

ARTISTS HELPING THE HOMELESS NEWSLETTER

2025 CITIZEN OF THE YEAR BECAUSE OF YOUR SUPPORT - ALL THIS IS POSSIBLE



United Services of Johnson County presents multiple Human Service Awards each year, which pay tribute to individuals and organizations making a difference in the Johnson County community. Kar Woo was the 2025 Citizen of the Year!

Kar Woo has transformed small acts of compassion into a powerful network of support for people experiencing homelessness. Since launching AHH in 2008, he has built an organization known as “the safety net for the safety net,” filling critical service gaps and strengthening partnerships across the region.

In 2024, AHH supported 211 Johnson County residents through nearly 9,000 service interactions and nights of housing. Kar’s impact deepened with the opening of the Concord House in 2022—AHH’s first respite home in Johnson County—providing transitional and supportive housing for individuals navigating homelessness, mental illness or substance use challenges. Congratulations Kar! Well deserved!

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OPPORTUNITIES](#)

[ART SHOW COMING
THIS SPRING](#)



Ingram's Magazine - Local Hero 2025 - Kar Woo!

In Kansas City, where commerce pulses and opportunity appears abundant, the reality is more complicated. Not every need is met, not every plate is filled, and not every life reflects the prosperity celebrated in boardrooms and balance sheets. Each year, Ingram's pauses to recognize those who work quietly beyond the spotlight, individuals whose generosity forms the deeper fabric of our community. This year, Kar Woo stands among those Local Heroes.

Woo's journey to Kansas City began far from it, in the crowded streets of Hong Kong. Raised in poverty by a mother who fled Communist China as a teenager, he learned resilience early. "We had very little," he recalls, "but she encouraged my sister and me to reach for our dreams." Paired with the heroic codes of the kung-fu novels he devoured, those lessons shaped a lifelong principle: help the next one up.

That principle was tested soon after he arrived in Kansas, when an apartment fire left him homeless. In that moment of loss, the community stepped in, donations from a mall wishing well, shelter in a co-worker's family basement. Decades later, visiting that same woman in hospice, Woo was able to fulfill her final request to help her family, completing a circle of grace that would define his life's work.

Years later, as an artist and gallery owner near the Country Club Plaza, Woo encountered unhoused neighbors while walking his dog. He started simply, 20 sandwiches on a Sunday when no meals were served. From that act, Artists Helping the Homeless was born.

Today, Woo's impact is measured not in recognition sought, but in lives stabilized, families restored, and systems bridged through transportation, respite housing, and wrap-around care. His story embodies exactly what Ingram's Local Heroes were created to honor: action over observation, humility over acclaim, and a sustained commitment to lifting others, one person, one moment, one community at a time.

AHH Presents - Be The Change An Art Exhibit

CENTRAL RESOURCE LIBRARY, MARCH 14 - MAY 3



“Be The Change” is a powerful exhibition by Artists Helping the Homeless (AHH) that explores the journey from hardship to healing through the eyes and hands of those who have lived it. Featuring artwork by individuals once unhoused and the artists who support them, the show transforms personal struggle into shared strength.

Through paintings, photography, sculpture and digital media, AHH residents reveal the human stories behind homelessness — stories of creativity, courage and community. The exhibition includes “The Car Launch,” a performance and video installation symbolizing renewal and the shift from crisis to stability.

Presented by AHH, a social service organization serving seven counties in Kansas and Missouri, the exhibition reflects its mission: to meet people where they are and help them move forward through compassion and creativity.

ARTISTS HELPING THE HOMELESS
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