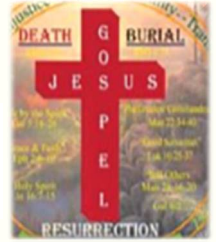




# \*\*\* THE MIRACLE NEWS \*\*\*



First Step Back Home  
PO Box 966  
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## VISIT US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

[facebook.com/firststepbackhome](https://facebook.com/firststepbackhome)  
[twitter.com/1ststepbackhome](https://twitter.com/1ststepbackhome)  
[youtube.com/@FirstStepBackHome](https://youtube.com/@FirstStepBackHome)

## Thanksgiving - Thanks for Giving

by Paul Kruse

Great words to express our thanks for the never-ending love and giving from God. Also, thanks to those who support us in all of our ministries! He gives us so much it's hard to list it all, but I believe it begins with the miracle of life. With life God gave us love, He loved us, and He showed us how to love others and much more.

*Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; For His loving kindness endures forever. Psalm 136:1*

We give thanks to the Lord!

Jesus' words to the questioning lawyer about inheriting eternal life:

*You shall love the Lord Your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and will all your strength and with all your mind; AND your neighbor as yourself. Luke 10: 25-27*

We tried obeying these Commandments in our ministries to see what would happen through obedience to His word by helping the poor through FSBH. During the past two decades we have helped more than 12,500 homeless and working poor in one or more of 25 different ways. And we are so grateful that God has sent us almost \$4 million to do so!

All thanks to God, His miracles, guidance, faithfulness, love, provisions, support and more! It looks like all we have to do is follow the plan He gave us to love Him first, love the poor with action and spread the gospel every chance we get. It's the greatest plan of success I have ever seen! Thank You God!

*Enter His gates with THANKSGIVING; and His courts with Praise. Give thanks to Him and bless His name. For the Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and His faithfulness continues to each generation! Psalm 100: 4-5*

His goodness is a beacon of hope that lights our path.

This is why our Mission statement is:

**Through the transformative power of God's Love through the Gospel of Jesus, we offer solutions to poverty and injustice to the homeless and working poor.**

We have found these solutions to be Homeless Crisis Intervention and Homeless Prevention. Homeless Prevention is mostly what we do. Giving prayer and thanks to God for the ability and resources to help those clients we serve!

Praise and gratitude open our hearts to receive His blessings and grace! Praise is the key to communication with God!

*Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through Him. Colossians 3:17*

So, we need to let praise and gratitude be behind all of our actions. God's will for us is to find strength and peace in our gratitude! He is the Creator and Sustainer of all we see, think, hear or touch so we need to keep Him on our minds and in our hearts constantly.

I talk to God daily as if He were in my brain, which He is! When we give thanks to God, we affirm our trust in His plan and purpose for our lives which I have found in that we were created to do good works!

(Continued on Page 2)



## Thanks for Giving

(continued from Page 1)

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10*

We need to worship God with reverence and awe.

*Therefore, since we received a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe. Hebrews 12:28*

We need to recognize the majesty and splendor of our Creator by the gratitude that overflows from our hearts and minds transformed by His Love!

*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2*

Every blessing and miracle are a reminder of God's faithfulness and His great love for us which should fill our hearts with thanks, praise and Joy!

*Every good and perfect gift from above, coming down from the father of the Heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. James 1:17*

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say rejoice. Philippians 4:4*

*The joy of the Lord is your Strength. Nehemiah 8:1*

Even in difficult times joy can provide us with strength to overcome challenges. Rejoicing in the Lord is a powerful act of faith that transforms despair into hope and sorrow into joy.

Finally, prayer, vigilance and gratitude strengthen our connection with God's presence and provision. We see God daily watching people get a step or more closer to success after we help them.

*Devote yourselves to prayer keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving. Colossians 4:2*

Many things take place that shouldn't have happened, because of God's divine intervention. We see our clients go from living on the street, to paying their own way in motels, to gaining other more permanent housing situations and employment.

