



HARVEST HOUSE

25-YEAR ANNIVERSARY
EDITION

1996 to 2021

From the Desk of Our Executive Director

Dear friends of Harvest House, 1/1/2021

This is our 25th year serving the greater Tulsa area. We will reflect on that in this report.

Harvest House's vision has not deviated from the original, but the scope and depth have grown. Virginia Runnells, our founder, had the heart of a servant with the goal of helping the less fortunate. In 1996, operating by herself with a few bags of groceries and some clothing, Harvest House was born! Our guiding principle has always been maintaining the dignity of the individual, as Virginia so well patterned for us! We work hard to be sure each one of our guests feels valued no matter what their circumstances. In 2010, we turned to the community to share our funding,

pursuing grants which would kickstart the exponential growth of the next 11 years. In 1996 nobody would have dreamed we would give 86,000 of our neighbors 2.2 million pounds of food, equivalent to 1.3 million meals over the next 25 years. Or that we would be able to put 400,000 garments in their closets or pay \$325,000 of their utility bills. Or that we would begin to give our guests eye exams and new custom-made prescription eyeglasses. Over the last three years we gave them 8,400 fresh job listings for their household members. Truly, the first 25 years has been a marvelous journey, but it is just a start. In the words of The Carpenters "we've only just begun"; we have received substantial help from our foundation partners, volunteers, board members, donors and staff that has enabled Harvest House to earn recognition as a major part of the northeastern Oklahoma nonprofit community! I am so very thankful for each person who has donated time, money, goods or support in any capacity during these past 25 years. I hope that you will continue to grow with us during our next 25 years!!

Wishing God's richest blessings for you in 2021. --- Marlene Cunningham



25 years serving Northeast Oklahoma

In the spring of 1996, Virginia Runnels, community volunteer with extensive experience in agencies serving the less fortunate, had a vision for an outreach to the residents of the Section 8 housing projects in South Tulsa. Seemingly simultaneously, the Pastors of Open Bible Fellowship were determined to establish a compassionate connection with the neighbors surrounding their new church building near 71st and South Peoria. When they met to explore their separate visions, the charity to become known as Harvest House was birthed. It was first just a dream that became populated by one volunteer, a folding table, chair, a phone and a few bags of clothes and groceries. From the onset, its theme was to affirm the dignity of all individuals, and serve from a heart of love and compassion.

The fledgling agency grew organically as others saw the vision and volunteered their time to serve the less fortunate. As more and more guests found this gem of a charity the word spread and word of mouth has made Harvest House become one of the five largest social services agencies in Northeast Oklahoma, based on outcomes. When the economy hit bottom in 2008 it was necessary to become an independent 501(C)3 charity and invite the community to share the financial support of this newly independent agency. The generosity of the Tulsa philanthropic community has been amazing and has fueled the rapid growth of Harvest House over the past thirteen years.



COVID-19 Impact

In mid-March the building in which we operate was closed to guests due to the COVID-19 protocols prescribed by the mayor of Tulsa. Harvest House placed a pause on all programs requiring face-to-face contact and redesigned a drive-up grocery delivery process, Monday through Thursday from 1 to 4 pm. Each guest received groceries, produce and meat into their trunks based on the size of the household for anybody who stated their need for groceries. All possible protections and disinfectant procedures were followed to protect our volunteers and our drive-up guests.

Based on the reopening phases of the COVID program, Harvest House resumed regular appointment times by the end of May. We initiated safety measures which included masks, rubber gloves and temperatures taken on arrival for staff and patrons, social distancing, limitations of numbers of people in the lobbies, offices, and limitations on shopping time in our clothing area. We began

asking guests to come alone because of the social distancing limitations. We are continuing to do everything we can to make guests safe and protected during this difficult time. All of our seven programs resumed operation. Phone calls requesting an appointment began again but very slowly, ramping up every week for several months, until finally achieving their previous levels by November. We found people still reluctant to venture out of their homes into an environment where there were many people present, even with all protocols in place.



Our Food Programs

From the beginning, providing high quality, diverse and nutritious groceries was a core program at Harvest House. About year six it became apparent that allowing the guest to select from the available groceries was the best way to place the right food into our guest's homes. An extensive menu is now presented and our guests select those items best for their households.

