

# ARTISTS HELPING THE HOMELESS NEWSLETTER

## 2026 HEART OF THE PACK AWARD

ZACH LEHR - COMMUNITY MANAGER -



Artists Helping the Homeless is incredibly proud to celebrate Zach Lehr, Community Manager, who recently received the Heart of the Pack Award at Metropolitan Community College.

This award recognizes students who embody the powerful idea of turning adversity into advocacy. Zach represents that spirit in every way. His story is one of perseverance, commitment, and the willingness to use his own journey as a source of strength for others.

During his time at Metropolitan Community College, Zach earned a recovery-based scholarship, excelled academically, joined Phi Theta Kappa, and completed his Associate of Arts degree in December 2025. Each of these accomplishments reflects not only his intelligence and work ethic, but also his determination to keep building a future rooted in purpose.

Now, Zach is preparing to take the next step in his education by beginning at the Bloch School of Management next semester. It is an exciting new chapter, and one that speaks to the hard work, discipline, and hope that have carried him this far.

We are beyond thankful to have Zach as part of Artists Helping the Homeless. His dedication, perseverance, and heart for others continue to inspire everyone around him. Zach's journey reminds us that recovery is not only about rebuilding a life, but also about becoming a light for others who are finding their way forward.

Congratulations, Zach. Your future is bright, and we cannot wait to see all that you accomplish.



## Kar Woo Named 2026 Marion Nichols Caring Service Award Winner!

We are excited to share that Kar Woo, Executive Director of Artists Helping the Homeless, has been named the 2026 Marion Nichols Caring Service Award winner.

Kar was nominated for his extraordinary commitment to helping Kansans move from crisis toward long-term stability and self-sufficiency. For more than 17 years, Kar has worked at the intersection of homelessness, reentry, recovery, and community reintegration, creating practical pathways that restore dignity, independence, and hope.

Through Artists Helping the Homeless, Kar has helped build transitional and respite housing programs that fill critical gaps between incarceration, hospital discharge, shelters, and permanent housing. His work strengthens partnerships with courts, hospitals, law enforcement, and community providers to ensure people are not left behind.

Kar leads with both compassion and accountability. He meets people without judgment while helping them build structure, responsibility, and belief in what is possible. His work reflects the heart of Marion Nichols' legacy: empowering people through practical support, unwavering belief, and a clear path forward.

Congratulations, Kar Woo. This honor is well deserved

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# 2026 Non-Profit Connect Persevering Advocate



## PERSEVERING ADVOCATE Artists Helping the Homeless

Kar Woo, Founder and Program Director of Artists Helping the Homeless (AHH) emigrated from Hong Kong to pursue the American Dream, studying business, psychology, and counseling at the Universities of Iowa and Kansas. While operating his Kansas City business, J.M. Porters, Kar encountered the local unhoused population and recognized that simple, targeted acts of support could catalyze profound change. In 2008, he founded AHH to formalize these efforts.

At the request of Saint Luke's Hospital, Kar developed a groundbreaking, transportation-based hospital diversion program to address the rising number of unhoused individuals in emergency departments. This initiative evolved into a sophisticated network of care, including a respite home for men awaiting treatment and a system for inter-agency coordination.

Studies confirm that AHH's programs have saved millions in emergency service costs while improving outcomes for safety-net agencies. Under Kar's leadership, AHH has removed systemic barriers for tens of thousands of individuals, helping them reclaim their own path toward the American Dream.

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