We also see people, thousands of dollars behind in rent, utilities etc. with no hope of finding more help. We pay as much as we can, and before we know it, they find others to pay the rest of whole bill. It seems like they just need a little encouragement to do more to help themselves sometimes. This has happened a lot and sometimes in the same day. Some clients are so thankful, that when we can pay all of their expense, they almost cry, and sometimes do. I tell all of them to be sure to thank God in Jesus' name for the blessing.



It only takes unexpected setbacks like car problems, lack of transportation, getting behind in rent or mortgage, loss of job, sickness, relationship problems, large amounts of debt, pay cuts along with increase in bills, evictions, utility shut off and more that puts the fragile people at risk of homelessness. We thank God in Jesus' name for all of our donors who make all this possible. We had never believed we would be around this long helping so many people 19 1/2 years ago after we borrowed \$1,000 to put people living in the woods, in motels and helping them with a plan and some finances to have a better life. We've guided them to a better understanding of who God, His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit are, how they should love and trust them for their needs, salvation, and how to learn from the Bible how to live a Godly life.

**So Happy Thanksgiving to YOU and Thanks again for Giving  
of your time, talent and treasure to the cause of FSBH.**

## 16th Annual Christmas Wonderland – December 14, 2024

Plans are underway and lots of elves and angels are working behind the scenes to prepare for the **FSBH 16th Annual Christmas Wonderland Event**. Registrations are nearly full, with 120 fragile families and homeless clients who will attend this year's drive-thru event, being set up in the same manner as we have over the past several years. All this will take place on **Saturday, December 14, 2024, at Wentzville United Methodist Church, 725 Wall Street, Wentzville, MO.**



The event will involve clients driving through the perimeter of the church parking lot and stopping at designated stations for Bibles, prayers, diapers, laundry/cleaning baskets, food, gifts for teens, toys, wave to Santa and to receive a family gift card. All these provisions are based on ministry friends who contribute to the cause. **Power of God Trucking, Crisis Nursery, Grace Community Chapel, Tammy Stratman Brown Charities, Toys for Tots, Wentzville United Methodist Church Men's Group, Mission Financial and Waypoint Church** are some of the primary supporters for this year's event.

**Donations Needed:** We still have opportunities for YOU to help out with donations of new toys for boys or girls, birth through 12 years of age. Toys for Tots is limiting what they'll supply this year, and we're about 100 toys short of the known need at this time. Other ways you can help would be to put a filled laundry/cleaning basket together, or contribute a \$25 Walmart type gift card as we hope to be able to provide these to each of the families, as we have been able to do in the past. Items can be brought to the venue on the day before: December 13 from 9 am – 3 pm.



**Volunteers Needed:** If you'd like to help with set up the day before, on during the event itself, *please contact Lana Kruse at [lanakruse@gmail.com](mailto:lanakruse@gmail.com) or 314-799-3694.*

Pray for good weather for us, please!

## Helping Hands for the Holidays Event – December 18th

Since 2008, the Saint Charles Convention Center has embarked on a mission to make a difference in our community by hosting an annual **Helping Hands for the Holidays** event. The convention center created this free event with the goal to improve the lives of people in need during the holidays. Over the years the event has surpassed 14,000 attendees and many volunteers. Last year, the Saint Charles Convention Center welcomed more than 750 guests, 60% of which were from St. Charles County. Over 800 coats and more than 3,500 personal care items were handed out to attendees.

This year, the Saint Charles Convention Center will host for the 17th year on **Wednesday, December 18, 2024, from 4 – 7 pm.** Besides coats and personal care items, guests will be treated to a warm meal, haircuts, photos with Santa, a DJ, holiday movies, and exhibitors that provide valuable community resources.

No registration required. Please share this engaging and festive event with any fragile families you know of.





## NEW Phone Number for Emergency Weather Response

As the mild fall temperatures leave us and winter arrives, efforts will be made again this year for those needing a warming shelter to find some relief through the tri-county Emergency Weather Response Team (EWR). However, once again, this year's phone number to get connected has changed.

**The NEW number is 636-344-0177. Please update your phone's contact information.**

The homeless can call this number any day to see if activation will take place. The plan is for that to happen anytime the temperatures are predicted to be 20 degrees or less from mid-November to mid-March.

Warming centers are typically happening at local churches, staffed by trained volunteers. Transportation may be available, based on day-to-day situations.



## Community Council Celebrates 70 Years!

It was a fun celebration October 3, 2024, to cheer on our friends and mentors from *Community Council* on their 70th Anniversary open house! This is the hub for all things "homelessness" in our region. And they're the ones who helped us get FSBH launched back in 2005.

We enjoyed hearing about their early days from former Executive Directors *Denise Liebel* and *Mary Hutchinson*, as well as to hear of the vision for the future from current Executive Director *Todd Barnes*. The Community Council operates out of the 80-Twenty Studios in O'Fallon, and their team coordinates education, networking, collaboration, data sharing, community planning and action to benefit fragile families in the tri-county region of St. Charles, Warren and Lincoln Counties.

They have an extensive on-line Resource Directory for local services on their website [www.communitycouncil.org](http://www.communitycouncil.org) and operate the local 2-1-1 Coordinated Entry system to link folks in need to resources in our area.





## New Car for Client Because of FSBH Help

"Needless to say, Angela Childers is thrilled to be getting a car!" That was the comment of our **FSBH Board member Dave Bonney**, who has worked with this client over the past couple of years, helping her transition from life in prison to success in her life since release from the gated community last February. She has been actively involved with the **Broken and Beautiful Ministry**, participating in their Discipleship program, working on their Care Team, and helping with community outreach events.

She has gotten a good job at a manufacturing company in our service area, but after a move to a better housing situation, she found herself needing reliable transportation so as to not miss work if her other driver wasn't available to take her to work.

Her goal is to get her own place and have her four children back with her. FSBH is happy to collaborate into this woman's success story with the provision of a 2013 Nissan. This makes 50 cars FSBH has helped clients get over the years.

Comments from Angela about her situation:

*"Coming from a background of big mistakes I found myself broken and in prison away from everyone I loved! Prison was a blessing in disguise for me. It helped me in so many different areas I didn't even know I needed help. I worked on myself, grew closer to God and in the midst of that I grew to love the Broken and Beautiful service there, I found myself attending every service. As I was trying to find my direction for after prison, where I would go, what I would do. Broken and Beautiful gave me hope for a better future, something to believe in, to value myself more than I have in the past. Able to help me paint my future! After getting out knowing there are several others like me that were and are stuck in a lifestyle they couldn't and can't escape, Broken and Beautiful helped me feel useful, important, strong. Being able to show myself I can make it back to where I used to be with their help is truly a blessing. I wouldn't be where I am right now if it wasn't for God placing them in my life, placing me in prison! The thought that I'm a part of something so great just lights my soul and I couldn't be more grateful to be a part of something so life changing. Thank you, Dave. Thank you, Jolyn. I truly love you guys and I pray thousands of people get on board to help you conquer your mission to help many other women like myself find their way and get back to who they were meant to be."*



## Client Success Story **By Lana Kruse**

I ran into a lady at an inter-agency meeting recently. She told me how FSBH was instrumental in turning her life around about 14 years ago! Now she's no longer homeless and has had a successful life working the social service arena helping others as she was helped herself way back then.

**Jamie Dowell** told me that when Paul first helped her through FSBH, she had lost her job and subsequently her home. She went to Gateway 180 and the YWCA and in 2013 got a place of her own again. Paul took her furniture, a couch, a table and some chairs.

