

CONNECT

FINDING HER SMILE



Sheila's smile headlines the conversation as she sits down to tell her story. It's a BIG smile, and it's a BIG deal.

"I didn't smile at all when I first came to the (KCRM) Women's Center," she relates. "I could hardly hold my head up, then. But ... I smile a lot now!"

It only takes a few moments with Sheila to recognize how smart and insightful she is. And her transparent honesty reveals she's incredibly brave, too: "In May I lost my house due to mental illness. I was in and out of the hospital. I lost my job ... I lost everything."

At the lowest point of her life Sheila came to KCRM, her first time ever to be in a resident recovery center. "I didn't have hope at all when I first came to the Women's Center," she remembers. "I isolated myself a lot, and didn't socialize with anyone.

"Before I came to KCRM, I'd tried to commit suicide — and didn't want to live. But KCRM's classes and staff, and different outreaches and volunteers who come visit us, have given me hope that there is something more for me. I don't have to end my life."

"I am open now. I smile a lot now. I've learned I am resilient!"

Since moving into our Women's Center, Sheila has worked hard and taken full advantage of the counseling and resources freely available to her. "It's easier now. KCRM is helping me have hope again! I am open now. I smile a lot now. I've learned I'm resilient!"

She smiles a lot, but she's serious about the change in her life and mind. "I am determined because of my kids," Sheila says. "They are with their dad now, but they need their mom to be there for them. God is amazing! He's my Father and He's teaching me that my life counts — that every day counts — and I am someone special."

HOLISTIC.

I've come to appreciate this word as it applies to the recovery ministries at KCRM, and especially the Women's Center. Throughout the Mission the word "holistic" simply describes our approach to client care, characterized by the treatment of the whole person, taking into account the body, mind and spirit of those we serve.

A holistic approach to care is one of KCRM's core values, and is founded in scripture where, time and again, we read of God's concern and provision for his children in each of these areas.

If KCRM does not help our neighbors in need to address their whole person ... in body (physical health, rest and nutrition) ... in mind (the way they think and feel that affects decision-making and relationships), and in spirit (the core of who they are, created to live with God forever), then we can never offer a lasting solution or fully compassionate response to their suffering.

In this issue of *CONNECT* we highlight the importance of nutrition as a tool in holistic care. KCRM has always been known on the streets as the place to go to find great tasting food served in a safe and welcoming atmosphere. But we continue to grow in understanding about how much good nutrition — the right kinds of food in healthy portions — can help our clients overcome addictive tendencies and live longer, healthier lives with greater confidence.

What a great way to continue to offer *Freedom from the Past and Hope for the Future!*

— **Joe Colaizzi**
Executive Director



SOUL FOOD A CONVERSATION WITH ANGELA MATNEY, RN

"Three hots and a cot" has long been street vernacular to describe the main services a homeless shelter often provides — three calorie-rich meals and a warm bed for persons who spend most of the day out in the elements. But Angela Matney, the KCRM Women's Center staff nurse, says the Women's Center is a different kind of place.

"We are not an overnight shelter concerned with loading our clients up with calories and carbohydrates because we don't know where they may be sleeping tomorrow," Angela (pictured below) explains. "When a client moves in here, this becomes their home. Our residents know they will be getting three meals each day and three snacks throughout the day as well."

Angela recognizes that this requires a different perspective on food preparation. "These women live and eat here day after day, week after week," she says, "and, just like you and me, they need to be aware of their protein, calories and fat intake."

For residents of the Women's Center, the majority of whom face a co-occurring struggle with addiction and mental health needs, nutrition also influences broader issues of care and recovery. "Some residents' drug of choice will keep their metabolisms raised, and they can eat anything and not gain weight," Angela says.



"Then they come to KCRM and the drugs get out of their systems. They begin to eat regular meals for the first time in a long time and it can affect their weight and contribute to struggles with self image if those meals aren't nutritionally sound."

Other factors contribute to relapse. "Multiple studies show that too much sugar in the diet can create a higher risk of relapse for persons battling addiction," she continues. "By providing well balanced meals and healthy snacks we can help break some of the addiction cycles plaguing our residents."

Changing old habits is never easy, especially when it comes to healthier eating. But it isn't only the Women's Center residents who must adapt. KCRM staff and volunteers alike are learning to resist the temptation to serve only comfort foods and sweet desserts that they know make the residents smile.

"Often when volunteers come to serve a meal, it is a special moment for them and they want to make it a special moment for the residents," Angela says. "And special moments are celebrated with party food! It's great to have pizza and cake or ice cream for a party, but if we would eat like this three or four nights a week, we'd be in trouble!"

