



CHRIST CARES - Sept. 2017

223 W Memorial Drive, Chicago Heights, IL 60411 (708) 539-8939 Rev. Scott Reese, Program Director



ChristCares.org

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1. **CHRIST CARES feeding the homeless and hungry... We believe that by showing love and meeting basic felt needs people can better understand that "CHRIST CARES".**
2. **We also believe that although the economic, social, & emotional needs are great; the greatest needs are spiritual and that through transformed lives, a community is transformed. Pictured is the Word of the Lord going forth in a powerful way at our Thursday Homeless Bible Study.**
3. **It's been an exciting journey of over 40 years of sharing the GOOD NEWS of God's Love in south Chicagoland. I'm so grateful to the many of you who have made it possible through the years. If it has been a while, please make arrangements for me to share the ministry of CHRIST CARES at your church.**



Basketball Volunteers Needed...



1. Thank you **ELIM MINISTRIES** for providing school supplies for three schools in our ministry area plus an additional 100 packs for Christ Cares - over **900 children** were blessed!

2. Thank you **Agape Center, First Church, Hillside Community** and all those who donated school supplies. We were able to co-sponsor a couple **Back To School Rallies** plus bless additional children and 4 other ministries.

3. Thanks **Tyler Ulis** (Guard—Phoenix Suns) for donating school supplies & basketballs— only 21 years old and giving back to the community.

1. Thanks to your generosity, **Christ Cares** was able to have a **special activity in Roseland**. It combined two groups 1) Children we used to minister to at Roseland Christian Ministries' Homeless Shelter & 2) **people who have had a loved one murdered**. We took them shopping, had a Bible Lesson and pizza... Thanks Galilee Baptist for opening your facility for us.

2. Bottom picture is Ms Dean who attended, whose daughter's murder by an 11 year old was international news. **Pray that Jesus will heal these broken hearts.**

1. Thank you **Pam Oliver of Channel 5 News**, for speaking to our homeless group.

2. Literally just minutes after **losing most everything in a house fire**, the Lord had me cross paths with the Leal family. We were able to help them in many ways and they in turn have been looking for ways to give back. (You may have seen the story on the news.)

3. Thank you to **all the churches who open up their facility on a Tuesday or Wednesday** for us to bring the homeless for a day of restoration. (Laurie Borkowski of Crete Church pictured.)

TRANSFORMED LIVES ...



James Hawkins - When I first met James, I was impressed with what a nice, helpful guy he was; however he was homeless and alcohol had a destructive grip on his life. We became friends and soon he was a regular at our homeless Bible Studies.

We encouraged James to enroll at **Restoration Ministries'** residential rehab program. It was quite a process to encourage him to take this step as the enemy really battled him and just when it looked like he would enroll, he'd relapse and disappear for a while... we persevered with God's help and finally met with John Sullivan and Ray Banks. He was accepted in the program. Rev. Richard Zietveld also began a weekly mentoring program with him. After about a year he graduated from Restoration Ministries a stable, gifted, committed Christian. He was hired by **Roseland Christian Ministries** **AND NOW IS**

EMPLOYED AS THE MANAGER OF THEIR THRIFT STORE! Praise the Lord.



Alisa – found herself broke and homeless due to circumstances outside her control.

Alisa soon became a regular in our homeless Bible study programs and also our discipleship program. She credits God using Christ Cares to give her a spiritual foundation and also a practical help and encouragement with the many difficulties she was facing.

We connected Alisa to **Orland Park Christian Reformed Church's Car Ministry** which blessed her with a car. Alisa found a job and was able to move out of the PADS homeless shelter.

Alisa has continued with our Bible Study programs. Please continue to pray for her as she faces the hardships of being a single mom with an autistic child.



Tom Braun – Tom had fallen on hard times and alcohol and drugs complicated his life. One week due to unusual circumstances we only had 2 show up for a Tuesday program. At first I was discouraged we had such a small crowd but quickly saw the Lord had a plan... I was able to share the gospel in a more personal way. Tom grew up never believing in God and he would be the first to admit he had a rough past... He put his trust in Christ and was thrilled to be a Christian.

Over time Tom's life was transformed by the power of the gospel. Like the woman at the well he was telling everyone about the great change God had made in his life. Often he would send me texts sharing how excited he was about some scripture passage or about the changes he was seeing in his life.

In a half year's time, Tom became my assistant in the homeless ministry and also one of my closest friends.

(Tom Braun – continued) Sadly, one evening Tom had a massive heart attack and departed to heaven. We had spent the entire day together and little did we know it was his last. He is greatly missed. I gave the eulogy at his funeral and Tom's life was a powerful sermon as many were there that only knew the old Tom...

Tom's testimony and legacy continues. Just two weeks ago one of Tom's friends put their trust in Christ for salvation – they told me that Tom's changed life is what the Lord used to bring conviction in their heart.

SADLY WE HAD OTHER DEAR FRIENDS OF CHRIST CARES PASS ON TO GLORY...



Please pray for the families of **David Smith** and **John Sullivan** as they both succumbed to illness. Also lift up their congregations Crete Church and Spirit of God Fellowship as they continue without their beloved pastors.

