**Community Outreach for 2021**

**Annual Report**

**February and April Events**

**February** events carried on with our efforts in 2021 to support the homeless by distributing 100 blessing bags. The bags included winter items -- hats, gloves, and thermal socks -- in addition to the traditional toiletries and treats plus 100 masks, including KN-95 masks donated by Lakeysha. 80 blessing bags were given to Our Daily Bread Employment Center in Baltimore for distribution to the homeless as needed. (Picture 1 shows Mary Davis, the ODB center resource specialist, and one of her helpers picking up 80 blessing bags.) The other 20 blessing bags were distributed in DC by Robbyn.

Cost for February distribution: $1,053

In **April** we distributed another 80 blessing bags to Our Daily Bread with sunscreen, sun glasses, and sport socks in place of the winter hats, gloves, and thermal socks. Once again, 20 additional blessing bags were also distributed in DC by Robbyn. (see picture)

In addition, we explored providing food assistance to needy families of students at the Homewood Center School in Columbia. The school requested that we give 20 gift cards that the families could use to purchase food items that were best suited for each family.

Cost for April blessing bags - and gift cards: $1,535

**June/July School Supplies**

The Our Daily Bread Center indicated that due to the pandemic there was less need for additional blessing bags at this time. After discussion and in consultation with the school system in Howard County by Kimberly, the Outreach Committee decided to donate school supplies to two elementary schools that serve the low-income population in Columbia. We purchased school supplies for donation to Cradlerock and Guilford Elementary schools --pencils, markers, composition books, erasers, crayons, rulers, scissors, glue sticks, pocket folders, highlighters, index cards, and jump ropes. (Picture 3 shows the supplies loaded for delivery.)

We also purchased 20 durable backpacks for donation to the Homewood Center School in Ellicott City. The backpacks are designed to accommodate laptops as well as books and supplies. Demetrius delivered the backpacks to Homewood.

Although we did not deliver blessing bags to Our Daily Bread for this distribution, we did provide 20 blessing bags for Robbyn to distribute in DC. We hope to resume distribution to Our Daily Bread in the fall.

Cost of June/July school supplies: $ 1,534

**August event: More school supplies**

Based on Kimberly's contact with several schools, there is a continuing need for school supplies at some Howard County Schools, and the Committee decided to make this the focus of our August effort. We provided additional supplies plus 25 backpacks to Cradlerock elementary and 25 backpacks for Ronnie Barnes to distribute at Eisenhower Middle School in Laurel where she teaches.

Our previous school supply distribution included Guilford Elementary. Due to a successful campaign by their PTA, they were able to purchase sufficient backpacks and school supplies. Kimberly and Keysha identified Swansfield Elementary, which also serves a low-income population, as an appropriate substitute. They were very happy to receive the Valley Brook donation. (Picture 4 shows the Swansfield custodial staff with the delivered supplies.)

And we continued to provide 20 blessing bags for Robbyn to distribute to the homeless in DC. Robbyn reported that she also collaborated with several friends to engage with a homeless population in Silver Spring.

Cost of August backpacks and school supplies: $ 1,552

**Fall 2021**

In October we ordered the needed items to assemble 100 blessing bags. The bags contained the usual toiletries and for the colder weather, warm hats, gloves, and socks. The total cost was $1,390. The bounty was split 50/50 between Our Daily Bread (ODB) and Silver Spring, a more local need that is currently growing. Then in November, donations of grocery gift cards and turkey dinner fixings totaling $1820 went toward Thanksgiving food for families of Homewood Center in Columbia. More detail follows:

**October: Our Daily Bread in Baltimore**

For the first time in a year and a half, the way was cleared for us to take volunteers to the Baltimore facility. Five church members -- Phil Weatherford, Roger White, Robbyn Wherry, and Dave and Jeanne Perin -- went the morning of October 30 and distributed fifty blessing bags to homeless men and women who came to pick up Grab-n-Go lunches provided by Our Daily Bread.

**Silver Spring**

The same day we delivered in ODB in Baltimore, Robbyn Wherry went from there to the Silver Spring site where she and two friends, Tawanda & Tanya, have connected with the homeless in that area. The next three Saturdays as well she met up with them again to distribute the 50 church blessing bags and other items the three of them put together – sandwiches, face masks, water, etc.

