

Franciscan Ministries | 1st Quarter 2024

Program Updates

The Community Garden

The 2024 season is starting up – the water is on, the port-a-let has been ordered, and people are already planting! We made the decision to increase fees this year to help with rising water costs. A 10x20 plot is now \$40 for the year. This did not deter any gardeners once the average 20% per year water cost increase since 2014 was explained. We are only waiting on payment from ONE more gardener – this is someone from the Wait List who just was notified of a spot opening up. We have never been this far along this early! Having Heartfelt Tidbits in the Barn has been extremely helpful on this front.

Heartfelt Tidbits received a grant on our behalf towards the fence replacement. We now have just over \$10k of the \$15k estimate collected. We have an additional grant submitted and continue to look for more funds. We hope to be able to replace the fence this year – it is sorely needed. Unfortunately, when the water was turned on for the season, two faucets were noted as dripping / leaking – we are well aware that the system (like the fence) is aging and will most likely need regular maintenance as we move forward.

In December, we approached Rachel about returning in 2024 as our In Garden Manager, but she declined. Rachel experienced a series of health related issues this past year. We have made inquiries, and are currently waiting to see if Heartfelt Tidbits is approved for an intern they applied for. This intern would have a 2yr term and Sheryl (ED) is willing to also have the intern act as IGM along with other responsibilities with them – which would solve numerous needs in one position.

Haircuts from the Heart

Our voucher program has slowed down (which has been somewhat typical for this time of year). We continue to look for new partner distributors and providers. We have applied for a grant to allow us to slightly increase our reimbursement amounts – their costs continue to rise and it is simply an ethics and justice issue.

In early January we applied for and obtained a barbershop license for the MMH location. In late January, we hired an additional part-time person to provide services within the program. Travis Johnson is a licensed barber and has lived and worked in OTR for years. He has been very well received. So far, he has spent his time on location at Mary Magdalen House, as the need there is great. This position may also serve as a substitute or an added chair at some mobile sites in the future, but we have been going through a learning / familiarity phase first.

Tamar's Center

The last few months have reinforced the need for re-evaluation of Tamar's Center clients. After a consultation with Mary Delaney at Community Matters, it has been made clear that Lower Price Hill is not a primary location for sex workers. We still reach out to our neighbors to help out in various ways to reach women who have had trauma and may need our help. The most common need in this community is for money: payment of rent and utility bills. We continue to await guidance from the Board and the Sisters regarding how to proceed.

Tau House

Tau House just finished its busy spring season with groups in the House for most of March – including at the Annex at St Columban for one week, and a brand new group that journeyed all the way from New York. We

continue to navigate the lack of a designated maintenance person at Tau (due to changes at St Clement). Thankfully, Fr EJ (Pastor) is very helpful and responsive. There was a boiler / heat issue in late February while a group was in House and it was addressed promptly and successfully (despite it being after 9p on a Sunday night). However, the intended electrical work at Tau to allow for the addition of an additional small AC unit on both the 2nd and 3rd floor continues to be put off. We hope to still be able to identify someone to assist with this at reduced cost. Fr EJ is working with the Parish Finance Committee on our behalf as well, but things often move slowly as school and parish needs are understandably addressed first.

Development

Work within the FM database continues with donor entries. Records were reviewed within the database, and those that have not had any contact with FM within five years (2019-2023) had the attributes removed; however, their basic information record is still in the database to be reactivated and made current should the opportunity arise. Acknowledgments of donations have been sent, this includes all Appeal donations. Donations totaled \$5,892 during this time, and Appeal donations totaled \$3,510 from January to March making the first Appeal total exceed \$10,000. This donations total includes \$2,500 from Heartfelt Tidbits designated for the Garden fence.

The 2024 Winter Edition of the Franciscan Ministries Newsletter was mailed in January. This issue highlighted the program Haircuts from the Heart. The next issue will be released sometime in May or June 2024.

Research for grants continues. Two local breweries have been contacted to participate with their charitable giving programs. One has denied and the other has yet to respond. Currently, we are waiting to hear from 2 grantors. Victory Noll Sisters Small Grant Program was approached for the Community Garden fence, and a grant was submitted to the Church of the Incarnation for the Haircuts from the Heart voucher program. Also, the will take place in May. FM is again participating in the Cincinnati Flying Pig Marathon's "Piggest Raffle." So far we have accumulated \$465 through purchases at \$5 a pig. Funds from the raffle will be awarded after the event in May. Advertising continues for this event to entice others to participate.

Compiled / Submitted by Marci Peebles
10.17.2023