

Artists Helping the Homeless

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www.ahh.org

MISSION

Reduce the need and cost of care for the homeless by:

Providing aid with respect.
Addressing underlying causes.
Advocating for those seeking to leave the street.
Working with - rather than - duplicating existing services.
Raising awareness of homelessness.

ABOUT US

Artists Helping the Homeless (AHH) creates highly personalized solutions utilizing available services to meet individual needs. AHH's innovative approach is efficient and improves outcomes for the homeless as well as safety net providers. This intra agency collaboration fosters communication, coordination and client engagement. Services are provided free of charge.

PROGRAMS

MEALS. Meals prepared by local churches and groups are served on Sunday evenings at Mill Creek Park in Kansas City and Thursday nights at Center of Grace in Olathe. The meals establish consistent contact with the homeless and build trust between the community and AHH staff.

GAP SERVICES. Police departments, commuter stations, libraries, businesses, shelters and area homeless all rely on AHH's gap services to fill voids in the local safety net. Known as the **BE THE CHANGE** program, services include but are not limited to transportation from domestic violence shelters to medical, legal and housing appointments; transportation from the street or hospital to area shelters. Additionally, AHH provides food, shelter and help returning to supportive hometowns for homeless individuals or stranded travelers.

DISCHARGE PLANNING & EXECUTION. Hospitals, prisons and safety net agencies call upon AHH for discharge planning assistance. The organization's knowledge of capacity and requisitions at local agencies assures a "warm hand-off." AHH is unique in its ability to transport individuals to new facilities and assist with medication, identification, rent and other requirements to ensure admittance. In the event a bed is not immediately available, AHH can offer temporarily housing at its respite facilities. And when appropriate, AHH staff will follow-up to provide wrap-around services.

RESIDENCE FOR YOUNG ADULTS. AHH's two respite homes provide food, shelter and basic needs for young adult

HISTORY

Local entrepreneur and artist, Kar Woo, founded Artists Helping the Homeless, a 501(c)(3), in 2008 following his own experience with the homeless in a park near his midtown business. To help, Woo started a weekly meal program. But he was determined to do more. After familiarizing himself with the system, he assisted dozens by eliminating barriers to existing services. Now in its 12th year, AHH has become an indispensable resource for the homeless in Kansas City.

THE COST OF DOING NOTHING:

\$5,390

The Kansas City Missouri Police Department estimates the cost of managing a homeless individual in and out of the ER at \$5,390.

Instead of doing nothing, Woo launched the **BE THE CHANGE** program in 2009, providing transportation for the homeless between existing agencies. This gap previously left many individuals vulnerable to recidivism, despite costing the city millions of dollars every year.

Since its founding, AHH has identified even more gaps, which the organization has proactively and continually worked to fill.

AT A GLANCE

Clients Served: 2,000 annually

Respite Houses: 2

Transitional Housing: 2

Be the Change Vans: 7

Full-Time Employees: 14

Part-Time Employees: 7

males who have been alienated from families and the very agencies that could help them. The program allows individuals to identify and address the issues that led to homelessness. The goal is to foster an environment where residents are able to not just survive but thrive.

Residents find gainful employment, attend NA/AA meetings, all court mandated activities, community service projects, group counseling and coping skills sessions. They have access to on-site medical and dental clinics staffed by World Outreach Foundation, physical fitness activities, educational and vocational training, social reintegration programs as well as legal, counseling and other professional services.

Additionally, transitional apartments are available for individuals who have jobs, but lack resources, peer support and credit, legal or housing histories to establish housing on their own. The facilities provide a clean and sober environment, peer support and access to AHH services, if needed. Residents pay rent and are responsible for their own living expenses.

COMMUNITY-FOCUSED PROGRAMS. Area schools and universities have turned to AHH to provide training for local students. UMKC undergraduate and graduate nursing students can opt to do a rotation with the **BE THE CHANGE** program. College social work students have interned with the organization, and high school students as well as Eagle Scouts have received hands on experience with AHH.

