

The JOSEPH HOUSE



Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary

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Dear Friends of Joseph House:

Many times in our ministry with the poor we ask ourselves, "How do they do it?"

How does the homeless man walk miles up and down the highway in the bitter cold? How does the elderly woman live on \$700 per month while paying rent of \$600?

For the hardships in life we have been spared, we must give thanks to God. We meet people every day at the Joseph House and think, "There but for the grace of God go I." Maybe you have had similar thoughts. They seem to come more frequently as we get older.

One thing we have learned is that an excellent way to show our gratitude to God is by being the answer to someone else's prayer. We all have blessings to share, both material and spiritual, and to loosen our grip on them is to let them flourish. It doesn't take much to brighten someone's day: we remember clearly when a young teenage girl was almost in tears because her family received instant hot chocolate mix in their bag from our Food Pantry. We shared in this little joy, but it was humbling. We take so much for granted.

The Joseph House is a collective effort. Every donation counts: they add up so we can address the needs, both large and small, of many people. Last year at our Crisis Center, we responded to **1,525 requests for financial assistance**. We wrote checks to help low-income people pay for housing, utilities, transportation, medicine, appliances, and other urgent needs. Roughly 30 individuals and families received help each week during 2016.

Here are some other figures from last year:

Average number of households receiving food from our Pantry per month: **671**

Of the people receiving food, percentage who are children: **34**

Number of bags of groceries distributed: **16,239**

Number of meals served in our Soup Kitchen: **12,005**

Average number of requests for services (food, laundry) from our Hospitality Room for the Homeless per month: **479**

Number of children who received Christmas presents in December: **756**

Number of winter coats distributed in December: **210**



Let us love not in word or speech
but in deed and truth.

1 John 3:18



Prayer Requests: use return envelope or e-mail to LSJM@comcast.net

In your charity, please remember my special prayer intentions:

These numbers reflect the hard work, sacrifices, and generosity of many people. When we decide to put love of neighbor into action, we make a difference!

There are stories behind every number, stories of people facing misfortune and looking for hope. Here are a few of them:

Gina, 37, lost everything when she was laid off from work. She and her teenage daughter were homeless. We met them on a cold afternoon when it was starting to snow. Since the homeless shelter was full, we paid for three nights for Gina and her daughter at a motel (\$183). That would give them time for two beds to open up at the shelter. Gina was due to start a new job as a waitress. We gave her \$20 for a taxi so she wouldn't have to walk to work in the worst of the cold and wet weather.

Marissa is 28 and works as a housekeeper. Her hours vary each week, making it difficult to budget her money when her income is uncertain. Earning less than \$1,000 per month, Marissa is lucky when she has enough for her basic expenses. Daycare alone for her two children takes a good chunk of her paycheck. When her car needed a new battery and tire, Marissa fell short on the rent money. We sent \$150 to her landlord so Marissa would not lose her rent-subsidized apartment.

Mary Lou is in her late sixties and retired after working for the same company for 30 years. She is a widow and lives in a trailer park. Her trailer has seen better days: the water heater had a bad leak and then the furnace died. Replacing them both was an impossible task on her fixed income. Thankfully, the Joseph House was able to purchase a new water heater for Mary Lou (\$389). A new furnace is too expensive, but Mary Lou said she can get by with a portable space heater that she borrowed.

Meghan, 24, and her four children are staying at a shelter for victims of domestic violence. Meghan's husband physically beat her inside her car, pushed her out and then drove off. He abandoned the car, but not before damaging the locks to keep Meghan from using it. Her husband was later captured by the police and arrested. Meghan came to see us at our Crisis Center. We contacted a locksmith and paid him \$150 to have the car locks replaced.



Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Whitney, 52, works as a school custodian. She has been raising her eleven-year-old grandson since he was born. The parents are not involved with him and Whitney receives no child support. Regarding public assistance, she gets only \$16 a month in Food Stamps (or SNAP). Whitney fell behind in paying her rent because her paycheck is being garnished for unpaid medical bills. We sent \$200 to her landlord.

Jordan, 26, has three children. She works at a fast-food restaurant to support them. The cost of living keeps going up; Jordan is always letting go of something to take care of something else. Last spring she couldn't pay her gas bill so it was turned off. She managed without it until last December, when the house was getting too cold for her children. The Joseph House paid \$200 to the gas company to help get the heat back on in Jordan's home.

Update from the Joseph House Workshop: The Workshop currently has five residents all of whom are employed. We are in the process of screening applicants to fill the three available beds. One of our residents is in the process of entering the armed forces. Regarding former residents, we have men who have been successfully in recovery since they were here in 2012. We are pleased by the fact that several of our graduates drop by frequently to “touch base” with us.

Editor's Note: The Workshop is not an emergency shelter, but a long-term program for men who are homeless and either not working or not working enough to support themselves. The men in the Workshop receive a place to live and opportunities to address health and recovery issues, undertake job training, and develop other aspects of personal growth. The length of time each resident spends in the program will vary; he may take as little as a few months or up to two years to finish. The Workshop opened in 2005 and is located next door to the Crisis Center.

Valentine's Day is the anniversary of the opening of the Joseph House Crisis Center. It is now 33 years old and truly an expression of love for all people. Our volunteers especially give it a lot of "heart." Thank you for your efforts in keeping both the Crisis Center and the Workshop alive and well.

With our prayers for your health and happiness,

Your Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary