

FAIRBANKS RESCUE MISSION

Making a Difference One Life at a Time

SERVING GOD AND THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1974

MARCH 2011



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723 27th Avenue
Fairbanks, AK
99701

Phone:
907-452-5343
Fax:
907-451-7058

FAIRBANKS HOMELESS CONNECT ~ by Michelle Harpole

What does it look like when our community opens its arms?

On January 26th of this year many agencies and dozens of volunteers, brought together by the Fairbanks Housing and Homeless Coalition, gave Fairbanks a glimpse of what that might look like. In a one-day event held at the Pioneer Park Exhibition Hall, 250 homeless people received a wide range of services and goods.

What do the homeless of our community look like?

Of the 250 people who attended the event, 98 of them were women. Of those women, 27 had children, the average age of the children being 2-1/2. The age group most represented was 41-50 year-olds with 60 people being in that age group. There were 25 individuals aged 62 and over and 11 in the 18-21 age group. The face of the homeless in Fairbanks is not one age and not one hue. Alaskan Native, African-American, Hispanic, Pacific

Islander and white were all represented.

As the doors opened, people came in singly and in groups drawn by the hope of help and the promise of a hot meal. They were greeted by volunteers who asked them for statistical information and then pointed them in the direction of the help they were most interested in. Public health nurses were in three



locations, answering questions, administering flu shots, and giving foot care. One of the Mission residents, an older man, always dressed in overalls, told staff at the Mission that he had been given a "pedicure." The delight in his voice and face told what an unexpected and special treat it had been for him.

Many people received assistance in filling out Permanent Fund Dividend forms, getting copies of their birth certificates with help from the Bureau of Vital Statistics, and getting State I.D.'s from DMV. Transportation to and from DMV was provided by the Salvation Army. In addition to the State ID's provided there was one Alaska CDL license issued, which is a story in itself (please see page 4).



FAITH Program Manager, Cassey Page, and Vet Caseworker Steve Sabens at the FRM Veteran's Program table.

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Because You Gave

JANUARY NUMBERS

6,294 MEALS
were served

3,072 BED NIGHTS
were provided

1,911 for MEN

933 for WOMEN

228 for CHILDREN

31 BIBLE STUDIES
were held

31 CHAPEL
SERVICES
were held

Thanks to our
VOLUNTEERS
for 176
volunteer hours!

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREETING

FROM THE DESK OF RODNEY GASKINS



The staff and I grapple every day with decisions about individuals, programs, and situations. Are we doing the best for this person? What should our expectations be? How do we discourage harmful behavior, in love? Where should we focus our limited resources? How can we help people learn vital life skills? It got me to thinking about how I learned to make my way in life.

When I was a little kid my mom did everything for me. All I had to do was eat, drink and be merry. Then came a dreadful day when it all stopped and it seemed to me it happened overnight. She now expected me to do things for myself like clean my room and for others like take out the trash and do the dishes. And if this wasn't awful enough, she gave consequences if they weren't done. How could she? Didn't she love me anymore?

First I attempted to convince her that I was unable to do these things. When that didn't work, I would waste most of my day sitting in my room thinking of ways to get out of the work. Then, unable to resist the sounds of the neighborhood kids outside, I'd grab my coat and head for the door, only to meet my mom. No words, just the "you must have lost your mind, don't even think about it" look.

As I got older I began to realize my mom placed these expectations on me because she was teaching me the principles of responsibility and caring for myself and others. I'm sure it would have been easier and less time consuming for her to do the chores herself rather than riding herd on me. She knew that

genuine love doesn't always do what people want; it does what is BEST for them.

I see those same principles illustrated in the Old and New Testaments. In Leviticus 19:9-10 the Israelites were told to leave grain on the edges of the fields and to leave grapes that fell on the ground for the poor and the foreigners among them. I notice that the crops were left with the expectation they would be harvested by the people who needed the food.

In Acts 3:1-9 we see Peter and John's interaction with a crippled man. *"Peter and John went to the Temple one afternoon to take part in the three o'clock prayer service. As they approached the Temple, a man lame from birth was being carried in. Each day he was put beside the Temple gate, the one called the Beautiful Gate, so he could beg from the people going into the Temple. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for some money."*

Peter and John looked at him intently, and Peter said, "Look at us!" The lame man looked at them eagerly, expecting some money. But Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus

Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!"



Then Peter took the lame man by the right hand and helped him up. And as he did, the man's feet and ankles were instantly healed and strengthened. He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk! Then, walking, leaping, and praising God, he went into the Temple with them."

