP Walk for Hunger (call the Center to volunteer at the sign-in table)
- **November & Dec...**holiday food distribution
- **December. 2nd...**Volunteer Holiday Lunch
- **December 9th...**Staff/Volunteer annual cookie exchange
- **December...**Holiday Appeal; Angel Tree; Adopt the Ongoing Needs

## Health Maintenance

The **Diabetes Education and Empowerment Program (DEEP)** is a free, evidence based program targeting Medicare Beneficiaries. The Center collaborated with DEEP by hosting 6 workshops that will cover the following topics:

1. Beginning Session – Understanding the Human Body
2. Understanding Diabetes and its Risk Factors
3. Monitoring Your Body
4. Get Up and Move! The Importance of Physical Activity
5. Health Management Through Nutrition
6. Diabetes Complications: Identification and Prevention
7. Medication and Medical Care: Communicating With Your Provider
8. Stress and Coping – Mobilizing Your Family and Friends



## socking It to Poverty!

The Center's annual *Sock It to Poverty* event is underway! This citywide collection for socks and underwear...the **most requested** and **least donated** clothing items...will benefit Center clients and also be shared with Salvation Army, Operation Breakthrough & Cross-Lines. This year's collection goal of new socks and underwear is 20,000 new items. And the possibilities are endless for the winner of the *Sock It to Poverty* raffle prize of **\$1,000** cash... you can **go anywhere and buy anything!**

The Junior Board of the **Indian Hills Middle School** is



sponsored by Steve O'Neil and the Curry Foundation. Students on the Junior Board were divided into groups to choose a charitable agency/organization to research and workup a

presentation. The group that chose the Center came for a fact finding Q & A session where their in-depth questions and professional manner demonstrated their commitment to the project. During the presentation ceremony at the school, the Center was thrilled and honored to be presented with a check for \$750.00.

## Deadly Virus

A cyber terrorist planted an Encryptolocker ransom virus on the Center's IT system in January. This deadly virus destroyed all files and programs (including Quick Books accounting), hard drives and back up storage. Due to unfortunate circumstances, the Center did not have adequate antivirus protection, firewalls and secure backup storage so it was easy for this virus to take over. The Center contracted with Chaz Kercher, owner of Kansas City Nerd, who proposed a detailed plan to minimize the chances of something like this reoccurring. He purchased and installed all necessary equipment, firewalls, antivirus, programs, etc., and identified and fixed many related issues in the process. The Center's Board and staff tremendously appreciate all that Chaz did above and beyond his quote and we are confident in his ability to head our IT program. Kansas City Nerd handles everything to do with computers and they also install complete home and business video security systems. The Center is grateful for grant support from the William Kemper Foundation and from several private donors enabling us to get everything that was needed for a new and secure IT system.



**Bryan Swenson, Lt. Colonel in the United States Marine Corps**, is the son of Roy Swenson, the Center's Building Facilitator.

Bryan just completed a three year tour of duty in Washington, D.C. where he was the Pacific Rim Advisor to the Pentagon. He is now moving to Japan where he will be taking command of the premier squadron on one of the most important military bases in Okinawa. Bryan said this opportunity has been one of his long time goals and his wife and two year old daughter will be accompanying him. We thank Bryan and the many courageous men and women who work so hard to keep our country safe!

Many thanks to the Kansas City **St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee** for designating the Center the recipient of \$589 from a special collection taken during the Gaelic Mass.



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*“PREVENTING A TEMPORARY CRISIS  
FROM BECOMING A PERMANENT TRAGEDY”*

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The Center’s Board is actively involved in and dedicated to the financial and programmatic growth and stability of the Center. Each Board member contributes both financial and in-kind support to the Center in support of our mission.

**If you would like to receive the Center’s newsletter electronically, please send me your email!**  
[Diana@kcsocialservices.org](mailto:Diana@kcsocialservices.org)

## ~ ON THE HOMEFRONT ~



- Happy 91st birthday to Ethel Rodriguez, our Food Pantry Coordinator!
- Retired Center staff attorney, Maureen Smith, moved to Kentucky to live and work with the Sisters of Loretto Community. On a recent visit, Maureen said she loves her 400 sq. foot house that provides cozy living and breathtaking views for her and her dog Lil’Bit. Maureen loves volunteering in the Loretto infirmary and primarily works with Alzheimer patients.



- Scout, a 9 year old Yorkshire Terrier, is a neighbor of Center volunteer Paige Patterson and “helps” her interview clients and input client data! Our clients love Scout’s friendliness and Scout loves socializing while her owner is at work!

***Thought for the day... Before you judge someone else, stop and think about all that God has forgiven you for.***