



The Benefit of the Doubt

Last month we talked a little bit about our friends without an address; who they are, what their journeys look like, etc. This month, I want to take a look at another very important part of our Phoenix Day Time Drop In Center: our friends from the community.

Who are our friends from the community? They are the awesome volunteers who share their time, experience, love and friendship with us every day. Just as we refer to the homeless as "friends without an address", because that is what they are, we refer to our volunteers as "friends from the community" or "our friends with an address." Everyone in the Phoenix is a friend. Friendship is a building block for healing and such a powerful force that helps to overcome some of life's toughest hurdles. The beautiful part about the friendships formed at the Phoenix is that they are often a two-way street. Our friends without an address look forward to seeing our friends from the community. They look forward to being able to connect with someone and be themselves in a

judgement-free environment; to be able to play games, music and laugh together. It is often a respite from their lonely, isolated lives. But our friends from the community look forward to seeing our friends without an address just as much, if not more! I have heard countless stories from our friends from the community about how a friend without an address has impacted their life and changed them somehow.

Jane is a regular friend from the community who spends time with us on Thursday afternoons. Jane is a relatively quiet woman, a bit on the shy side. She had limited experience

SNEEK PEAK

02 Friends from the Community

04 Hello & Farewell

06 Attitude of Gratitude

with the homeless before coming to volunteer with C-U at Home. She took the time to explain to us, how several weeks back, she was at home one day when she noticed a strange truck in her neighborhood. Several of her neighbors had posted on the neighborhood website about the suspicious truck and the man driving the truck. Apparently, the man was going door to door offering to look at roofs and give estimates for any needed repairs. The neighbors were very suspicious and negative about this man, noting that it might be a scam and that he may try to rob the houses in the neighborhood, so everyone had better beware!

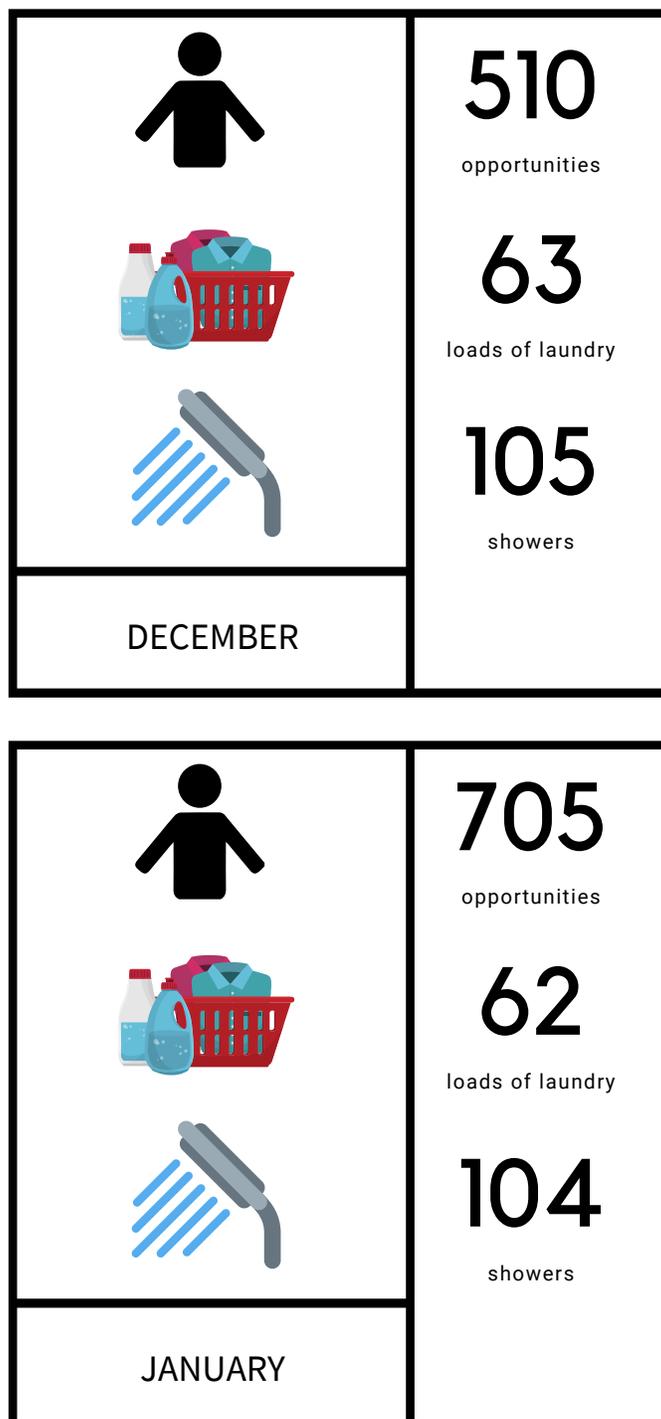
Jane was struck by her neighbors' mostly unanimous negative perceptions of this man whom they had never met. And, with tears in her eyes, she explained that just a few months before, she would probably have had the same reaction as her neighbors. But since coming into the Phoenix, forcing herself out of her comfort zone and ultimately forming strong bonds with some of our friends without addresses, her perspective on that suspicious stranger had changed. She did not automatically assume the worst, as most of her neighbors did. She found herself giving this man the benefit of the doubt, something that she had learned to do after getting to know our friends at the Phoenix.

