

Saturday, August 21, 2010

Mission Tuesday #76



The needs of the people we serve at Mission of Hope are growing. As an example, during the month of July we served lunch 17 times at Mission of Hope. On average 120-140 people currently come through the lunch line each day. So let's do some math... $120 \times 17 = 2,040$ meals served in the month of July approximately. In our Food Pantry we served 1,345 people in July. Adding that together, Mission of Hope helped 3,385 people in some way with food. (Some people may have had more than one meal and have also gone through the Pantry up to two times in a month.) That's a lot of food!

That's the good news. The bad news is that monetary donations have dropped significantly. Mission of Hope is funded by donations...donations from individuals, churches, and organizations.

Some days if I think about the needs of the people and the lack of funds coming in, I can get a little overwhelmed and a little stressed. But this is where faith comes in...this is where we trust God that He will provide...just as He has for the last almost-ten years.

This week as I spent time at Mission of Hope, I was again reminded how very important the existence of Mission of Hope is in this area. I can't imagine what would happen to the people who are served at Mission of Hope if the doors had to be closed because of lack of donations. What would these people, who are dear to God's heart, do? Where would they go? Who would help them? Would anyone else help them? Would they be left to fend for themselves? It scares me to think of my friends, who I see there on a daily basis, not having a place to go to receive help, hope and encouragement.

It was very clear to me after reading the article and people's comments online in last week's newspaper (about my friend who was arrested 106 times), that she and most of my Mission

friends would not be welcomed in most public places, let alone offered any kind of help. That scares me.

The majority of the people we serve at Mission of Hope are people like you and me, but something happened along the way that caused them to make different choices. Many are hurting in one way or another. As I've said before...hurting people hurt people. Some have mental health issues. Some can't keep track of the days, let alone hold down a job. Life isn't easy for most of these friends of mine. And they each have a story...

- This week I talked with a woman who struggles with mental health issues. Her brain works differently than mine, and our conversation seemed to go in circles. It was ok though...she just needed someone to talk to and to have someone listen.
- I prayed with a man who has what he calls 'flashbacks' of his childhood when he seems to get agitated. I saw how calm he became as we finished. (Thank you God.)
- I briefly talked with a man who used to come into the Mission a lot and had been gone for some time because of his career as a truck driver. He lost everything in a truck accident on the road last month, including his girlfriend and his livelihood, and is in physical and emotional pain because of the accident. He needed a shower and clothes the day he came in. It was nice to see a glimmer of a smile come across his face at one point.
- I have seen how homelessness can harden a person. This homeless man who I consider a friend, has been homeless for the last 10 years. He knows he is accepted and loved at Mission of Hope, that hardness that was once there has been softened. We'll hopefully be able to help him find housing soon so he won't have to spend another winter on the streets.
- One man was so hungry...I saw him come back to the kitchen counter five times for a bowl of fresh fruit.
- One man who now lives 2-1/2 hours away who used to frequent the Mission stopped in yesterday. He said he wanted to come here for the weekend to see everyone. He misses Mission of Hope.
- Another man works at a local business, and is currently looking for housing...he's staying with a friend. He comes by when we open in the mornings, sometimes for a shower and a change of clothes every couple of weeks. He has a couple of cups of coffee, then leaves for work around 10:00. He's trying to get back on his feet.

- A woman who was hit by a car last weekend spent most of Thursday at the Mission. She told me, and I quote, "I love it here. It is nice to get away from the outside and feel safe here. It's different in here. I never want to leave."

I think her statement says it all.

I have many, many more stories like these. The people who are considered the least, the lost and the last need a place like Mission of Hope. The general public need a place like Mission of Hope. Why? Because God changes the hearts of both groups with what He's doing there. I firmly believe there's no other place like Mission of Hope...at least not in this area, to experience the work of God in this way.

We and the Mission of Hope patrons need your help. Would you consider coming in to volunteer your time (we were short of volunteers ALL week this week)? Would you consider lifting the Mission up in prayer? (We also have a prayer group on the second and fourth Thursday at 9am each week.) Would you consider giving monetarily?

We will continue to trust God, and do what we can to help those who need it most. Thank you for your consideration. Stop in anytime to see for yourself what God is doing. You'll be blessed! :)