MISSION MOMENTS

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WOW! What an incredible season of generosity we experienced during the Avenues for Hope campaign in December.

- Thanks to many of you, Valley Mission received over $54,000 from more than 50 donors!

This allowed us to complete installation of the entire sprinkler system - we are eagerly awaiting the opportunity to have it tested and approved. This is very exciting!
A special shoutout to everyone who created matching gift opportunities throughout the event. Their contributions sparked enthusiasm and participation, significantly boosting our fundraising.

Our next fundraising event is just around the corner—can you believe it? Idaho Gives will take place in the first week of May, and we are already preparing some exciting activities. Participants will have the chance to see our progress on the building and learn about what's coming next.

Thank you once again for ALL the ways you support Valley Mission and the important work we are committed to doing.

Warming Shelter Update



Although this winter hasn't been typical just yet, the warming shelter remains open on those nights when temperatures dip below 25 degrees. That's still quite chilly!

Here are some highlights regarding the shelter's current status:

- Over 60 individuals have volunteered to cover one of four shifts each night we are open.
- An average of 16 guests are served nightly, with a peak of 27 guests so far!
- Initially estimated to cost around $15,000 to operate, we have successfully raised more than $30,000!
- A staggering fact is the young age of many of our guests, some as young as 18, with an average age in their late 20s to early 30s.
- We Have Blankets! Thanks to this incredible community, we have an abundance of blankets to keep our guests warm and cozy each night.
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Two aspects will never appear on a stat sheet. The first aspect is the care and attention that our volunteers provide to our guests. As one observer recently noted, "There is an air of dignity and respect within the setting. Needs are anticipated before someone asks... people are treated with kindness... things are available rather than an 'us vs. them' attitude." While certain skills can be taught, culture is learned and experienced collectively. This is precisely what our team of volunteers is creating!

The second aspect is the sense of 'community' that develops in environments like this one. It's not about "poor me and my plight" among these individuals; they genuinely care for one another, look out for each other, and value one another. In fact, we could all learn a great deal from this community about how to truly live and work together.

I know it has positively impacted my life!



Shelter By The Numbers

Given the limited timeframe for the warming shelter, it may feel like our impact is minimal. One might question how many individuals truly need refuge from severe weather. After all, it seems like there aren't many people living on the streets or in vehicles, right?

However, while Pocatello may not display a visible homeless population like larger cities do, this doesn't mean our community is free from homelessness issues. In fact, Pocatello ranks second in the state for homelessness. Moreover, we have only one operational shelter in town, which frequently reaches capacity during the winter months.

Since the warming shelter opened in December, we have been fortunate to assist many individuals in our community who would otherwise face the harshness of the streets, vehicles, or under bridges, struggling to survive our cold winter nights.

- To date, we have welcomed 72 unique guests through the shelter–individuals who have utilized the shelter at least once.
- On average, 16-21 people find refuge in the shelter each night.
- Over 60 volunteers make this effort possible every day–these individuals are truly inspiring!
- Our community has generously provided a **wealth of blankets, socks, clothing,** and funds to support supplies, food, security, maintenance, and more.
- Shelter guests also have access to laundry cards, Rec Center passes for showers, bus passes, hygiene kits, and additional resources.

The most significant ongoing challenge for many in this population is finding a place to park their vehicles or campers when they are not at the shelter. City ordinances prohibit long-term parking, and many neighborhoods are resistant to having what they perceive as an 'eyesore' in their area. However, until these individuals find permanent housing and support, this is their home.

This remains our greatest challenge, especially as seasons change and the shelter prepares to close. Therefore, we kindly ask that you keep this situation in your thoughts and prayers as we move forward.

For the poor you will always have with you in the land.

DEUTERONOMY 15:11

STREET REACH | VM

Reflecting on Outreach Efforts

As I contemplate all the outreach efforts from last year and consider the individuals we connected with—whether on the street, by the river, in a parking lot, or under a bridge—I realize we have only begun to address the needs within this community.

Our initial thought is to ask what led them to their current situation. How did they find themselves living on the streets? Was there a traumatic event that pushed them into this life? Did a significant loss contribute to their circumstances? The questions seem endless. However, this isn't where we should start.

When we're on the streets, our primary question is simple: **How can we help?** We'll uncover the rest of their story over time, but in that moment, their immediate needs take precedence. It could be as basic as providing something warm or as complex as securing housing, medical assistance, or counseling.

Too often, our society rushes to judge, blame, and shame those living on the streets. Phrases like, “They should just get a job... they should be locked up... they need to be somewhere else” can be all too common.
So, I pose this question: If this were your child, parent, or friend, how would you want someone to respond? Your tone would undoubtedly change because you have a personal investment in that individual. What would it take for you to extend that same level of concern to a random stranger you encounter on the streets or in their car? It would require some time and a willingness to be vulnerable. Is that too much to ask? By investing that time and inquiring, “How can we help?”, you might discover you have something valuable to offer, even if it’s just a word of hope or encouragement.

And on some days, that word can carry someone a very long way!



Construction Update & Pantry Bites...

Moving Forward!

Things are truly gearing up! With the fire sprinkler system now completed, we are set to begin work on HVAC, electrical, and plumbing systems.
In the upcoming weeks, expect to see a flurry of activity as these teams get to work inside the building.

We are still aiming for a spring opening of the food pantry, contingent upon our ongoing fundraising efforts. To meet our updated target, now raised due to our electrical plans, we are working towards securing just over $200,000. The positive news is that this will significantly reduce the costs associated with the remaining two phases.

Be on the lookout for Idaho Gives in May, where we will have some exciting funding challenges and matching opportunities!

Food Pantry Bites

Partners In Caring

Ridley's FAMILY MARKETS

As we work with local markets to collect donated food, we take the opportunity to share the impact that each store makes for our pantry guests.

We have celebrated Ridley's in the past, but they just keep on raising the bar in providing food for our pantry. Each week they find a way to surprise and bless us!

THANK YOU, RIDLEY'S!



Volunteers make the nonprofit world go round!

Our volunteer this month is one of those quiet, “go-about-your-business” kind of individuals. Head down, get work done, move on to the next task.
He has been a huge help on our Wednesday team with unloading and prepping the truck when it arrives with food. He quietly jumps up and begins the process of sending totes and boxes in for us to get them weighed and put away for our guests.

Don has been a very welcome addition to our work here at Valley Mission.

THANK YOU, DON, for all you do for Valley Mission!

Food Pantry Opportunities

There are a few ways to serve:

Wednesdays, 8 am - 11:30 am
Food is delivered from our 14 stores as well as from the Idaho Foodbank. Unloading, sorting, organizing and building food boxes takes place on this day.

Thursdays, 10 am to 11 am
Additional food deliveries from some of the same stores. Unloading, sorting and organizing takes place here.

Thursdays, 3:30 to 6 pm
Food is distributed to the community. Most ‘jobs’ deal with serving the guest as well as carrying boxes to their vehicles.

Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

ROMANS 12:10