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“GREETING” continued from Page 2

Notice that the crippled man was “put” there to beg. His lameness was being used to earn income. Then notice that Peter and John “looked at him intently.” The beggar was only hoping for money, but Peter and John looked and believed for something so much better – complete healing.

What can my mom and the Word teach us all about helping?

- Teach people how to help themselves and each other.
- Give, but expect people to participate in their receiving.
- Believe for people what they are not able to even hope for themselves.
- God is able in EVERY situation.

Peter and John gave the man a hand up, not a handout as he was expecting and accustomed to. They literally helped him to get back on his feet. I often wonder how that affected the others begging at the gate. How could any of them be content in only receiving loose change when they’d seen someone receive life change?

Let’s keep helping people up.



Kitchen Needs

- Brown Sugar
- Flour
- Cooking Oil
- Seasonings - Bulk Size
- Eggs
- Butter
- Breakfast Meats

“CONNECTIONS” continued from Page 1

The amazing University of Alaska, Fairbanks Cosmetology School students completed 107 haircuts. One hundred sets of cold weather gear were given away. One young woman was wearing a worn pair of tennis shoes and was able to find a pair of warm boots that fit her. The smile on her face was as warm as her feet now felt. The Fairbanks Rescue Mission gave away boots and sleeping bags and provided information about the shelter, the Veteran’s Program, and the Genesis Recovery Program.



Other providers included Access Alaska, Interior AIDS Assoc.,

Fairbanks Community Behavioral Health Center, Lion’s Foundation (eye exams and glasses), Fairbanks Vet Center, Alaska Housing, Boys and Girls Home of Alaska, S.O.A.P. (outreach to homeless youth), Fairbanks Diabetes Center, and Alaska Legal Services.



Early that morning and the night before volunteers had filled backpacks with toiletries, snacks, gloves, hats, and hand warmers which were given to each person as they left. Whatever each person left with in the way of material goods and information, the hope is that they also left with a warm, kind image of the face of Fairbanks.

MISSION NEEDS THIS MONTH

- Beef Base
- Chicken Base
- Cereal
- Oatmeal
- Grits
- Vegetables - #10 cans or frozen
- Egg Noodles
- Instant Mashed Potatoes
- Onions
- Potatoes
- Disposable cups - 8 or 12 oz.

- Towels
- Feminine Hygiene Products
- Diapers - Sizes 3, 4, and 5
- Baby Wipes
- Disposable Razors
- Deodorant, Men’s
- Deodorant, Women’s

Other Needs

- URGENT - Twin Mattresses
- 8-1/2 x 11 Copy Paper
- Scotch tape (for dispensers)
- Kleenex
- Paper Towels

Shelter Needs

- Men’s underwear

ROAD TO THE MISSION ~ by Michelle Harpole



Robert arrived in Fairbanks at the end of January. It was -33 degrees and he had eight dollars in his pocket. He was grateful the Mission had a place for him. In fact, he seems to be a man who is walking in gratitude. Maybe when you lose everything each step, every kindness, every need supplied is a thing to be grateful for.

Fairbanks is the place he's starting over, the place he claims back his life. He used to have a life full of all the things we work for, we hope to have. He had strength and ability, a good job as a welder, a nice home, a pretty wife. In 2007, while working a job in Dutch Harbor, a massive stroke tore away his strength and ability and with that, his confidence. That was the beginning of piece after piece of his life collapsing down around him. He found himself alone in a hospital bed – stripped of everything he thought defined him as a man. Struggling to

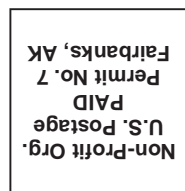
make sense of his life and with how to go, on he came to a place of surrender and made peace with God. That night he dreamt of an angel with his grandmother's face who came to him and soothed him with her touch, taking away the pain, the inability, the brokenness of his body. Nineteen days later he walked out of the hospital, fully functional.

Unable to walk the high beams and do the physical work of welding, Robert searched for another career path. He enrolled in an out-of-state school and graduated with his CDL. Living in his old room at his parent's home in Eagle River, he was restless and knew he needed to launch himself again. He bought a one-way ticket to Fairbanks. Within a week he already had his Alaska CDL (with help from DMV) and was working at getting a Haz/Mat certificate. Within a couple of weeks he had a delivery job in town and is waiting for the paperwork that will make him eligible to get that big paying job on the Haul Road. His energy and optimism make it easy to believe that will happen for him; though we at the Mission will miss his smile and good cheer.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION, INCLUDING EMPLOYMENT AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:
WWW.FAIRBANKSRESCUEMISSION.ORG

REQUESTED

RETURN SERVICE



PO Box 73250
Fairbanks, AK 99707