She had a medical diagnosis that got her on a disability status, so she was able to return to school. She experienced seven strokes in 2019 and was paralyzed in a wheelchair. Now she's healed and out of that chair! Just this past spring she completed her Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology. Now she works as a case manager and is off disability! She told me that FSBH provided for her when she had NOTHING...when she had NO ONE. Now she's in a position to help others. She's saved and following Jesus in her life. Her family relationships are all in order and she has eight grandchildren! She told me **"I am a success story!"** And she definitely is just that! Praise God from whom all blessings flow.



## Blessings from 850 Miles Away and Beyond!

*What does a sixth-grade student in St. Charles County have in common with a retired teacher from Austin, TX? They've never met each other, but their hearts are bonded forever.*

Last summer when our ministry friend **Mark Horvath** from the **Invisible People ministry** interviewed a client family of ours, the connections were starting. Paul had taken Mark to a burned-out property in West Alton where we were helping to restore some normalcy for a grandmother, her son and grandson, after a massive fire had destroyed their home two years ago. Mark interviewed the grandmother and her grandson, and their story was viewed on the Invisible People YouTube Channel with more than 73,000 views so far! (You can see it on our website or Facebook Page as well). Donations came in to support this family, and a special one was from a retired school teacher who lived 850 miles away in Austin, TX, who wanted to make a positive impact on a young teen by funding his back-to-school needs. The student just wanted to fit in. He wanted a special school backpack, new clothes, and a water bottle with his name on it. Thanks to our donor, all that (and more) was provided to him.

Additionally, other donors contributed enough to help us help them with restoration of their electricity, water supply and heater for the small RV they're staying in on the property AND a newer, more reliable vehicle. What a blessing it is for us to be a conduit of blessing to others through your generosity!



## FSBH Mobile Homes Gifted to Clients

The Board of FSBH decided to disperse the mobile home aspect of the ministry late last summer. As a result of that plan, most of the units in Rolling Meadows Mobile Home Park were gifted to the current residents who have proven themselves capable of managing their expenses.

Those current clients had been successful residents of FSBH units for several years, and have been able to pay their lot rents and utilities without difficulty. The smiles on the faces of five clients were bright and hopeful for five of our homes, as they became first time homeowners. Some told us they never thought that would have ever been possible.





## Missions Thrift Store

Tucked into the back side of the shopping center, The Meadows at Lake Saint Louis, is a hidden treasure called **Missions Thrift Store (MTS)**, where wonderful provisions for our clients have been supplied over the past year. The 12,000 sq. ft. building with a huge sales floor opened September 21, 2023. Locals have donated, and donated, and donated! Many of the items our clients need have been provided to us, such as clothing, suitcases, bedding, and housewares. In late September, MTS celebrated their One Year Anniversary, and co-founder Jeff Herndon says business has been growing all year long! Jeff, his daughter Janna Pollock, and her husband Derek dreamed of this project as a means of funding

missions. The young couple sold their home in Iowa and moved here close to her dad to get the store launched. They felt God's leading in every aspect. Donations were pouring into Jeff's basement and overflowing into volunteers' homes before a building was even secured. The family saw God move quickly. They purchased some fixtures when a store closed and received much more as a donation! MTS is volunteer driven and has a handful of employees. The proceeds from sales primarily go to the H.O.P.E. Ministries Food Pantry and The Sparrow's Nest, both of O'Fallon, MO. They also support other organizations like collecting eyeglasses for Focus on Missions, giving literature to Love Packages and bags for foster care, providing animal shelters with towels, supporting local schools, and sending coats and blankets not only to FSBH but to others serving the homeless as well. We frequently get calls from folks wanting to donate items to us, so we send them to places like MTS since we have no storage space. When clients' needs surface, we can direct them to resources like MTS. Find out more information about them at [www.missionsthiftstore.org](http://www.missionsthiftstore.org).

