

# RED WAGON MINISTRY

## *A Spiritual Practice*



**Report to the Vestry  
May 2017 – May 2018  
July 16, 2018**

**Background.** Jim McReynolds and Julie Hamilton took over the Red Wagon Ministry (formerly known as the “Little Red Wagon” from Deacon Linda Goertz in May of 2017. Rev Linda was tasked by Rev Kerlin Richter to implement the “Little Red Wagon” project in 2016. A \$500.00 grant was obtained to purchase a collapsible wagon (red of course) and some supplies.

The program was re-envisioned in May and June of 2017 to its current configuration. Jim and Julie met with St. David’s clergy leadership; visited with other outreach programs that support our neighbors who live outside; performed a theological reflection with the Education for Ministry group about the practice; tweaked the Red Wagon configuration; and surveyed our neighbors who live outside as to needed quality of life items to carry in the wagon.

Our presence on the streets of our neighborhood is valued by our neighbors living inside and out, as well as by police, government, and local business owners. Everyone recognizes the need.

### **Outcomes vs. Ministry Operating Principles.**

- Approach this ministry as a spiritual practice / discipline.
  - We created and vetted a liturgy to be used before taking the Red Wagon outside to help us get our minds and spirits right. We developed reflective questions to ponder after going outside. I believe both Julie and I have grown as a result of our participation in the practice. Feedback from those who have gone out with us indicates they see the value of the practice and their perspectives are changed.
- Commence and close Red Wagon Ministry activities with prayer.
  - We begin the practice with the liturgy and have Rev Kerlin, if she is around, bless us before heading out. We use a prayer from the Book of Common Prayer to close the practice for any given trip.
- Engage with our neighbors living outside in the “local” community.
  - We’ve established two primary areas to engage with our neighbors:
    - Main route: about 2 ½ miles in length; walk from St. David’s to Sewallcrest Park; north up 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue; east on Hawthorne to 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue; back west on Hawthorne to the bottle drop at the Safeway on the corner of 27<sup>th</sup>; then back to the church.
    - Laurelhurst Park: there was a significant population of those living outside residing in the park up until the aggressive clearance actions by local officials began taking place in the late summer of 2017 and onward. We were going there as regular part of our practice; not so much anymore.

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- Take the Little Red Wagon (LRW) out at least twice a month.
  - We are not meeting this objective. We need at least another couple of people to participate in the practice in order to meet this metric. Julie and I have suffered illness and injury, have limited capabilities depending upon what life is throwing at us at the time, and inclement weather all of which have undermined our ability to get out more than once month.
- A minimum of two (2) people will go out with the LRW.
  - This safety standard in not compromised.
- Keep the congregation involved.
  - The congregation has been very generous in supplying both funding and in-kind items for the ministry. Only a few people have gone out with the Red Wagon.

<b>Red Wagon Ministry Statement of Donations and Costs</b>			
<b>May 2017 - May 2018</b>			
<b>Estimated Donations:</b>			
Cash Donations / Grants		\$ 694.00	
Gift In-kind: hours		\$ 2,775.00	
Gift In-kind: travel		\$ 318.00	
Gift In-kind: items		<u>\$ 960.00</u>	
<b>Total Donations</b>			<b>\$ 4,747.00</b>
<b>Estimated cost of practice:</b>			
quality of life items		\$ 1,110.00	
hours		\$ 2,775.00	
travel		<u>\$ 318.00</u>	
<b>Total Costs</b>			<b>\$ 4,203.00</b>
<b>Net RWM Donations:</b>			<b>\$ 544.00</b>
Estimated ending inventory of quality of life items:			\$ 500.00

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- Have project metrics.
  - The following metrics provide a limited snapshot of the practice over the last year:

Number of outings:	16
Total # of people served:	185
Average # of Items taken per neighbor:	6
Average # of people served:	11.56
Average cost per person served:	\$ 22.72
Average cost per outing:	\$ 262.69

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- Provide feedback to the congregation.
  - Periodically Julie and I have addressed the congregation about the practice and the specific needs of our neighbors living outside. However, we could improve in this area.

**Opportunities and Interventions:** Here are few interesting events that happened over the year:

1. Purchased a large bag of pancake mix and some syrup and dropped off to the folks living at Laurelhurst Park last summer. They had a gas stove to cook on. Estimate we provided a hot meal for about 20 people.
2. One of our neighbors was in crisis: he has no teeth and was desperately hungry. He assaulted our wagon tipping it over because we nothing he was able to consume. I went into the Safeway and purchased him several easy to eat / drink high calorie – nutritious items. By the time I came out, one of the Safeway employees had called the police. I gave him the items and the police took him away.
3. Let our neighbor Timothy-James (TJ) use my phone to coordinate medical and food stamp services. Have allowed a few others to perform like functions.
4. Called the port-a-john folks to have the outhouse at Sewallcrest Park serviced. Our neighbors made me aware the outhouse was overflowing. They folks responsible attended to it the next day.
5. Purchased pain medications (ibuprofen, acetaminophen) for some of our neighbors in immediate need. We've added these items to our standard inventory this spring.

### **Closing Observations.**

Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, “Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land.” *Deuteronomy 15:11*

“...mercy triumphs over judgment.” *James 2:13*

The situation in our neighborhood is getting more challenging for those who live outside; government crackdowns and sweeps on encampments and other places where they attempt to sleep / keep their meager belongings has resulted in additional burdens for them to deal with.

Our neighbors recognize and are happy to see the “Church People” when we come around.

I believe God is calling us to provide banquets for our neighbors living outside as a regular part of our practice once our new commercial kitchen is completed; more on this later.

Authentication:

Jim McReynolds

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