She learned that just because a situation appears a certain way, doesn't make it so. A homeless person isn't a suspicious, lazy, alcoholic with no friends or family. A homeless person is a human being deserving of respect and kindness; deserving the benefit of the doubt.

Our friends from the community are such an integral part of what we do at the drop-in center. One rule that our founder, Melany Jackson, established during the birth of the Phoenix was that we would never open our doors if we didn't

have at least one friend from the community present. Being a friend from the community is one of our most powerful volunteer opportunities available through C-U at Home and certainly has the potential to be life-changing! If you are interested in being a friend from the community, please contact me at kj@cuathome.us for more information!

Snapshot of Services



ONE WINTER NIGHT 2019 RECAP



One Winter Night, our annual community awareness event, was held on **Friday, February 1, 2019** from 6pm-6am. Over 300 box dweller participants braved the winter cold as they slept on the streets in a cardboard box to get a first hand experience of what it might be like to be homeless. We truly don't have words to express our gratefulness for the outpouring of support that was shown from the community. Our overall fundraising goal of \$250,000 was **SURPASSED** and as we look ahead to expanding our services to include men's emergency shelter this year, we are beyond excited! Check out a few snapshots and stats below as a recap of the event.

\$269,160.12
AMOUNT OF DOLLARS RAISED



320
box dwellers

216
volunteers



58
business sponsors





Hello

ALETA KEITH

Administrative Director

As we often do, my husband and I were “dreaming” one evening. I don’t remember exactly what his contribution to the conversation was (some variation of “I’d like to travel to ____” or “I want to build ____” most likely), but I will never forget what I said that night. “I’d love to quit my job and volunteer for C-U at Home full-time.” That week, responding to an email from Rob and Bailie, I mentioned our talk. The reply caught me a little off guard, “we are beginning a job search for...”.

Truth be told, I LOVED my job, and I was certainly comfortable in it. But I’ve learned in some not-so-subtle ways that God doesn’t necessarily like “comfortable”. Over the next couple of months, many discussions with Rob, and lots of wrestling with God over the details, His plan was revealed in a way that could not have been clearer to me. When presented with the newly-created job description, it was the perfect culmination of the experience I have gained at each of my previous positions.

To say that I felt “divinely led” to this place at this time would be an understatement. I am so grateful for the huge, unexpected curve-ball God threw my way, leading me to this new position with a ministry that has been near and dear to my heart for several years now.

Over the last month, the decision to join the C-U at Home team has been affirmed more times than I could begin to count. I look forward to seeing this ministry continue to grow and help our most vulnerable population, meeting them where they are and showing them grace and the love of Jesus.

