

EPISCOPAL SOCIAL SERVICES – VENTURE HOUSE | BREAKTHROUGH CLUB

UPDATE

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'A Night on the Red Carpet' raises \$63,000

Our celebration of the Oscars, "A Night on the Red Carpet," was a huge success, generating over \$63,000 in much needed income for Episcopal Social Services programs and services.

With the glitz of Hollywood, the event was attended by over 200 ESS friends and supporters. Thank you to our sponsors: Linder & Associates, Schaefer Johnson Cox Frey Architecture, Mike Steven Volkswagen, Ron Allen Auction Service, Carlos O'Kelly's, and Southwest National Bank. We had a blast! Hope you can join us next year.

Breakthrough Club helps 'decriminalize' mental illness

The number of people who are inmates in the Kansas Corrections System has increased 126 percent since 2006. The joint report from the Treatment Advocacy Center and the National Sheriff's

Association, published April 8, 2014, states, “Prisons and jails have become America’s ‘new asylums.’ The number of individuals with serious mental illness in prisons and jails now exceeds the number in state psychiatric hospitals tenfold.”

The Breakthrough Club is the right model to work with those with mental illness and at high risk of becoming incarcerated. The clubhouse offers an evidence-based model of success for its “members” — individuals with mental illness — where they are treated as valued contributors to the rest of the group and the community. This model provides dignity of self-worth, and self-determination for those who have been marginalized in the past.

The Lattner Family Foundation-supported LUCK project (Living in an Unrestricted Community with Kindness) is starting to help those with severe and persistent mental illness with extra community support to help them live a life of recovery and not be incarcerated. LUCK will serve adults age 17 and older who have been diagnosed with severe and persistent mental illnesses and are residents of Sedgwick or Butler counties.

Partner Highlight: WPD's Homeless Outreach Team



During more than 15 years on the Wichita Police Department, Officer Nate Schwiethale has seen firsthand the problem of chronic homelessness.

“I’d see the same homeless people going in and out of jail for vagrancy, intoxication or panhandling,” he said. “It was like a revolving door for them.”

Between 2009 and 2011, the problem only got worse, with the number of homeless here doubling to about 140. That’s when Schwiethale began looking to other communities for programs designed to get and keep people off the streets. In February 2013 he helped launch Wichita Police Department’s own Homeless Outreach Team, or HOT.

Patterned after a successful program in Colorado Springs, Colorado, HOT bridges the gap between the police, the homeless and agencies, like Episcopal Social Services, that provide food, shelter, and physical or mental health care. The goal is to get homeless people the help they need, keep them off

the street — and out of jail.

While homeless rates nationwide are skyrocketing, Wichita's HOT and its partner agencies have helped rates here drop by 72 percent, to just 39 in the most recent survey.

Together, Schwiethale and the other officers on the team — Dave Nienstedt, Lisa Berg and Sgt. Brett Stull — answer about 7,000 calls for help a month.

“But we wouldn't be successful if it weren't for the agencies we partner with, like Episcopal Social Services,” he said.

Schwiethale says the team particularly appreciates the ESS philosophy, that it is here to “give a hand up, not just a hand out,” by requiring participants to enroll in its services to help them get out of homelessness.

ESS's payee program, which manages funds for the chronically homeless so their money goes toward food and housing instead of alcohol or drugs, also is an extremely effective tool in helping keep people off the streets, he added.

“For people like this, jail is the last resort,” said Schwiethale. “Thanks to this program, we're seeing a huge reduction in the homeless population — but we wouldn't exist at all if it weren't for our agency partners.”

The program officers can be reached at 316-854-3013.

HOT and ESS: Making a difference together — George was released from jail after serving a sentence for a probation violation. As a result of a new relationship with the Wichita Police Department Homeless Outreach Team, George became client of the ESS representative payee program. His ESS representative payee provided him with a list of potential housing options and a referral for help in getting furniture and other household supplies.

Within two weeks, George was able to find a home, despite his criminal record and a past eviction. His landlord was happy to know that George's rent would be paid in a timely manner because of the payee program, and George is excited about finally having a place to call his own.

Small ways you can help us help others

You can help further the mission of Episcopal Social Services with your donation of items like these:

- Heavy-duty paper shredder
- Microwave oven
- Toolbox filled with an assortment of household tools
- Portable carpet steamer/cleaner
- Cordless drill
- Wok and juicer for our kitchen

For more information on how to provide these things, contact [David Kapten](#).

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