







Youth StreetReach

Youth StreetReach Mission Statement

“To integrate education, worship, and outreach in order to make youth more aware of injustice and to respect the dignity of all people, especially the lonely, lost, and disenfranchised.”

The program goals are:

-  To bring together youth and adults from different faith communities to explore the issue of homelessness on Cape Cod and to help them develop a passion for living out the message of the prophets and the Gospel in the world.
-  To empower formerly homeless and homeless individuals to use their gifts and talents in a positive way through sharing their stories
-  To help dispel the stereotypes identified with homeless individuals by spending time and sharing a meal together
-  To look at the root causes of homelessness and vision action to prevent it.
-  To provide food and clothing to the homeless
-  To have fun through praying and working together!

Youth StreetReach began in September of 2007 as a response to a request from the Housing Assistance Corporation (HAC) to provide a program to help youth understand the issue of homelessness on Cape Cod. It is loosely based on the CityReach Program in Boston sponsored by Ecclesia Ministries. Youth from St John the Evangelist Parish had participated in CityReach with Youth Minister Marilyn Lariviere and wanted to replicate it on Cape Cod. It began with an overnight gathering of youth and adults meeting homeless and formerly homeless individuals, touring areas where homeless have camped out, visiting shelters, and listening to stories. After the guests left, the youth spend time processing, sharing, watching a movie about the issue, and sleeping on the floor in the Federated Church of Hyannis. This led to the next day when 75-100 homeless folk arrived for breakfast and an opportunity to pick up donated clothing. It was so successful that a Youth StreetReach Council was formed and now seven events are held annually, including a cookout at Sea Street Beach.

The Youth StreetReach Council meets at least six times annually and oversees the events. We had received a grant in 2008 that enabled us to hire a part time staff person, but that grant has not been renewed, so we currently rely solely on volunteers. We call our group a Council rather than a Board of Directors since we feel that is a more inclusive term. It includes youth and formerly homeless individuals to provide a balance..

Our mission statement was written by Kelsey Collett, one of our teen age founders. She is now a junior in college, planning to be a social worker. It articulates what we believe, that youth learn best when service, education, and spirituality work together.

We have developed brochures . They are part of the informational packets sent annually to local churches and schools who have expressed interest in having youth participate. (Part of the packet is attached to this application Church group from all over Cape Cod have participated as well as one from Rhode Island. Barnstable High School House Masters have sent students to our program in place of detention or Saturday School. The Eddy School from Brewster and the Builders Club from Nauset Middle School have been frequent participants at the breakfasts. The Falmouth High School Girls Hockey Team made Youth StreetReach their project for the year.

We have also taken on the task of serving food to the NOAH shelter on the fifth Saturdays (four times annually) This is another way for the youth to serve. Serving at NOAH makes them realize how important it is to provide other programs for the homeless where they can interact with others in a positive manner.

What began as a one -time event has turned into much more. We have found that we are able to help our guests with other immediate needs such as overnight stays in a motel, a sleeping bag, new sneakers, etc. We receive donations from churches and individuals and have received grants from the Cape Cod Youth Empowerment Initiative, the Barnes Grant (United Church of Christ) and the Headquarters Trust (Massachusetts Jaycees) . We also have received donations from churches and individuals. In 2012 we received a donation from a couple celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversary who asked that donations from their friends and family be made to Church Women United's Outreach Programs including Youth StreetReach and Prison Ministry.

Our Program continues to grow and we typically feed 75-100 individuals at one of our breakfasts and have 20 or more youth and adults participating each time. We filmed a "Zumba" dance to the song "Go Make a Difference" for the NOAH telethon, and have participated in the National Homeless Person Memorial Service held on December 21st each year. For the past two years our youth have prepared and decorated 120 luminaria bags for the folks who have died homeless over the past 10 years to be used at the Homeless Memorial Service.

We have begun a partnership with Stop and Shop Supermarket involving their staff in helping to prepare food. Team M25 helps us with donations of socks for each event. We continue to work with NOAH, Pilot, CHAMP, and Duffy Center to provide information for the homeless folk they encounter.