MISSION MOMENTS

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Construction Progress

After a recent conversation with a curious community member, I realized we haven't shared a comprehensive snapshot of our project's progress. Over the next few issues, we will discuss as much of this process as possible, beginning with some of our earliest accomplishments.

- 2020 - We acquired the old Metro Gym with the goal of establishing Valley Mission. Over the following months, demolition commenced, primarily carried out by volunteers. The only expenses incurred were for mold remediation and the removal of the racquetball court walls. We worked on permits and other necessary approvals with the city.
- 2021 - In the fall, demolition was completed, and we entered the planning phase. Throughout this time, we were actively fundraising to secure as much preconstruction funding as possible before moving forward.
- 2021-2022 - Site work begn, which included removing walls and concrete, raising floors, connecting to sewer and water lines, and installing an additional power pole on the property. In short, there was a significant amount of behind-the-scenes work to prepare for the initial phase of construction – the framing!
- 2022 -2023 - The framing was completed by late fall. Funding slowed some our progress but that picked up again in winter 2023 and gave some momentum for the new year.

Be sure to check out the April newsletter for the rest of the timeline!

Warming Shelter Update



Reflecting on an Incredible Journey

This experience has been nothing short of extraordinary.

Not only have we had the privilege of supporting over 123 individuals through the Warming Shelter, but we've also forged valuable connections with volunteers, agencies, and others that we might never have encountered otherwise.

As we prepare to conclude this vital and fulfilling service, here are some key statistics:

- 62 nights of service so far
- Average attendance: 28 individuals per night, with a peak of 39
- 123 individuals utilized the Warming Shelter at least once during this period
- 63 volunteers dedicated countless hours to serve this remarkable group
- The Housing Alliance Community Partnership provided this essential space for our work
- Several guests were linked to community services and transitioned into more stable housing before the shelter's closure
- Over $30,000 was contributed to make this initiative possible

While we faced a few challenges along the way, the resilience of our team and the guests helped us overcome any obstacles. As I mentioned in last month’s newsletter, this community exemplifies how to thrive and support one another. They share vital information and resources, look out for each other—even amidst differences—and find ways to uplift those facing tough times. It truly embodies the spirit of community.

Our aspiration—our hope—is that by winter 2026, our funding and construction efforts will lead to an emergency shelter within our building. This facility will feature showers, a full kitchen, and wraparound services to help our guests achieve stability, especially during the colder months.

Thank you for your unwavering support through prayers, financial contributions, and hands-on assistance. You've made a significant impact and saved lives!

STREET REACH | VM

Addressing the Needs of Our Neighbors

I encountered a very distressed guest at the door of the food pantry one Thursday. He is one of our neighbors residing in a local encampment, and it was evident that something was troubling him. He shared that the police had visited the encampment that day, giving them until March 2nd to vacate the area—less than three weeks away at that time. His mind was racing with questions: Where would he go? How would he transport all his belongings? How could he afford assistance? The list of uncertainties grew as he contemplated his situation.

For the past two years, they had been assured that their presence there was acceptable. They had kept the area clean and organized—most of the time—and had not disrupted anyone. This location was well-concealed from public view and was a rarely visited part of the river.

After meeting with the mayor, we managed to secure an extension until May 1st, allowing them time to plan and gather resources. Additionally, we arranged for the city to provide a dumpster, enabling them to clear trash and dispose of items they could not take with them. While this offered a slight reprieve, it still represented a significant adjustment for everyone living in that space.

To put things into perspective, we had 123 individuals seek refuge in the Warming Shelter this winter. This number does not account for the 17 individuals we are aware of who remain on the streets, in vehicles, or along the river, totaling 140 people without a permanent and safe place to rest.

So, what's the solution? How do we assist those in need, especially when many in our community remain unaware of their existence? How can we instill hope in those whose struggles seem invisible?

We begin by opening Valley Mission, enabling us to do more than just provide shelter. Offering housing with supportive care is the first crucial step. Regular coaching, counseling, encouragement, and accountability are essential for fostering change for those who are willing to embrace it. Yes, this will take time, money and resources to make this possible. We are thankful that we have 17 partner agencies and churches in the wings ready to step in and help change lives. THANK YOU for being some of those people!





Construction Update & Pantry Bites

Construction Update

A Lot Going On - and In!

HVAC units were ordered and paid for last year, and they were installed in February! The team is currently working on the ductwork while preparing to heat the building to test the fire sprinklers. Electricians are scheduled to start their work in early March. The sheetrock visible in the photos will serve as the 'cap' above the dorms and apartments on the old racquetball court side, which is required for our fire sprinkler installation.

There will be plenty of activity in the coming weeks.

Additionally, we are awaiting our plumbing contractor to complete the food pantry area and install vents through the roof, allowing us to seal those before the arrival of spring rains.

Partners In Caring

Fred Meyer®

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 were contacted by the Idaho Foodbank to participate in a cereal food drive. We didn't have a lot of lead time to respond, but thought it worth the effort to get cereal for our families and get the word out about Valley Mission.
FRED MEYER Pocatello was amazing and made this so easy - and extremely successful. Over 350 boxes of cereal were donated by our community!

THANK YOU, FRED MEYER!

Pantry Bites

RIDLEY'S Market case lot sale is going on through March 16. Protiens such as peanut butter, tuna fish, pasta, etc. are always welcome items. Cases can be dropped off Wednesdays from 8 am until 11 am at 408 N Arthur Avenue.



Volunteers are the Heartbeat!

I am continually amazed by the wonderful individuals who join our enthusiastic team of volunteers. This month's volunteer brings a generous spirit, a fantastic sense of humor, and an overall fun personality that makes him a joy to be around. He has jumped right into action, assisting with food pickups and eagerly offering help wherever it is needed.

He always has delightful stories or anecdotes about life that can bring a smile to your face or inspire deeper reflection.

We are truly fortunate to have Jim serving alongside us!

THANK YOU, JIM, 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