FAST DAY SUCCESS

The 2017 Fast Day Goal has been met! The critical funds raised through this campaign are used to literally keep the lights on, the doors open, and the meals on the tables.

Through your gracious generosity, and the able leadership of Jim and Marian Steffner, we start 2018 ready to make a difference in the lives of those most in need. We express a sincere thank you to all who gave. We will continue to work to meet basic needs, restore hope, and help people find self-sufficiency.

For over thirty years, Fast Day has offered a practical way to help others in need. Whether it is through the literal fasting of a meal, a food drive through your workplace or church, or as a result of your generous financial gifts, Fast Day brings us all together to help our neighbors in need.

Thank you for supporting Fast Day and the mission of our Community Kitchen.

How May We Help You?

Homelessness is not a chronic condition. In fact, the average episode of homelessness in the US is less than three months! Locally, most who seek our services do so for the first time, and they often come to the Kitchen not knowing where to get help or how to navigate the ever-confusing system of services in our community.

Recognizing the confusion and stress of homelessness, we’ve changed the way we greet those coming for services by adding a “welcome center” near the front door. In addition, we’ve moved things around across the block to create a more open space and improve “traffic flow” for all who visit.

For volunteer Cindy White, the welcome desk is a great place to meet everyone who comes to the Kitchen: guests, volunteers, staff and donors. For new volunteers, such as Makenzi Coleman, the desk provides an opportunity to learn more about our community and its resources. For those we serve, the center offers hope and direction.

If you are interested in volunteering at the welcome desk, visit our website’s volunteer page or email our volunteer coordinator at: volunteer@homelesschattanooga.org
Planning for the Future

2017 marked thirty-five years of the Chattanooga Community Kitchen’s service to our neighbors in need. While there was not much fanfare surrounding the event, behind the scenes something significant occurred.

A group of staff and board members met throughout the fall to create a strategic plan to set future goals and priorities. Building on past successes, the plan establishes a path forward for the next few years, with a goal of resolving homelessness in our community.

However, this group of leaders did not act alone. Several weeks of interviews among community leaders, Kitchen employees and service recipients helped to give impressions of our work and suggestions for the future.

As a result, a new mission statement and several key focus areas have been identified: communication, both internal and external; job training to move guests into sustainable employment; innovative fundraising to attract supporters to the Kitchen; the identification of more permanent supportive housing opportunities; and a definitive, collaborative discussion about the construction of a temporary shelter for individuals.

With the leadership of our board, a supportive community and a clear plan for the future, we’re already starting to tackle the plan’s goals as we work to “meet the most basic needs of hungry, homeless and vulnerable people in our community while offering a clear path to self-sufficiency.”

See more and check out the plan at our new website below.

New Website!

A few months ago, Make-A-Mark Chattanooga brought together dozens of local developers and designers to volunteer their time to create a variety of promotional materials for non-profits during a one-day, 12-hour marathon. We were selected as one of the beneficiaries. The result: we received an incredible new website and a redesigned logo! It’s a work in progress, so expect more changes to come, but check it out today by visiting http://www.homelesschattanooga.org

Thank you, Make-A-Mark team!
In Their Own Words

Tommie Pruitt’s service to those experiencing homelessness goes well beyond the Community Kitchen. “Back then, the word ‘homelessness’ didn’t exist.”

Tommie was hired as a program director for the City of Chattanooga in 1973, but as economic and social conditions changed over the next several years, city leadership would adjust to meet local needs. “We were having to figure things out as we went; by the early 1980’s, we had large groups of people living on the street.”

Tommie would later head up Chattanooga’s Community Action Program, an initiative that grew out of the War on Poverty to aid individuals in poverty and homelessness.

“I’ve never felt like any of the work I did was a job; it was always a mission and I enjoyed it so much.” Tommie would go on to serve as the first president of both the regional and state homeless coalitions as well as a representative on the national coalition.

Since his retirement in 2010, Tommie has continued to serve those experiencing homelessness through his work as property manager at our House of All Souls, a home for men who have struggled with homelessness and disability.

Originally a vision of Brother Ron Fender, the House of All Souls was the first home in our Supportive Housing Program.

Reflecting on his years of service, Tommie says, “I’m committed to it, and I enjoy it. I have dealt with a variety of situations both good and bad, but regardless of people’s actions, you must show them you care.”

Circle K Stores Offer Helping Hand

With more than 600 people turning to us each day, we go through a lot of food and supplies at the Kitchen. Fortunately, we have great neighbors. One of those is Circle K - last summer, they came to us wanting to help.

After learning a bit about what we do, the North Georgia team had an idea - first, they’d tackle coffee. After all, they serve at least as much as we do! Over the next weeks, they began promoting a drive, asking customers to donate spare change to help supply the over 30 gallons of coffee we serve each day. So far, they’ve donated 42 cases...and counting. But, they didn’t stop there!

