

February 2019



# REACH News



## Funding REACH Home

Once again we thank all who are supporting us in this winter's REACH Home. We are currently experiencing an increased number of guests, now at 36!

We want you to know about our current financial challenge. Since opening in

November we have received \$24,000 in donations and grants. **But we have spent \$28,000 in operating the home. Most of this is payroll for our wonderful staff who are on duty 7/24. We are running at a loss and the only way we are surviving is through the generous support of the HOUSE of MERCY.** We anticipate that when the County eventually pays us for those guests who have qualified for County bed support we will be able to pay them back. If you haven't had a chance to donate yet this season, please consider a donation of any size. Every dollar helps! Thank you for your support.

All gifts are tax deductible. Checks should be made out to FLACE - REACH Advocacy, and mailed to REACH Advocacy, P.O. Box 10845, Rochester, NY 14610 or you may give through our bank by clicking here: [DONATIONS](#) When prompted please choose REACH Advocacy from the list of organizations.

**Please help us by spreading this request for funding among your friends and organizations to which you belong. Thank you!**

### **A story of one donation:**

A 79-year-old gentleman chose to make a monetary donation to REACH after seeing our House Manager, Evelyn, on the TV news. He was looking for a charity to donate to as a way to thank a neighbor who snow plows his driveway. The neighbor would not take any payment in return for the plowing. REACH Advocacy extends a thank you to this gentleman and all who have contributed to REACH Home with goods, services and monetary gifts.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Many have asked, How are Shelters Effected by the Polar Vortex?**

REACH Home shelters chronically homeless men and women and when the weather gets extremely



cold or snowy our number of guests swells dramatically! We put extra mattresses and cots in whatever space is available and safe. *This means REACH must ask staff to work additional hours or shifts. Normally two staff members are on duty at all times, but when the number of guests increase, additional staff are added to keep our guests comfortable and safe. We ask our volunteers to provide extra food to have on hand during the day in case the regular feeding programs are closed due to weather.* So, as you can see the frigid weather creates extra stress on the system financially and in increased need for volunteer donations. Rochesterians are

amazing and often step up to provide additional support, thank you from the REACH Advocacy Team! We still need your help.

\*\*\*\*\*

## News of our Guests

Our Social Work team has been successful in housing nineteen of our guests into permanent housing so far this season. This continues the commitment of the REACH Team to a Housing First philosophy as we assist homeless people move to better ways of coping with their challenges.

Deacon Dan Callan has assisted many in getting furnishings and moving our guests to their new home. Many of these guests tell us that they are thrilled at this opportunity for a new beginning.

## DONATIONS IN KIND NEEDED - February 1:



### Food Items

Coffee  
Cocoa  
Creamer  
Sugar  
Cereal  
Peanut Butter

Jelly  
Powdered drink mix  
Ramen Noodles  
Snack food (evening snacks)



### Household Items

Toilet bowl cleaner  
Detergent pods  
Paper napkins  
Paper Towels  
Spray disinfectant (Lysol type)  
Room deodorizers

Ice melt\*\*\*

### Personal Care Items

Shampoo  
Deodorant: need men's and women's  
Shaving supplies—razors, shaving cream

### Bedding

Comforters  
Bath towels

### Household Items for Welcome Wagon Sets

Canned goods  
Chicken noodle soup and tomato soup  
Macaroni-type products for apartment use  
Utensils  
Cups, bowls, dishes & plates  
Compact skillets and saucepans



### Clothing

Belts: men's & women's  
Men's underwear  
Men's gloves  
Sturdy boots  
Men's scarves

### Medical

Cold/cough pills, NOT liquids

Donors may also wish to go to our links to these two vendors to see our wish lists [Walmart](#) and [Amazon](#). And check our [Facebook](#) page for regular updates.



### Guest Gift boxes for their new permanent home.

We are putting together "welcome wagon gift boxes" as our guests succeed in securing their own permanent place of residence. These boxes contain items to assist them as they begin to take care of their own homes. We would love to get donations of the following items to put in these boxes:

- plastic dishes, bowls, and cups
- utensils
- pots and pans
- shower curtains and hooks
- stackable food storage containers, etc.

**Evening Meals** - Please go to our [Web Page](#) and sign up. Current number of openings for the remaining months are:

- February. 3
- March. 16
- April 8



A big THANK YOU to all who signed up since the last Newsletter and all who help in this way. Our guests experience this as a real sense of community time and care.

---

## Meet a member of our Staff:

**Karee McGill** (46) is a shift leader at REACH Home 2018-19. Karee has been with REACH from 2016 when he joined our staff at the invitation of his cousin, Maurice Cooper who was the House Manager of the 2016-17 REACH Home, known as Bridge Home. Karee went to Edison Tech, but did not finish. As a young adult he was homeless for a while seeking independence from his mother. He admits that he ran the streets and was involved in the drug scene.