"We're asking for help from our wonderful volunteers and donors to help us continue to improve our menu at the Women's Center and guide our residents into their best health!"

NEW KCRM NUTRITION WEBPAGE

February 1, KCRM launches a new webpage at kcrm.org/wcnutrition providing nutritional information for our Women's Center and for you! Included will be:

- Articles on how diet affects mental health, addiction recovery and overall wellbeing
- Links to portion control, the food pyramid and other reference sites
- A link to KCRM's new Pinterest page with albums for recipes, menus, photos and articles on health and wellbeing

This webpage will be critical for volunteers who bring and serve meals, or for those who simply donate food to the Women Center. If you'd like to help residents manage their diets while in recovery and after leaving our program, contact Volunteer Coordinator Kristen Ray at kray@kcrm.org or visit kcrm.org/wcnutrition today!

WHERE IS SHE NOW?

In KCRM's 2014 Holiday *CONNECT* newsletter (go to kcrm.org and click "Connect with KCRM"), we introduced our readers to Jessica, a 23-year-old resident at our Women's Center. Her desire to overcome her meth addiction and reconcile with family was reflected in her energy and determination. So where is she now?

After leaving KCRM's Women's Center, Jessica reconciled with her family in Kentucky. Life hasn't been easy, but Jessica's determination to overcome each setback has remained strong. Recently she moved back to Kansas City with Baby Jaxsen. "I need to stop being dependent on my family for everything, and I know Kansas City has resources to help me," she says. "I have a new part-time job working nights and, during the day, I'm babysitting and working toward my high school diploma through KCRM's Learning Center."

KCRM welcomes Jessica's participation in our Learning Center and asks you to pray for this young mom and baby. To learn more about the KCRM Women's Center and our Learning Center, visit kcrm.org.



l-r: Cordellia Clark, KCRM's Learning Center Coordinator, tutors Jessica

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Beggar's Table Gallery, 2010 Baltimore, Kansas City, Mo., will feature portraits of the homeless at KCRM by artist **Eric Tiffany**, Friday, April 7. Eric will also present at KCRM's own art show, Sunday, June 25.



Eric Tiffany's portrait of Tommy, a KCRM resident

KCRM Art Show – Sunday, June 25, 1:30 p.m.

Tickets are just \$25 each for this Sunday afternoon art show by KCRM's residents and local artists who represent the homeless through their work. Price includes art show, testimonies from our residents, tours of KCRM's Men's Center and a delicious lunch buffet. Watch for more information at kcrm.org or contact Julie Larocco at jlarocco@kcrm.org or 816-421-7643.

A Cuppa Joe with Joe

Contact Paul Masao at pmasao@kcrm.org or 816-421-7643 to reserve your seat for: Thursday, February 9, Friday, April 7 or Friday, June 2. Or, call to schedule a special "Cuppa Joe" for your group. Learn more at kcrm.org/cuppajoe.

Volunteer Summits

If your group volunteers regularly at KCRM, our Volunteer Summits are for you! Summits include a required training session, along with several electives. If you haven't scheduled your Summit, please review the dates below then contact Kristen Ray at kray@kcrm.org or 816-421-7643.

Women's Center dates: April 22, June 10, August 12, October 14, December 9

Men's Center dates: February 18, March 11, May 20, July 15, September 9, November 4

hope! AMBASSADORS COME ABOARD!

When the **Crate family** does something big, they usually do it together. So when they heard KCRM was looking for **Hope Ambassadors** for its **Extreme Makeover: Mission Style** project, the whole family jumped aboard.

Hope Ambassadors is a volunteer- and donor-driven program covering a variety of projects such as **Operation: Shower Power**, which supplies travel-size soap and shampoo, to **Extreme Makeover: Mission Style** renovations.

During a recent visit to the KCRM Men's Center, the Crates learned about our need to raise \$53,000 to give 10 transitional bedrooms their first major renovation in 25 years. They decided to kick off the project by sponsoring the first room with a gift of \$5,300! "We love the concept of having a safe and functional place for men and women to call home while they work to re-enter society. Homeless people are often overlooked or looked down upon ... we love the idea of helping them feel like a valued member of society and not an afterthought," says Cindy Crate.

To learn more about **Hope Ambassadors** projects or to start one of your own, contact Julie Larocco at 816-421-7643 or email jlarocco@kcrm.org.



Cindy Crate, Glenda Crate, Chuck Crate, Suzi Palmer, Stephanie Palmer on a recent cruise.



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