## Meals on a Mission

Since the beginning of August, we've no longer been able to serve meals in the lobby at the local motels in Wentzville. At this time, **Cissy Hamby from St. Patrick's Church**, Wentzville, is coordinating an effort to identify another inside location for meals to be served. In the meantime, some groups are doing a tailgate distribution of prepared foods or brown bag items, and meeting clients in the parking lot next to Budget Inn, Wentzville. The current meals calendar is posted on the FSBH Website.

If you know of an inside location, preferably on the east side of Wentzville where meals could be prepared or served from, please contact Cissy at:

[cissyhamby@yahoo.com](mailto:cissyhamby@yahoo.com) or  
call 314-304-0757.





## How Do We Help the Homeless and Fragile Families? Service Summary January-October 2024

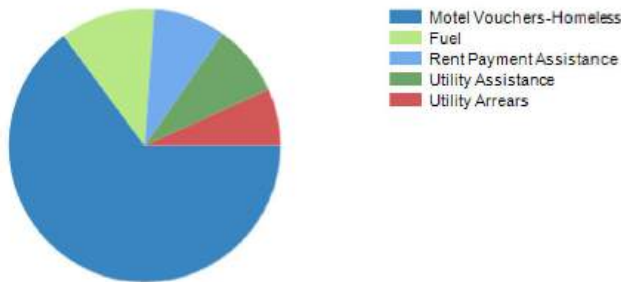
The chart below depicts expenses FSBH has covered for 193 families this year, representing 266 adults, 136 children and 15 seniors. The left pie chart indicates services by units, or numbers, not dollars spent. So far this year we've spent \$72,650 on direct client needs. We primarily know about client needs from referrals that are generated out of the *2-1-1 Coordinated Entry Referral System*.

Demographics about the clients served indicate that our "typical" client is a female, between the ages of 25-44, non-Hispanic, white, staying in St. Charles County.

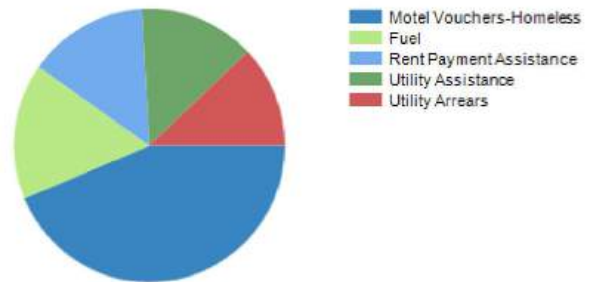
If you know of someone needing help, please direct them to dial 2-1-1 on their phone and follow the prompts. If they enter a zip code in our service area, the Coordinated Entry team will triage their situation and send us a referral if we're the best agency to support their needs.

### First Step Back Home

**Top 5 Services by Units**



**Top 5 Services by Clients**



Service	Entries	Units	Total	Clients	Families	Adults	Children	Seniors
Assistance to purchase vehicle	6	6.00	\$24,226.53	6	6	9	15	0
Car repair	17	17.00	3,151.63	16	16	30	17	0
Cell phone	7	7.00	742.41	7	7	9	1	2
Cell Phone Minutes	8	8.00	452.45	8	8	15	8	1
Clothing	7	7.00	588.51	6	6	8	3	0
Department of Revenue Payment	6	6.00	734.31	3	3	4	3	0
Emergency Home Repair	8	8.00	2,365.47	2	1	2	1	0
Food	19	19.00	1,219.83	15	14	13	1	2
Fuel	37	37.00	1,276.16	28	27	39	13	1
Household Goods	9	9.00	1,006.42	6	6	9	5	1
Insurance	2	2.00	415.00	2	2	2	0	0
Medical Services	1	1.00	90.76	1	1	1	0	0
Medication Assistance	2	2.00	29.98	2	2	3	0	0
Mobile Home Expenses	10	10.00	1,596.37	6	6	9	9	3
Motel Vouchers-Homeless	101	212.00	18,260.30	76	78	102	38	5
Personal hygienic items	1	1.00	8.74	1	1	3	3	0
Rent Payment Assistance	28	28.00	6,383.77	25	25	28	14	1
Rental Arrears Payments	3	3.00	637.00	3	3	7	6	0
Rental Deposit	1	1.00	200.00	1	1	1	2	0
School Supplies	1	1.00	193.63	1	1	2	1	0
Storage	2	2.00	218.00	1	1	1	0	0
Transportation	5	5.00	464.68	4	3	5	1	0
Utility Arrears	22	22.00	4,196.86	21	21	27	23	1
Utility Assistance	28	28.00	4,037.63	24	24	38	31	5
Utility Deposit Assistance	1	1.00	153.83	1	1	1	0	0
<b>Organization Total:</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>443.00</b>	<b>\$72,650.27</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>15</b>