At some point he recognized that his way of life was leading him to a dead end, possibly literally. As he said it, "You can't retire off selling drugs." He saw too many people killed or injured on the street. And he knew that he needed to change. He began to listen to some of the lessons his mother taught him. One of her favorite sayings is, "It is better to give than to receive."

He is a seasonal employee of the City of Rochester working in the Parks Department doing landscaping and especially caring for the Rose Garden in NE Rochester.

Karee has two daughters, Kasheen (27) and Morshai (26), and five grandchildren. He lives with and cares for his mother here in Rochester as she is now getting older and is starting to lose her sight. He hopes that younger people can learn to live differently and not go through his life experiences.

Karee told me that his name comes from the West Indies and means *kindly*. He lives into his name by caring for our guests and says that at REACH Home, "When the homeless reach out to us we will do all we can to help." He says that he has learned that helping others, especially our homeless guests means being patient and not speaking down to anyone. He really loves the kind of work he gets to do at REACH and feels that he is contributing in some way to the good of society.

---

## Meet one of our Guests

**Susan Smock** (69). Susan has been a guest in REACH Home last winter and now this winter. She has not always faced this kind of



hardship. She is a Rochester native and as a youngster went to St. Joseph's Parochial School in Penfield and was the class secretary. From St. Joe's she went on to Mercy High School, graduating in 1967. She then enrolled in the Rochester Business Institute and became a medical secretary. She worked at St. Anne's for twelve years, as well as other positions in this field.

Susan was married and with her husband lived in Arizona for six years. She had two daughters while in Arizona, Nicol and Amanda, and now has four grandchildren. Sometime after their return to Rochester, Susan's husband announced that he no longer loved her and was leaving her for another woman. This left Susan feeling that she was worthless.

Sometime after raising her two daughters and following retirement, Susan found herself in financial difficulty. Although she has a modest income, she was spending far more than 30% (HUD's recommended figure) on housing. At some point she lost her apartment and began living in her car during the warmer seasons. She is thankful to have REACH as a safe haven during the winter.

During these past few years Susan has found herself being distanced from her daughters, and now says that she is no longer welcomed by them. Now she is facing the possibility of lung cancer and possible surgery. She would like to re-establish contact with her daughters before she goes to the hospital.

Susan has a ready smile for people at REACH and can often be found sitting in her place in the community area of the home. Susan values family connections and is puzzled over the break-up of her own family. She has one brother in Florida that she stays in touch with, but her phone is old and needs to be replaced. Susan is an independent kind of person and wants to do all that she can to become self-sufficient.

Last week Susan was taken to Rochester General where her cancer diagnosis was confirmed, and she was admitted for treatment. Susan returned to REACH home and her case worker is trying to get her placed into an assisted living facility. Our House Manager has contacted one of her daughters to let her know of Susan's situation. Is it possible that Susan could have done better if, in these past few years, she had been able to find *truly affordable housing* along with the kind of support she needs?

---

## REACH Team actions and concerns:

- We have re-submitted our papers to become an Incorporated Not For Profit organization with the NYS State Department after learning that a slight typo had been made!
- We will have our final meeting with Causewave this month, and then our

elected Board will begin to identify and name the standing committees etc.

- We continue to search for a new treasurer as our current treasurer, Dave, is hoping to let this task go in the near future.
- Sometimes we have a difficult guest who is disruptive and threatens our efforts to build community in the Home. This past week we had one such guest and we were forced to take him to the House of Mercy. We are so very thankful for the amazing work done by the House of Mercy.

---

## February Events of Interest:

**Feb 5, at 6:30 p.m. Listening For Opportunity: How the Voices of Rochester's Homeless Led to Social Entrepreneurship:** Nick Coulter, Person Centered Housing (PCHO) Dugan Center, St. Mary's Church, Downtown.

**Feb. 11, 3 p.m. What Really Works in Homelessness Prevention: Lessons from Literature and the Field** Presented by Abt Associates' Center on Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness, this webinar combines evidence with real-world insight. Practitioners from three communities will discuss their experience planning or implementing prevention activities, and how the evidence aligns with their work on the ground. Info or register [here](#).

**Feb 12, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. End Homelessness Legislative Awareness Day**, Empire State Plaza. Albany, NY. Call GG for more information: 516-900-7455 or click [here](#).

**Feb 26, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Stand Down 2019** for all veterans wanting to learn about benefits, housing, social security, employment, health care, public assistance, VA eligibility, senior services, peer mentoring, veteran organizations, education, counseling, legal assistance & more! Harro East Theatre and Ballroom, 155 Chestnut St, Rochester. FREE! Call 585-546-1081 for more information.

Thank you for your interest and support of REACH.  
For more information please check out our Website at [reachadvocacy.org](http://reachadvocacy.org).

