

CONNECT

Safe at Home

Most families are formed by bloodlines and marriage, but at the Kansas City Rescue Mission Women's Center, a family is being formed by understanding. Under the constant care of trained and loving staff, women who have never before felt accepted or understood have found a place to belong, and to begin a journey of healing. Recently, a few of our residents gathered to share with each other what brought them to the Women's Center and what they are discovering in their new family.

Renee*: I've always had a place to go before where I could get away to get clean, but this time all my avenues were shut down. There was nothing. Some people have to go all the way to the bottom before they're ready.

Kate: I was just running and running and running. I drank to deal with the hurt I was feeling and felt like a failure for drinking. I would try to get sober, going to AA, but always something would happen and I would run back to drinking. I thought I was going to drink myself to death.

Shana: I came from a very abusive situation. People said to me, "Why don't you just leave?" Where am I going to go? Nobody would take me. I have a felony in my past so I can't get an apartment. I called 18 shelters; they were all full. I had nowhere to go. I would barricade myself in my room. I would wait to shower until three in the morning when everyone was sleeping. I prayed to God every night, "Please God, don't let someone come in and hurt me!"

Luann: It's hard out there for a woman when you're homeless. You sleep in a park with one eye open. It's hard to find a place to even wash your face. You might walk three miles to find a meal and when you get there, the place is closed. We've been hurt so much we don't know what the truth is.

Renee: I met a woman when I was at the truck stop to make some money. I was hungry and embarrassed, but I knocked on a truck cab and was surprised when a woman opened the door. She didn't shoo me off, but instead she invited me in from the cold and talked to me and asked if she could pray with me.

She prayed with me about finding help to get out of the life I was in, and God led me to the KCRM Women's Center.

Kate: I ran out of places to turn and finally called my mom's best friend. She has always loved me unconditionally. She started researching places I could go to get help and suggested the Women's Center because the counselors are trained and licensed.

I was scared to come, but the moment I walked in I felt so safe and at home.

Cheryl: We're safe here, and we have each other.

Others: That's right!

Shana: I'm so blessed that the Women's Center welcomed me with open arms. For the first time in my life I feel safe. I can come out of my room when I want. I can get something to eat without fear of being hurt. I feel completely safe here.

**Not their real names*



It's not that they *Can't* ... it's that they can't do it alone.

On the cover of this issue of CONNECT you have met some of the women who turned to the KCRM Women's Center. They are unique, with diverse backgrounds and stories. But they have this in common ... each one found herself alone, trying to survive ... each one came to a moment where they desperately needed help ... **the distinctive and essential help offered at the KCRM Women's Center.**

Here, Executive Director Joe Colaizzi and Women's Center Director Terri Bennett share about the challenges faced by these precious women and how KCRM, with your help, is caring for them.

If We Don't Help Them, Who Will? — Rev. Joe Colaizzi

The people Jesus encountered and spent His time with were real people with real problems. One of those was a woman He met at a drinking well in Samaria. You can read this story in the Gospel of John, Chapter 4, so rather than retelling it here, I'd like to share how she reminds me of the women we serve at the KCRM Women's Center.

She was an outcast in her own community. The well was a social gathering spot and it was common for the women to come early in the morning to get their daily supply of water. She came alone ... at noon.

The women who reside at the KCRM Women's Center are ones society has often pushed to the fringes ... the ones no one knows how to help ... the ones ignored, forgotten and alone who've fallen through the cracks.

Her need was too great to meet on her own. Jesus gently confronted her about her lifestyle and choices and showed her she was trying to fill a void in destructive ways. Then He offered her real help.

In the same way, years of pain, abuse and dysfunction have sent the women we serve careening into addiction and self-destructive decisions.

KCRM's staff, volunteers and supporters have prepared a place for the homeless women in our community who are too broken emotionally, mentally and physically to find a refuge anywhere else. Together, we feed, comfort, counsel and love them to wholeness, because...

If we don't help them, who will?

Please continue to stand with KCRM in prayer and with your financial gifts and volunteer support as we offer freedom and hope to the hurting and homeless in our city.

CONNECT asked Terri Bennett to talk about the new KCRM Women's Center and the women it serves.

Why do so many single, homeless women need the Women's Center?

Many single homeless women are chronically homeless and have years of addiction. They don't know how to behave appropriately or compete in the job market. They don't know how to do a resume or present themselves in a job interview. Some are even illiterate. Almost all we serve at the Women's Center have co-occurring disorders like addiction and mental illness.

