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SPRING OF HOPE!



MESILLA VALLEY Community OF HOPE

SPRING 2024

MVCH OFFICE EXPANSION UPDATE

As has been reported in past newsletters, MVCH is being expanded to meet the growing needs of the organization. The design is complete and will allow for more bathrooms, client intake offices and several more staff offices to allow for more client privacy. The City of Las Cruces is currently in the bid phase for construction. We are excited to get the project underway and look forward to having the space to provide better service to our community.

However, the project requires \$11,000,000 and we are applying to some agencies for grant funds to help fill the \$5,125,000 gap.

We have the design plan approved so far by MVCH staff and clients. A meeting was held in the MVCH Resource Room in February to get client and case worker input.

There will be 50 units total, 25 units will be efficiencies and 25 will be one-bedroom apartments. While this project is still in the planning and funding stages, onsite property management and case workers will be available when the facility is up and running.

AMADOR CROSSING IS CLOSER TO BECOMING A REALITY

Amador Crossing is a master plan housing project that will be built on 4.8 acres on the Community of Hope campus to provide supportive housing, on-site services, and access to campus agencies. The primary population will be small households in need of housing.

Nicole Martinez, the Executive Director of Community of Hope went to the December legislative session in Santa Fe with Natalie Green, City of Las Cruces staff, and Johana Bencomo, District 4 Councilor, to request Capital outlay from our legislators in support Amador Crossing. The legislature was very supportive of our community's need, and we secured \$5,975,000!

COMMUNITY OF HOPE BY THE NUMBERS

2022-2023 Stats

Total Clients: 7,258

Gender:

Male -4666

Female 2584

Transgender - 8

Age Range:

18-90

Veterans served - 449

Total Households Housed - 850

of people - 942

of children - 130

Mano y Mano

Unique People Worked - 1388

Men - 1104

Women - 284

Camp Hope

Total People Served - 266

Male - 184

Female - 79

SOAR (Social Security Disability filing assistance)

98 Services provided to clients;

Volunteer Hours

10,004 hours donated, equaling \$160,806 in donated hours



SAVE THE DATE!

The fundraising committee is in the process of planning the Tents To Rents Fundraiser taking place August 19th-Sept 27th. Keep an eye out for the return of the Hops For Hope Pub Crawl and soon to be Coffee Crawl!

Since the first tent went up at Camp Hope in 2011, it has been a place of shelter and safety to more than 3,100 people who might otherwise have been living on the streets in very unsafe conditions. Camp Hope makes a difference, but it is temporary shelter. Our goal will always be to move people into their own homes.



Be watching for our 9th Annual
Tents to Rents event starting
in August.



HOME DEPOT GETS IT DONE

Five years ago, Camp Hope saw a major improvement with the construction of threesided shelters built on many of the raised platforms where campers sleep. In December, the Home Depot stores of El Paso and Las Cruces, assisted by volunteers from the community, the Home Depot stores, Gensis Construction and Chacon Builders helped us finish the job.

On a brisk morning before Christmas, over 175 volunteers arrived ready to paint, build roofs, nail panels in place, and complete the structures so that all 50 camping sites were sheltered. The professional builders and Home Depot staff took the lead using power

saws and nail guns to quickly complete the panels for walls and roofs. Once the roofs were ready, teams hoisted them above their heads and walked them through the camp to the next structure and placed them on the walls ready to be attached. Enthusiastic volunteer painters of all ages gave the walls a coat of protective paint in a bright blue that simulated our winter sky.

There were so many helpers that by lunch time the job was finished, and campers were able to occupy the new shelters. While a three-sided structure will never replace permanent housing, these structures shelter campers from the howling spring winds and protect them from dust. The Camp Hope residents are very grateful to all the thoughtful volunteers for improving their lives at the camp.



COLOR FUN RUN BENEFITS THE COMMUNITY OF HOPE

For the fall Tents to Rents Campaign, NMSU's community engagement programs organized a 5K Color Fun Run, which drew participants from the campus and the greater Las Cruces community. As runners

crossed stations throughout the route, they were splashed with color so at the finish line there was a rainbow of participants.

Nicole Martinez, the Executive Director of the Mesilla Valley Community Hope said "we are grateful to NMSU, the Office of Experiential Learning, and the participants who made the 5k Color Fun Run an overwhelming success. The proceeds will support the Tents to Rents campaign which raises funds to operate Camp Hope and keep people experiencing homelessness safe and close to services and access to housing."

Organizing the first ever color run was a team effort, led by NMSU staff Alice Delgado and Trish Leyba from the Office of Experiential Learning and Student Engagement. Delgado and Leyba were able to mobilize 47 volunteers (36 were NMSU Students) for the day of the race, including students from the Pre-Dental Society, American Institute of Chemical Engineers, and the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association, as well as members of the Las Cruces community and OEL staff.

All of the costs of staging the run were supported by community sponsors and vendors including the Office of Experiential Learning, NMSU Foundation, Gym Magic, Little Steps Pediatrics, Adams Radio, and Pathology Consultants of NM. The 230 runners set off at 8:00 a.m. and the first runner crossed the finish line after only 18 minutes. The event raised more than \$4400 to support Camp Hope.

At the finish line runners were greeted by music and a DJ, and fun. Participants loved the event, Alice Delgado said "runners told me they've always wanted to do a 5K Color Run, that NMSU was the best location for 5Ks, and to count them in for the next one." Trish Leyba, Director of the OEL said "The Office of Experiential Learning Community Engagement and Outreach really appreciates what the Community of Hope is doing for those in our community who need help. We are thankful to all community partners who allowed us to market the event in their establishments, which contributed to its success, specifically Crunch Fitness, Sports Accessories, and Stay Fit Fitness." The day was a resounding success, and may become an annual event, showing the benefit of joint efforts between the students, the campus, and the community.



Dear friends,

Community of Hope has continued the important work that it was created to do. I am excited to share the exciting and innovative plans in the works here at Mesilla Valley Community of Hope! As a licensed social worker, one very important initiative is close to my heart. Because mental health services play a critical role in supporting the unhoused population, the Community of Hope is partnering with Amador Health Center to provide onsite therapy to those living at Desert Hope permanent supportive housing complex and The Veterans' complex. It is the philosophy of Mesilla Valley Community of Hope that these services are a fundamental necessity for restoring dignity, and hope for long term stability.

Homelessness rarely occurs in isolation. For many individuals who have experienced homelessness, mental health challenges precede or exacerbate their housing instability. Untreated mental health conditions can significantly impede an individual's ability to secure and maintain housing, perpetuating a cycle of homelessness.

The grant providing these mental health services are tailored to the unique needs of the unhoused population. Onsite therapy is provided every week. In February, 43 people attended the group therapy offered. Those behind on rent are given assistance with payment as well as supplemental therapy to address the stressors causing the lapse in payment. Interventions that acknowledge the unique circumstances and experiences of homelessness are crucial for engaging individuals who may otherwise be hesitant to seek help.

Homelessness itself is a traumatic experience, characterized by instability, exposure to violence, and the constant struggle for survival. Coupled with pre-existing trauma or mental health conditions, the cycle becomes even more entrenched. Individuals may find themselves caught in a cycle of trauma, unable to break free without adequate support. Mental health services play a pivotal role in interrupting this cycle by providing trauma-informed care and support, which reduces the risk of relapse and promotes long-term stability.

By equipping individuals with the tools and support they need to address their mental health challenges, these services provided by Amador Health Center pave the way for greater independence and resilience.

Sincerely,

Nicole Martinez,
Executive Director