Their next project, Operation Helping Hands, focused on providing disposable razors for the Kitchen; like coffee, we go through a lot!

So, over the past months they matched each shaving kit purchase by donating a 2 pack to the Kitchen. ‘Lil Drug Store Products also partnered with the project and contributed 288 of the 1,875 shave kits donated.

Thank you Circle K and all who gave!
A Note From Our Director

What’s in a mission?

Each time I visit with volunteers or guests and show them around the Kitchen, I hear a similar phrase: “I had no idea.” No idea that there were so many programs. No idea we were open every day. No idea so many people were in need. No idea we served so many meals, helped so many find housing, kept so many safe and off the streets. And, for most, no idea of just how big a goal we’ve set for ourselves.

This past fall, our board and staff completed and adopted a strategic plan. As a part of that plan, we’ve adopted a new, clarified mission statement to guide all that we do and summarize what we hope to accomplish.

*The mission of the Chattanooga Community Kitchen is to meet the most basic needs of hungry, homeless and vulnerable people in our community while offering a clear path to self-sufficiency.*

To accomplish this mission, we’ve set specific measurable goals related to housing, shelter, programs and communication. These goals share one common thread: people - the same people referenced in our first mission statement, the people we serve without expectation of recompense, but out of love and compassion for mankind.

You can see from our annual report that we serve a lot of people – several thousand each year; many of those folks are considered chronically homeless, the most difficult to help and toughest to house. But, each of those people has a unique story and most importantly, each deserves an opportunity to succeed. And that’s where you come in – our volunteers, our donors, our supporters, our community.

Just about two years ago, I walked through the Kitchen on a tour with a good friend. It was a rough day; the seats were all full. The weather was wet. The floors were dirty, and a few folks were in foul moods, to say the least. As we were finishing the tour, my friend Jim Steffner looked over at me and said “you know, there’s not a single person in here one wouldn’t want to help.” Not only did his words remind me of you, our friends and supporters, they summarized what we do and why – meet the most basic needs of hungry, homeless and vulnerable people while offering a clear path to self-sufficiency.

If that’s not a mission, I don’t know what is.

Thank you.
2017 Annual Report

What did we do all year?

178,254 Meals Served

We have served meals every day since 1982.

41,092 Volunteer & Community Service Hours

42 Women Sheltered at St. Catherine’s Shelter

UTC Nursing Students have partnered with us to provide foot care since 2008.

Over 100 Families Housed

117 Families Served at our Maclellan Shelter for Families

1,817 in Foot Care Program

Did you know?

Families make up 1/3 of those experiencing homelessness.

42 Men Sheltered at St. Matthew’s Shelter

640 People Kept Safe in our Cold Weather Warming Shelter

Did you know?

On an average night, over 600 individuals in our area are homeless.

Over 200 Individuals Housed

Over $575,000.00 in Clothing Give–Away (6x total thrift store sales)

178 Tons of Material Recycled

Your recycling donations help create jobs for our employment training program.
Thank you for your support in 2017. Thousands of lives were influenced for the better because of your help. As we reflect on 2017, we look forward to helping even more families and individuals find their way to self-sufficiency.
Over the past five years, EMJ Corporation has helped make Christmas a lot merrier by preparing a tremendous dinner for our guests. Dozens of EMJ employees come together each year to serve our guests and spread some cheer.

Thank You, EMJ Corporation!

A Faithful Presence Around the Kitchen

On Thursday mornings in our Day Center, you will find individuals offering prayers and sharing in communion through the outreach efforts of Mission Chattanooga’s Street Chapel.

Father Dale Hall leads the team. Before serving as a pastor, he was a social worker in Chattanooga working with runaway youth and homeless families. He’s also been involved in area non-profit boards, including our own.

Part of the purpose of the Street Chapel is to be a "Faithful Presence" in the lives of those in need. They do this by being here every week or even more often (like at board meetings, bringing coffee to Day Center events, dropping off donations, etc.), and becoming a part of the community. Being known and getting to know the guests and staff is critical to their work.

Recently, as Father Dale was setting up the communion table, one guest looked at him, laughed and said, "What kind of priest has tattoos?" It was not the first time he had heard the question, so he smiled.

In Dale’s words, “later, she came up and received communion, and winked at me; [it was] very sweet.”

The Street Chapel strives to uphold the Rule of Saint Benedict which says, "Receive all as Christ."

Father Dale tries to do so and hopes others try to do so when they see him. “I need all the help I can get,” he says with a smile. Thanks, Father Dale for volunteering and Serving at CCK.
We value your support and regard ourselves as accountable not only to you but also to God for stewardship of the funds you entrust to us. We are audited by a recognized, local independent CPA firm and publish an audited annual financial statement.

The Chattanooga Community Kitchen (Chattanooga Church Ministries, Inc.) is a 501(c)3 organization with EIN 62-1151413. Qualified contributions are tax deductible per IRS regulations.

Thank you for being a part of our team as we work to change lives!