Seeing guests by appointment was instituted to honor the value of the guest's time and to ensure all goods and services would be available when the guest came to Harvest House. We started out giving each guest about 2.5 days worth of groceries, but beginning in 2013 we began to increase portions and now give a full seven days of groceries. Not every guest will come with an appointment; many come in hungry and out of food at home. So we instituted a daily emergency groceries program to serve those guests. Shelf stable food plus fresh produce, bread products and a meat selection are included, and volumes scaled to the size of the household. We have tested many different variations and programs, but we believe these two programs are the most cost effective and helpful for our guests. From the first guest served in 1996 to the present day, we have served over 34,000 households composed of 86,000 individuals and given them 120,000 bags of groceries, or 1.3 million meals equivalent, for a total of 2.2 million pounds of quality, nutritious groceries. And we hope to double that over the next seven years.



Clothing Programs

From the beginning our founder, Virginia, wanted to be sure Harvest House guests had clean, appropriate and up-to-date clothing to remove barriers in their daily lives. By the end of the first year there were tables displaying the clothes, toys and household goods available that day. Guests were invited to shop and take home any clothes they found and wanted for their families. As time went on, more friends and neighbors brought unneeded clothing to Harvest House. Eventually racks were purchased and clothing began to be displayed tastefully in a manner that made shopping a more positive experience.



Other churches in the community have come along side and conducted clothing drives periodically for Harvest House. Several consignment shops have donated clothing from time to time, but the best is the Echo shops. Their weekly clothing donations comprise the core and best quality of our offerings today. We ask our clients to be accountable to our standard, which is three full outfits of clothing for each household member represented by our guests. Today Harvest House has the best clothing department in quantity and quality in the region. And we have household items of all kinds for our guests. We have given our guests about 270,000 items of apparel in the past 11 years alone.

Vision Program

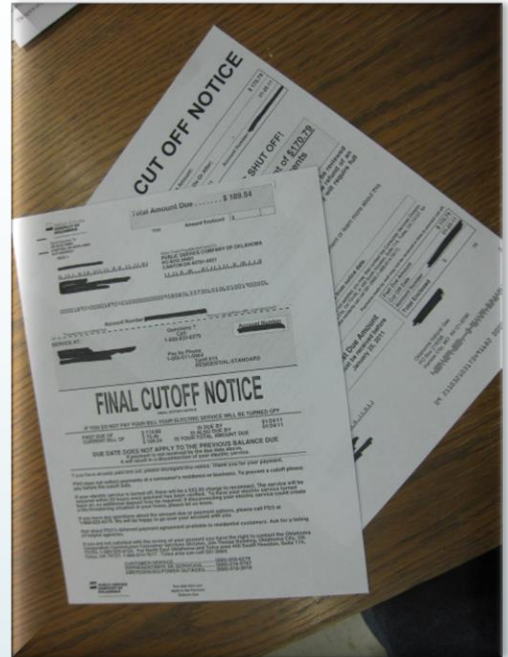
Poor vision is a huge roadblock for many of our guests. We knew many of our visitors complained of poor vision, and few had the resources to afford an eye exam and new prescription eyeglasses. But we underestimated the impact new glasses can have on their lives. They came back to report that they can now apply for a drivers license, or can read the Internet job listings, or can fill out an application for a job, or can perform new job duties on a computer they had not been qualified for in the past.

Our new Vision Care Program provides vision impaired guests a voucher for a free eye exam and new eye glasses installed in frames of their choosing. Our charity partner in New Jersey, New Eyes, manufactures the eyeglasses and mails them directly to our guest's residence. It has been nothing short of revolutionary for the lives of some of our guests.



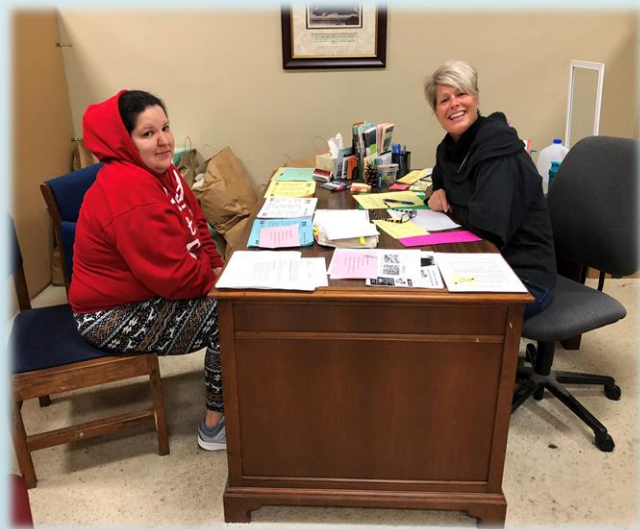
Utilities Assistance Program

In the beginning Virginia wanted to help guests with their past due rent, utilities that were about to be cut off and with the cost of vital medications. Over the following years experience demonstrated the assistance with medications became an administrative nightmare (HIPPA regulations, etc.), and the meager amounts funding would support on rent assistance afforded very little help to avoid evictions. Experience also showed us that even small amounts of assistance with utilities, along with referrals to other agencies, would allow our guests to keep their utilities operating. Initially the assistance was \$25 per guest, but that amount has been doubled to \$50, and is available every 90 days to help the guest who has a cutoff notice. This program has helped thousands of our neighbors avoid utility cutoff; a total of \$325,000 has been spent helping the less fortunate keep their utilities operating over the first 25 years of Harvest House operation.