Prior to the pandemic, AHH curated exhibits by homeless artists displayed at Museum at Prairiefire, MIRROR, Douglas County Courthouse and the Johnson County Central Resource Library. AHH sculptures in Parkville, North Kansas City and the Healing Garden at Saint Luke's Plaza Hospital have raised awareness of homeless issues

FACILITIES



BODHI HOUSE
Kansas City, MO
Respite House
Est. February 2015



KAIROS HOUSE
Lawrence, KS
Respite House
Est. October 2019

The respite house concept was created for individuals completing detox while awaiting inpatient treatment programs. Wait times can be as long as eight weeks in limbo, which often leads to relapse and a waste of the community's \$3,000-\$5,000 investment in recovery efforts. The original respite house (Bodhi House) was established in February 2015. Due to its overwhelming success, a second respite house (Kairos House) was launched in 2019. The concept has now been replicated in Douglas County, MO, as well as Johnson County, KS, and Jackson County, MO.



FINNEGAN PLACE
Kansas City, MO
Transitional Apartments
Est. September 2016



MERAKI HOUSE
Lawrence, KS
Transitional Apartments
Opening July 2021

The transitional apartments were designed for individuals unable to find housing conducive to sobriety after graduating from AHH's young adult program. Finnegan Place consists of eleven 1-bedroom and six 2-bedroom apartments. AHH converted the twelfth 1-bedroom unit into a free medical and dental clinic where program participants receive proactive and preventive services, including physical examinations upon intake. This summer, AHH will launch Meraki House in Lawrence, KS.

POWERING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

Despite the pandemic and ongoing closures, AHH was able to operate at approximately 75%, serving a total of 1,568 individuals in 2020.

Occupancy at the residences remained near capacity, although turnover was markedly lower as individuals were reluctant to risk homelessness during the pandemic. Resident and meal programs adapted to comply with Health Department regulations.

As the number of COVID cases increased, AHH curtailed several gap programs, while working through interrupted access to facilities in need of discharge planning services. Agencies reduced intake capacity and admission times were severely delayed. Hospitals were forced to choose between holding patients with nowhere to go or risk their return – potentially with COVID.

In May, AHH created a Shelter in Place program (SIP) to bridge this gap and flatten the curve.

AHH contracted a local hotel, also facing pandemic-related challenges, to provide temporary housing with full wrap-around services, including assistance with establishing longer term arrangements. AHH staff were present on-site 24/7 to aid residents and limit exposure to COVID. Food, shelter, medical supplies and transportation were provided free of charge.

Originally planned for two months of service, the SIP program operated 11 months, housing 220 residents for a total of 3,006 nights. None of the residents contracted COVID.

Most of the SIP residents (72%) came directly from hospitals, but nobody was readmitted during their stay. The average occupancy lasted 15 days, with 77% returning to their own place, family or longer-term placement at other facilities.

Had the 140 hospital referrals been released even a single day earlier, the community would have saved an estimated \$300,000 – and the SIP program would have paid for itself.

Multiple foundations and churches stepped up to continue the program, while the city of Lawrence replicated the AHH model, opening a similar facility in Douglas County from October 2020 to January 2021. More than half (56%) of its SIP residents came directly from prisons.

2020: BY THE NUMBERS

TOTAL INTAKE	2019	2020
Individuals Assisted (Unduplicated)	2,039	1,568
Individuals Housed Per Night	51	56

	BODHI	KAIROS	FINNEGAN	SIP	TOTAL
RESIDENTS	78	29	50	150	307
TOTAL NIGHTS	4,518	2,444	9,044	2,780	18,786
AVERAGE OCCUPANCY	12	8	25	11	56

DISCHARGED TO:	BODHI	KAIROS	FINNEGAN	SIP
Own/Family	44%	54%	85%	25%
AHH	31%	14%	6%	21%
Other Agency	11%	-	9%	20%
Treatment/Program	8%	14%	-	16%