**Robbyn's report.** Each time we enter the homeless encampment area in Silver Spring we are reminded that it is hallowed ground.  We think about how God created each person and Jesus died on the cross for every soul.  We know and believe that God has ordained each as princes and princesses, potential fireballs whose lives will be living testimonies of His power to deliver fallen lives.  Shortly after our arrival several men and women will meander toward our small, but welcome table bearing Jolly Rogers (candy of choice), blessing bags, bologna/cheese, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, bottled water, face masks and three women waiting to shower each person with love.  We are on first name basis with some while others do not readily identify themselves.  They are unaware that while they walk about to and fro, engage in frivolity, or simply scream angry insults at each other and sometimes at us, that Tawana, Tanya, and I are covering them in prayer.  One of the three of us are as green as grass in relating to addicted beings but all three of us are committed to service in unknown ways each Saturday.  A few determinedly have stated that they are ready for rehab one week but sadly change their mind the next.  Satan will never easily give up his prey.   We thank everyone who has contributed to this initiative.  Please continue

praying for us as we reach out to the lost.

**November: VBCC Thanksgiving Turkey Drive.**

The donations for our Fall Turkey Drive far exceeded our expectations! From the VBCC membership, $1020 in gift cards and cash donations, and from Joy of Living, $500 in gift cards and $300 for turkey dinner baskets. Demetrius collected the gift cards at the church, and Kimberley delivered everything to Homewood Center on Monday, November 22. A huge Thank You to everyone who took the time to shop or send in their donations to feed 49 disadvantaged families! That’s right – we almost doubled our goal of reaching 30 families!

**December: Christmas gift Delivery**

Valley Book has traditionally supported the annual Christmas gift wrap and delivery sponsored by Joy of Living. Several of our VBCC families did this again this year, bringing holiday cheer to the children of local families in need.

**Summary of VBCC Outreach Activities and Expenditures**

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| **Month** | **Category** | **Accomplishments** | **Expenditures** |
| February | Homeless – Our Daily Bread (ODB) & DC | 103 handwritten notes, for 100 blessings bags (warm hats, gloves, and socks, plus usual hygiene items) - 80 to ODB, 20 to DC. 80 handmade masks | $1,053.33 |
| April | Homeless - ODB & DC.  Also, food assistance (20 $25 gift cards) to families of Homewood Center | 108 handwritten notes for 100 blessings bags. Sunglasses, sport socks, sunscreen, plus usual hygiene items - 80 to ODB, 20 to DC | $1,534.61 |
| July | School supplies for Cradlerock & Guilford Elementary plus Backpacks for Homewood Center | School supply items for 2 classes at each elementary school plus 20 durable backpacks with laptop pocket and 20 blessing bags (made from existing inventory) for DC | $1,566.16 |
| August/ September | School supplies to Cradlerock & Swansfield Elementary schools.  Backpacks to Cradlerock Elementary and Eisenhower Middle School (PG County) | Supplies for 2 classes at each elementary school. 25 Backpacks to Cradlerock Elementary and 25 to Eisenhower Middle School (where Ronnie teaches).  20 blessing bags (made from existing inventory) distributed by Robbyn and two friends to DC & Silver Spring homeless. | $ 1,551.88 |
| October | Homeless - Cold weather blessing bags to Our Daily Bread & Silver Spring | Five VBCC volunteers distributed 50 blessings bags plus 8 oz water bottles to homeless outside ODB facility.  Robbyn and two friends distributed 50 blessing bags, sandwiches, face masks & snacks | $1,390.00 |
| November | Thanksgiving gift cards | 23 gift cards with a value of $700 plus $320 cash contributions from VBCC. Joy of Living contributed twenty $25 gift cards plus three full Thanksgiving dinner baskets worth $100 apiece | $1,820.00 |
| December | Baltimore gift delivery with Joy of Living | Four VBCC families took part in delivering gifts to recipients in the Baltimore/Howard County area | 0.00 |
|  |  | total | $ 8,595.98 |