You've been counseling homeless women for 30 years. Has anything about your residents surprised you?

Yes, I am surprised at the severity of their issues. Many have been addicted for so long, they aren't aware they have a mental illness until they are off drugs. Some become mentally ill later in life and don't understand what's wrong ... like those with PTSD or dissociative identity disorder.

What's different about KCRM's Women's Center then? Why do they come to us?

Many women on our waiting list come right off the street or from other agencies. The women are often on "do not take" lists at other shelters. Many have lost their children or given them to family members to raise, so they struggle in a shelter that includes children. Those struggling with mental illness find it difficult to follow a strict set of rules.

We are unique in that we have chosen to focus only on single homeless women and planned an environment where they don't have to stress and can focus on meeting their goals.

If they have so many issues, how can we help them?

Unlike most shelters, KCRM Women's Center has a clinical treatment team with licensed and certified counselors, social workers and addiction recovery specialists. And we aren't a 30-day or 90-day program. Each woman has the time and attention she needs to grow at her own pace and meet her objectives.



Joe Colaizzi cuts the ribbon at the opening of the KCRM Women's Center with Terri Bennett (far right) and Terri Bachtel, KCRM Board President.



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Center
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Does the Women's Center have a Christian component?

Yes. We use the Life Recovery Bible and have devotions daily. Women can choose to attend, and most do!

Is there hope for the residents at the Women's Center?

Yes, there is! They can improve their lives. They can have quality of life with housing and healthy relationships. And many learn there is hope in Jesus and more to life than they've ever experienced.

For more information about the KCRM Women's Center and how you can get involved, visit kcrm.org or call (816) 421-7643.

Attention Ladies!

You are invited to attend

Women for Restoration

*Women Who Can
for
Women Who Can't*

A Benefit for the
**Kansas City Rescue Mission
Women's Center**

Tuesday, June 10, 2014

The Promise*

1814 Oak, Kansas City, Missouri

Registration and Buffet Lunch

11:30 am – 12:15 pm

Program and Raffle

12:15 – 1:30 pm

The goal: to raise **\$100,000**

to help fund KCRM Women's Center's programs and services. You will have the opportunity to meet some of the women you are helping and hear their inspiring stories. If you cannot attend, please consider sending a donation in the envelope provided or giving to **Women for Restoration** at kcrm.org.

*Located near the intersection of 19th and Oak, **The Promise** is a rustic yet elegant event space located in Kansas City's thriving Crossroads Arts District. Parking is free and located on the south side of the building and along the streets surrounding the facility.

For interactive directions, go to kcrm.org/wfr and click **The Promise** address.



Please RSVP by Friday, May 30, 2014 to Julie Larocco, jlarocco@kcrm.org

Donor **Bill of Rights**

Kansas City Rescue Mission is a member in good standing with the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability. Here is the ECFA "Donor Bill of Rights."

You have the right to:

- Know how the funds of an organization are being spent.
- Know what the programs you support are accomplishing.
- Know that the organization complies with federal, state, and municipal laws.
- Restrict or designate your gifts to a particular project within the organization's mission objectives.
- A timely and courteous response to your inquiries about finances and programs.
- Visit office and program sites of an organization to talk personally with the staff.
- Give cheerfully without being pressured by the organization.
- Obtain a copy of the organization's most recent audited financial statements.
- Know that there is a responsible governing board providing oversight to the organization's mission.
- Know that all appeals for funds are truthful and accurate.

You can learn more about KCRM's financial accountability at kcrm.org.

Click "Who We Are" and then "Memberships and Certifications." Thank you for partnering with us!

The **CONNECT** newsletter is a publication of **KCRM**

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Way to Go, Women's Center Team!

The KCRM Women's Center was honored by **Avila University** as the **Outstanding Field Agency** of the year. Bachelor of Social Work seniors are placed at the Women's Center and provide nine months of supervised social work practice in the form of long-term, intensive case management for residents there. Avila honored the WC staff for treating the student interns with respect and embracing them as fellow staff members. Pictured here, Women's Center Director Terri Bennett accepts the award.