Two couples; Ray and Lois Brown, and Julia and Gus Spysma, have been supporting our ministry for I believe about **30 years!!!** We are saddened

by the loss of Lois and Gus and pray the Lord will strengthen and help Ray and Julia in this time of loss and change. We also grieve the loss of Eric Pepin the husband and son-in-law of our volunteers.



I office at and still help the church I founded over 35 years ago – **New Life** where David and Regina Gills now minister. We are grateful to have two rooms there that we use to store all the resources we bless the community and other ministries with as well as use the gymnasium for our youth programs. Last Sunday I was thrilled that they **baptized six people**. Deacon Tommy Beasley who was once a criminal and drug abuser did the baptizing. He has an amazing testimony and **we'd be happy to share it along with the ministries of Christ Cares at your church.**

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& select CHRIST CARES
As your charity



UPCOMING EVENTS AND WAYS TO PARTICIPATE:

- **OCT. 7 PRAYER BREAKFAST & FOOD DISTRIBUTION**
- **OCT. 9 \$10 GIFT CARDS** (McDonalds & Walgreens) for homeless ministry
- **OCT. 12 YOUTH BASKETBALL PROGRAM** begins – volunteers needed
- **OCT. 26 CANDY** Collected for Halloween alternative / outreach activities
- **NOV. 11 EVANGELISM TRAINING** (Call for details)
- **NOV. 18 CANNED GOODS ETC.** for Thanksgiving baskets collected
- **DEC. 2 PRAYER BREAKFAST & FOOD DISTRIBUTION**
- **DEC. 18 TOY DONATIONS DUE**

DAILY
Southtown

NEIGHBORHOOD STAR

Churches open doors to homeless

Christ Cares gives population a place to spend the day

By ERIN GALLAGHER
Daily Southtown

The homeless are not stereotypes; they are individuals.

That's the message being spread by a group of churches in an effort spearheaded by a man known in some circles as "the pastor of the streets," Scott Reese.

"There are a lot of cold homeless people and there are a lot of warm, empty churches, so I put those two together," said Reese, of Chicago Heights.

Reese is the founder and director of the nonprofit organization Christ Cares, which was formally organized in 2009. But Reese, now 56, has been ministering to the homeless for 30 years, he said.

"There's a lot of need in the south suburbs," he said. "In the south suburbs, we have the same (kinds) of urban poverty, but we don't have the same resources of the city of Chicago."

Christ Cares serves primarily Chicago Heights and Ford Heights as well as Riverdale and Roseland. On Tuesdays, he drives to areas where he draws homeless



Scott Reese, in red sweatshirt, sits with a group of people served by his organization, Christ Cares, on a recent Tuesday at First Church of Lansing.

SCOTT REESE PHOTO

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"They can come, they can shower, they can do laundry and just have a place to hang out, have a meal and a Bible study," said Richard Zekveld, pastor of Covenant Fellowship Church of South Holland. "We don't own a church building, we rent, so in our case, we have them come into our home."

Because area shelters provide food and lodging at night, people living on the streets have nowhere to be from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., Reese said. That can be dangerous for people when temperatures remain low even when the sun is shining.

Reese calls Tuesdays "a day of rest." Even though the population they serve varies from week to week, Reese and members of Christ Cares know where to find people who need a place to go.

"We just know where to look," Reese said, citing a nighttime



Scott Reese, in red sweatshirt, sits with a group of people served by his organization, Christ Cares, on a recent Tuesday at First Church of Lansing.



MARY COMPTON PHOTO

Sabrina Walker, right, who is homeless, gives a hug to Gloria Leal, who lost her home in a house fire just before Christmas, at a Christ Cares toy-wrapping event before the holiday at Crete Church.

shelter in Chicago Heights, and the Chicago Heights police station just around the corner.

Other Southland churches that host people on Tuesdays include

Church in South Holland.

"For us, it must mean we are a church that cares about people," said Pastor Ben Kappers, of First Church of Lansing.

Scripture says not to discriminate against rich and poor, Kappers said, and that is what his ministry is about. Zekveld, of South Holland, said the volunteers from his church gain just as much from the homeless as they give.

Getting to know people's individual stories, not "pigeonholing" or stereotyping people are ways the volunteers are enriched by their interaction, he said.

"We end up changed as much as anyone. ... Until we got involved with this ministry, homeless people were invisible to me," Zekveld said. "That's how it's changed me."

The efforts on Tuesdays are only one aspect of Reese's Christ Cares ministry. He also started a Hope for the Homeless Bible study session on Thursdays in the basement of the Chicago Heights library, which also includes lunch.

About 50 people gather each week for about two and a half hours, Reese said.

Christ Cares also organizes a youth basketball program "providing a safe atmosphere to play basketball and also to try to encourage them spiritually and academically," Reese said.

Throughout the year, the organization also provides Christmas gifts, school supplies, coats and food, Reese said.

The organization, which includes Reese, two part-time employees as well as six others in smaller roles, is funded through donations. Each participating church provides its own volunteers and food, Reese said.

The ministry is both rewarding and challenging, he said.

"With the homeless, every story is different but I often tell people not to believe the stereotypes," Reese said. "A lot of people doing a little bit makes a difference."

Erin Gallagher is a freelance reporter for the Daily Southtown.