MISSION MINUTE

January 2025

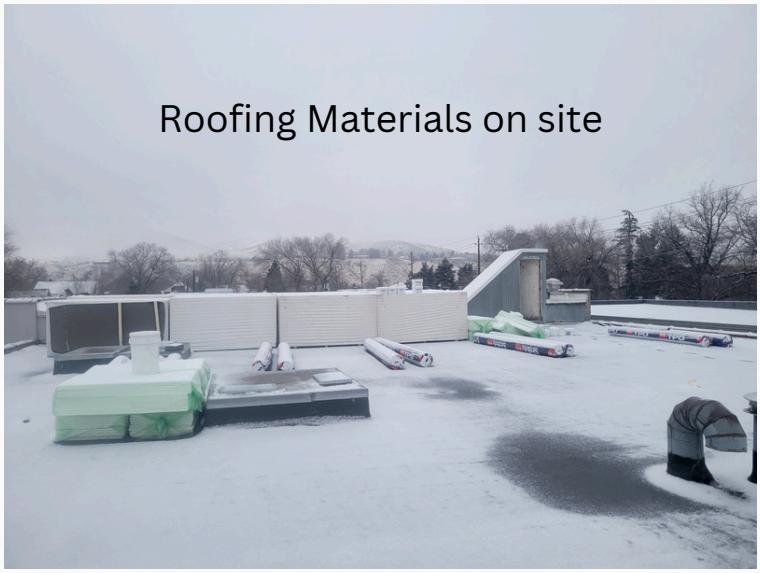


THANK YOU for another great year of giving and connecting with Avenues for Hope! This year's online giving was just over $40,000, with an additional $15,000 to $20,000 still coming in offline.
With some new media coverage, we connected with several new donors and created some excitment within the community for the work that Valley Mission is gearing up to do this year.

The other big news is that all the funds needed have been raised to replace the roof! Our contractor has already had product delivered to get the job started, and should be done in just a couple of weeks. THANK YOU again for making another big part of this project happen.

While talking with current and potential donors this past holiday season, the enthusiasm level was never higher. People are starting to see not only the need in our community, but also the opportunity that Valley Mission will give to those who desire a new way of living. They understand that the issue of homelessness is not just a 'big city' issue, and that we have real people in real crisis in Pocatello who need a hand up and a new way to live.

THANK YOU again for a great end to a great year! Looking forward to another amazing year in 2025.


Roofing Materials on site

This issue:

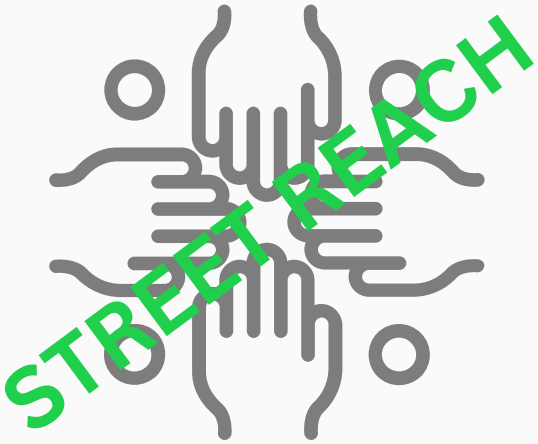
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Street Reach - The Current State of Homelessness



Street Reach is our outreach ministry to those living on the streets, in parking lots, in parks, under bridges and more. We look to make a connection with them, offer some simple resources, and work to connect them to permanent housing and other support from within the community.

The recent report released by the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Annual Homelessness report revealed a sobering reality: homelessness continues to rise at an alarming rate. Data shows an increase in homelessness of 18% nationwide, on top of the 11% increase in 2023. This is an issue not reserved just for big cities or poor neighborhoods. This is the reality of life in Pocatello, and it is only going to increase unless several things change in our community.

First, we all have to recognize this reality. We ask - "Do you know their story?" It is too easy to judge and assume that the person we see is taking advantage of the system, is just lazy, or a myriad of other issues. Do you konw the trauma they went through? Do you understand how addiction works and messes with the mind? Second, we all need to work together to create solutions and opportunities for those who want to change their situation. I often tell people that Valley Mission's programs are not the solution, only *part* of the solution. It will take all of us to make this change a reality.

The primary goal of Street Reach teams is to create a bridge of trust. We do this by repetition and offering resources. Seeing them often, pointing them to the help they need, going with them to appointments - all in an effort to earn their trust now. Once we gain that, and when our building is open (THIS FALL), then we can begin to change lives and offer hope and healing.

Thank you for all your support - and really for the prayers for safety and connection!

> Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon.
>
> ISAIAH 58:10

The Year in Numbers



Food Pantry

Another big year of blessing people with food and other needed items. Our local stores - 14 of them in total - have been very supportive and generous in their donations.
We distributed over 400,000 pounds of food again this year and served more than 32,000 people (that's 8600+ families).

None of this happens without an amazing team of volunteers and volunteer leaders! More than 80 people have given well over 6,500 hours to bless our community. WOW!
Our team of drivers is out early every Wednesday and Thursday and makes the work of collecting the food look easy - which it is not.

Street Reach and MAP

Our Street Reach teams have been in and out of the community on a fairly regular basis. We did have a lull in August and September as we transitioned some leadership and rebuilt teams, but have been able to get back on track connecting this population. We visited just under 100 encampments throughout our first year, seeing at least a couple of people get off the streets and into more permanent housing or relocating to a safe community.



MAP (Mobile Access Partnership) is a collaboration of services by local partner agencies. We bring these agencies to one location so our neighbors can access multiple services at once in a safe, non-threatening environment. This takes place from spring until fall. This was our first year offering this and was less than what we hoped for. Of course anytime you try something new there is a learning curve, or in this case a trust curve that has to be navigated.
We did have great partnerships with the Free Clinic, The Rock Church, a traveling veterinarian, Dept. of Health, Center for Hope South and others. With their support we were able to assist just under 20 individuals with care, support and aid.

volunteer

Volunteer Highlight

Each month it is truly a challenge to select just one volunteer of the month. There are so many to choose from that it often creates several suggestions among the leaders. We are all trying to highlight that one person who stood out to us all.

This month we are pleased to celebrate a volunteer who comes in and gets right to work and is always on the lookout to help improve the process. In addition to her hard work on Wednesdays and Thursdays, she also does the input for our Street Reach outreach. This data is vital to not just grant writing, but also helps us track our amazing neighbors that are on the streets each day.

We cannot say THANK YOU enough to 'Z' for all her hard work and dedication to the people we call guests and neighbors! You are truly appreciated for all you do.

We celebrate 'Z' as our volunteer of the month!!!!



Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth.

1 JOHN 3:18