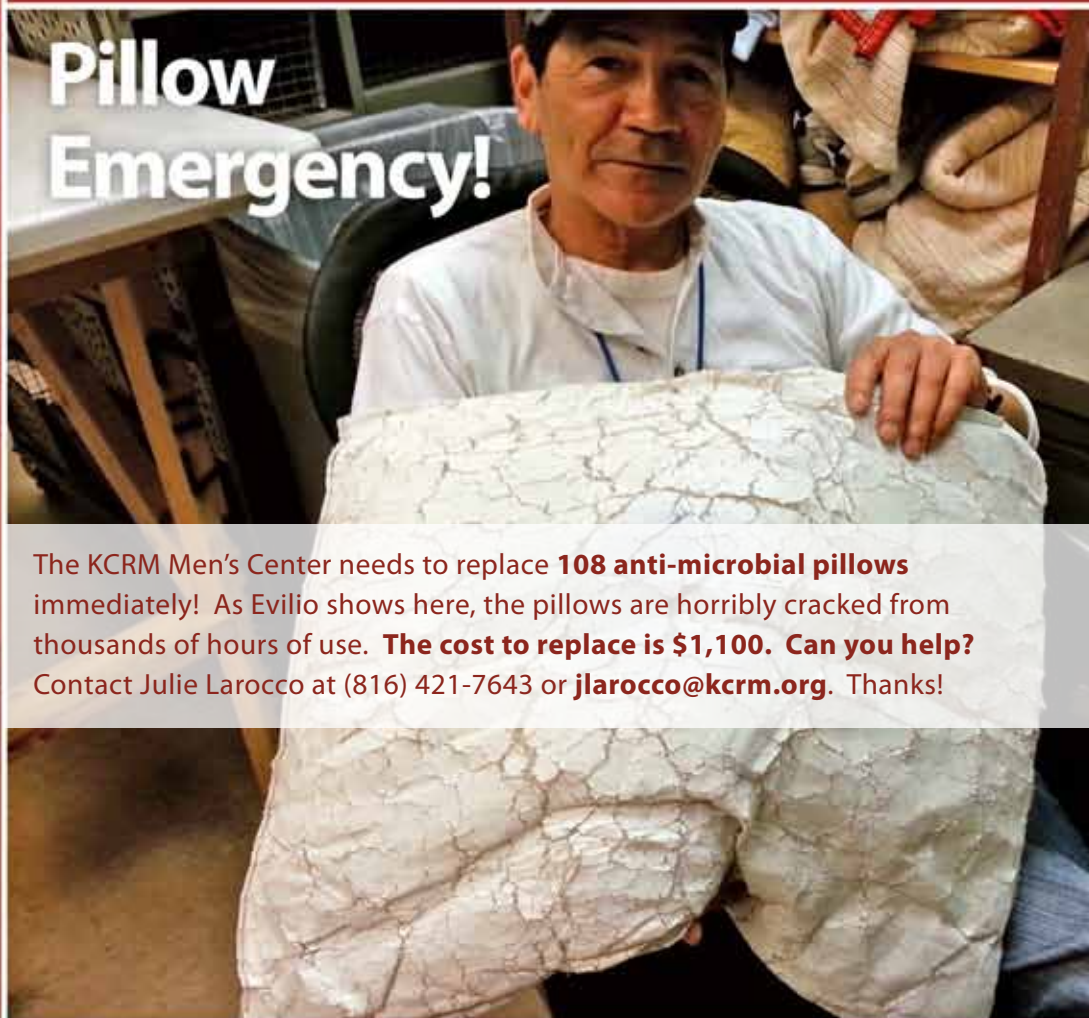


1212 Taney Street,
Kansas City, Missouri
waechtersbachusa.com

Warehouse Sale to Benefit KCRM

Waechtersbach, well known for its high quality ceramic tableware, is having a warehouse sale on May 17, featuring up to 60 percent off of retail prices. **Entry into this sale is a \$2.00 donation or two cans of food** which will be donated to Kansas City Rescue Mission. Thank you, Waechtersbach, for supporting Kansas City's poor and homeless!

Pillow Emergency!



The KCRM Men's Center needs to replace **108 anti-microbial pillows** immediately! As Evilio shows here, the pillows are horribly cracked from thousands of hours of use. **The cost to replace is \$1,100. Can you help?** Contact Julie Larocco at (816) 421-7643 or jarocco@kcrm.org. Thanks!

Make a Note! July is **KCRM Awareness Month!** Come visit us! Learn more at kcrm.org.