## Recent Donor Acknowledgements

### November 2024

We want to thank several businesses, churches and community groups who have financially supported FSBH this past quarter with these recent gifts.

Some gifts have been made in honor or in memory of loved ones.

- \$5,000 – Tom & Mitch Fleming Foundation
- \$3,000 – Cuivre River Operation Round Up
- \$2,500 – MasterCard – Match from employee gift
- \$1,500 – Mission Financial- St. Peters
- \$1,450 – Warrenton Christian Church
- \$1,416 – Mary Martha Thrift Shop, Wentzville
- \$1,200 – Element Church, Wentzville
- \$1,042 – Oakridge Baptist Church Special Offering, St. Peters
- \$1,000 – Theodore A. Kienstra Foundation
- \$1,000 – Grace Community Chapel, St. Peters
- \$ 752 – Marathon Petroleum – Match from employee gift
- \$ 695 – AbbVie Corporate - Match from employee gift
- \$ 600 – Church of God Faith Fellowship, Grubville
- \$ 600 – Chapel of the Lake, Lake St. Louis
- \$ 500 – Central Presbyterian Church, Clayton
- \$ 360 – Thrivent Choice Dollars allocations from Dennis & Donna Hall, Tina Koncki, Susan Bauer, Judith Johnson and Jessica Holtam
- \$ 200 – Dardenne Presbyterian Church Women's Group, Dardenne Prairie
- \$ 15 – AT&T Corporate - Match for employee gift



We are so very thankful to all of you who think of donating to our public charity.

## Donation Methods to Support FSBH

We want to remind you that your tax-deductible charitable donation is a great way to support the ministry. We are a public charity per IRS Regulations of a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations will be receipted for tax-deductible documentation purposes. Here are several options to consider:

- **Corporate Matching Grant Donations**
  - Some matching grant companies are Industrial Ally, AT&T, Wells Fargo, Bayer, Boeing, Marathon Petroleum, MasterCard, Pfizer, VMWare, and Thrivent Financial Services.
  - Boeing and perhaps other corporations offer **volunteer time grant matches**. If you volunteer 25 hours with our ministry, Boeing will send a \$250 cash gift.
  - If you work for a company that offers match gifting, please initiate the paperwork for this to be done, and we'll complete the required elements so you and others can participate.
- **Write a Check payable to First Step Back Home and send to the following address:**
  - First Step Back Home, Inc.  
Paul Kruse  
PO Box 966  
O'Fallon MO 63366
- **Visit our ministry website and click "Donate" for direct donation via your credit card through PayPal. There is a small fee charged to the ministry with this option: [firststepbackhome.net](http://firststepbackhome.net).**
- Donate directly to our PayPal account: [paypal.com/paypalme/firststepbackhome](https://paypal.com/paypalme/firststepbackhome)
- Thrivent members can create an "Action Team" and receive \$250 "seed money" twice per year for charitable causes. Details can be found at this link: [thrivent.com/actionteam](http://thrivent.com/actionteam).