It has been wonderful to meet so many of you over the past few weeks and I would love to get to know each of you. Let me know if I can buy you a cup of coffee and sit down with you for a chat, and certainly if you are at The Phoenix, please stop by and introduce yourself!

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. - Romans 15:13





Farewell

BAILIE PORTER

Communications Manager

For the last two and a half years I've had the privilege of working at C-U at Home, first as the Office Manager, and then as the Communications Manager. As I prepare to leave and get married, I'm excited to step into the new adventure God has for me, yet sad to leave this place that has become like a home. Our staff, friends without addresses, and volunteers have become another family that I get to see each day. It's hard to put into words what my time here has meant to me.

My heart has always been passionate about sharing the stories of our friends without addresses, of our residents, and of those whose lives have literally been changed because of what we do here. One of my favorite stories while being here has been that of seeing a friend without an address take steps forward. We talk all the time about how these steps forward take time – time for us to get to know the person, time for them to trust us and call us friend, and time to decide whether or not they will make a change in their life. There were so many times that I became frustrated with this particular

friend because a step forward seemed so close and easy to me. I came to realize that I could not want his recovery more than he wanted it for himself. That's when my work family taught me to sit back, dig my heels in, and just love him as any friend would. It looked a lot like just being there to check in on him and encourage him, even when he made poor financial decisions or was seen entering a liquor store.

Through it all, I've been able to witness my friend through each step - getting to know us, developing a relationship of trust with us, and finally making a decision about the path he would take. He was and is one of my closest friends without an address! Slowly, but surely, I've watched him take steps to better himself, fall back down, and then get back up again. I'm excited to share that in the past few months he has surrendered and given up his alcohol addiction! He is working a great job and is one of our recovery house residents. His journey is still in progress, but as his friend, I am so proud of how far he has come!

I encourage you to dive deep into the stories we share and to think about coming to spend an afternoon at our daytime drop-in center with our friends without an address. It's been a joy to serve here at C-U at Home and I couldn't be finishing up my time feeling more blessed!

P.S. While you're at it, don't forget to share your own personal story with those around you because it's the most powerful thing you have!



Executive Director CORNER

Dear Friend,

Have you ever been around someone who is negative all the time? What is it about that person who just popped into your head that bothers you? Does he always bring others down or does she always focus on the things that are going poorly? We all know those people who light up the room when they leave it or the person who can have nine situations going well in his life but he chooses to focus on the one situation that is going bad. At the heart of that negativity, I wonder if that person is simply lacking in gratitude. **As we are nearly two months into our new year, are there areas in your life where you can increase in gratitude?** As I look back at January and February, there are a multitude of things that have happened causing me to feel thankful, grateful, and humbled.

During our One Winter Night 2019 season, **we had the honor and privilege of speaking in front of 19 different churches, connecting with print/radio/TV media to promote the event, having over 300 box dwellers and 216 volunteers participate, and raising over \$269,000 dollars!** Even though the cold weather struck hard the week of the event (with “feels like” temps reaching -45 degrees), this gave us the opportunity to be even more in the forefront of the minds of those in the community. This cold weather gave us an even greater platform to share about the needs of those on the streets. I am beyond grateful and humbled by the support we have received during One Winter Night 2019 and appreciate the opportunity to show gratitude to the hundreds of people who helped make it a huge success!

I have heard it said that "gratitude" is an action word. There has always been and will always be a million circumstances happening at the same time in our lives. But we must continually exercise gratitude. **God has blessed us with breath in our lungs and each day we are alive is a new opportunity to have impact, to have influence, and to breathe life and hope into those around us.**

I pray that as winter comes to a close over the next few weeks that you will take this opportunity to make “gratitude” an action word in your life. May God bless you as we prepare to turn the calendar to spring and may we remain **grateful for every blessing** we have been given.

**In His Service,
Rob Dalhaus III**