The Interview Process

Even the best programs like those we offer at Harvest House fall short of delivering transformative results in the lives of our guests. The interview process is where we help our guest begin to re-envision their situation & hope for success begins. First, we ensure they receive our services; then we connect to other agencies. We see ourselves serving as a “front door” to all the other wonderful agencies that participate in the continuum of care that is available in Tulsa. This city truly has a big heart, and rare is the problem that cannot be alleviated by a combination of programs from our great charitable agencies in Tulsa. We carefully and caringly interview each household to discover the full range of problems of struggles within that household. After applying the services Harvest House has to offer, we next acquaint the guest with services offered by other agencies and make referrals where appropriate. The goal is to help the client envision a plan that leads to independence for household breadwinners. We also have a stack of fresh job openings we offer where there is a need and match of skills/interests. The interviewer will offer prayer if the client chooses. This can be a great source of hope and encouragement. We refer them to the many sources of further education and job skills training available in the Tulsa area. In short, we help each visitor to discover there is a path out of the poverty condition they are temporarily experiencing. We help them find a path forward and renewed hope for a better future. So, it is evident why our mission is “Empowering the Poor and Transforming Lives in Northeast Oklahoma, One Life at a Time”.



Our Collaboration Partners

Organization

Living Water Irrigation
 New Eyes
 RiverGate Church
 Christ Redeemer Lutheran Ch.
 Salvation Army
 Comm. Food Bank of E. OK
 Wal-Mart
 ECHO Shops
 Panera Bread
 WalMart
 Dress for Success
 So. Tulsa Community House
 Kim's Donuts
 Sharehouse
 Tulsa Teen Challenge

Areas of Collaboration

Employees sent to volunteer in Food Dept
 Eyeglasses for our vision-challenged guests
 6000 sq ft of space for our programs
 Clothing drives, cash donations
 Clothing, furniture, and paper goods
 Regular supply of food products
 Clothing at end of season and plastic bags
 Quality clothing from the resale shop
 Weekly supply of quality bread
 Clothing and household goods
 High quality business apparel
 Groceries, other items
 Fresh donuts and pastries
 Furniture
 Clothing

Our Financial Partners

David E and Cassie L Temple Foundation
 The Anne and Henry Zarrow Foundation
 The Jess L and Miriam B Stevens Foundation
 Christian Life Foundation
 George Kaiser Family Foundation
 The Sharna and Irvin Frank Foundation
 H. A. and Mary K. Chapman Foundation
 The Helmerich Trust
 Quick Trip Corporation
 Joseph and Virginia Dibert Foundation
 Ralph and Frances McGill Foundation
 The Ryan and Genevieve Tedder Foundation

WalMart
 Oneok Foundation
 Sams Club
 Harvest Church
 Gelvin Foundation
 Arvest Bank
 KPMG Tulsa Office
 DP Financial and Tax
 Christ Redeemer Lutheran Church
 The Williams Companies
 Carpenters Class FUMC
 Oxley Foundation

In Conclusion

As we all look back over 2020 it's easy to focus on the negative. At Harvest House, we refuse to slow down or look back on the year in anything but a positive light. Did we have obstacles this year; absolutely. Did we adapt to a changing world; of course. But we were able to assist guests who we would never otherwise have met. In the end, it is all about our mission to 'empower the poor and transform lives in northeastern Oklahoma, one life at a time'. That mission doesn't have a pause button or a slowdown mode. Now that 2020 is wrapped up, we look forward to 2021 and beyond. We are still adapting, but are poised better than ever to make more tangible contributions to the lives of those guests who come in our doors every week. If you are reading this and have participated in any way over the first 25 years in what we are doing here at Harvest House, we thank you!! If you are reading this, and you are hearing about the Harvest House story for the first time, then what are you waiting for? Let's look forward to working together to change our city for the better over the next 25 years!



The 'A' Team

