



Legacies of Giving

We had the opportunity of late to reflect on the amazing generosity of the many individuals, families, and other local entities that have supported our mission for the past decade. It is profoundly humbling to see the extent of the blessings that have been poured out by so many over the past ten years!

A list of our **Top 100 Donors** during this period includes **30 churches, 20 businesses, and 15 charitable organizations and civic groups** along with **35 faithful families and individuals** who have abundantly supported us with their gifts and prayers. Amazingly, a full one-fourth of these donors have partnered with **C-U at Home** since its inception (or nearly so)!

The generosity of our community reaches, of course, far beyond this Top 100 list. A great many individuals, families, and churches have donated to our **One Winter Night** event each year (or nearly so) since its inception. The number of **“Hope Givers”** who donate monthly

or annually to support year-round emergency sheltering and the other services we provide to our friends without addresses has **nearly tripled** over the past year alone!

We say it often but can never really say it enough: **we could not do what we do without YOUR help.** Thank you to ALL of those over the past decade and beyond who come along side us with your time, your prayers, and your donations. We value your trust and are blessed by your generosity!

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Ministry Focus: C-U at Work and Prosperity Gardens

Our **C-U at Work** program has kicked off its second season partnering with the **City of Champaign Township** and **Prosperity Gardens** to bring fresh produce to local markets.

In a recent orientation for new crew members, **Prosperity Gardens Director Nicole Bridges Musumeci** led a walk-through of the garden sites at 302 N. First Street in Champaign.

“It’s April, and that means it’s time to get started prepping the garden plots and getting seeds in the ground!” she said enthusiastically.

Veterans of the project had already constructed a dozen new raised planters in the west gardens, and the new crew went right to work filling them with new, rich soil. Throughout the summer, these urban farmers will work morning shifts, Monday-Friday, raising a variety of crops. When harvested, hundreds of pounds of produce will go to the nearby **Daily Bread Soup Kitchen** as well as to local farmer’s markets.



Andrew J. Quarnstrom, City of Champaign Township Supervisor, expressed appreciation for this fruitful relationship. “We are extremely proud of the Prosperity Gardens project and the work that our participants are doing,” he said “Our partnership with C-U at Home has been the key to our success and the growth of both the **C-U at Work** program and **Prosperity Gardens** is extremely exciting.”

At least two of this year’s new recruits bring past gardening experience to their work. “Back in the day,” **Josh** recalled, “I used to work a couple of acres growing produce I sold.” **JR’s** memory was a bit less fondly held: “My Grandad made us get out and work in the garden first thing every single morning!”





Our new C-U Shelter Coordinator, **Thomas Welte**, came to the Champaign-Urbana area in 2019 to work at Cunningham Children's Home. Thomas hails from Quincy, and he graduated from Lincoln Christian University in 2016 with a Bachelor's in Youth and Family Ministries.

Thomas's early life calling was to Youth Ministry, and he served in that role at a Lincoln church for six years. Life switched gears after that, and he started down the path that would lead him here.

"I was fortunate enough to land a job with the local community action partnership in Lincoln and began working with people in poverty," he says. "I also worked part time at Lincoln College as a Campus Safety Officer. Both of those jobs taught me some invaluable skills that remain relevant to my work."

After coming to C-U, Thomas added another layer to his diverse skill set. "I spent one year as Athletic Director at Saint Thomas More High School," he says, "and I just completed my Master's in Coaching and Athletic Administration through Concordia University." Thomas follows all things NFL intently and has even appeared on some podcasts talking about his beloved Kansas City Chiefs. Football is a major passion!



What drew Thomas to the demanding job of Shelter Coordinator? "I see so many of our friends suffering from disabilities, both mental and physical, who have fallen through the cracks," he explains. "In a perfect world, there would be a big red 'easy' button we could press and get everyone the care they need, but that doesn't exist, so our job becomes one of advocacy."

The biggest reward of his work so far has been getting to know the guys at the shelter and celebrating their little victories every day.

"So many of our friends are moving forward with their lives - their sobriety, their search for employment, their process for finding housing," he notes. "It truly is a privilege to share in the day-to-day joy that comes with their progress."

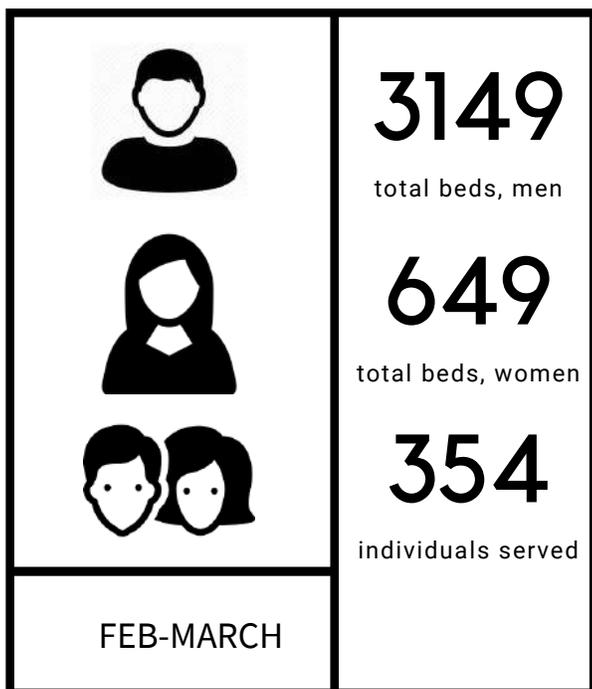
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Staff Spotlight (continued) . . .

Thomas enjoys spending free time with friends and family, coaching football, traveling, and doing “anything BBQ related.” He confesses, “I’m always looking for an excuse to throw a brisket on the smoker and having people over is the perfect excuse.”



Shelter Services Provided



As part of our mission to “engage and mobilize our community to house and support the most vulnerable homeless on their journey of healing and restoration,” C-U at Home is part of a "CoC" (Continuum of Care) in our community called the **Champaign County Continuum of Service Providers for the Homeless (CSPH)**.

The **CSPH** is comprised of representatives of organizations such as nonprofit homeless providers, faith-based organizations, governments, public housing agencies, social service providers, hospitals and mental health agencies, law enforcement, and other related organizations concerned with the various needs associated with homelessness in a specific geographic area.

The **National Alliance to End Homelessness** website lists several specific activities CoCs undertake in their communities:

- Outreach, intake, and assessment in order to identify service and housing needs and provide a link to the appropriate level of both;
- Emergency shelter to provide an immediate and safe alternative to sleeping on the streets;
- Transitional housing with supportive services to allow for the development of skills that will be needed once permanently housed; and
- Permanent and permanent supportive housing to provide individuals and families with an affordable place to live with services if needed.

(from <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/what-is-a-continuum-of-care/>)

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Continuum (continued) . . .

One of most important activities entrusted to CoCs is the biannual count of the homeless population and an annual enumeration of emergency systems, transitional housing units, and beds that make up the homeless assistance systems.

This count was one of the first tasks undertaken by **C-U at Home** after it was organized in 2012. The count was last conducted here this past January.

Business Partnerships

It's tax season – have you hugged your accountant lately?! We owe **BIG hugs** to two local firms that have supported us for many years. **Martin Hood, LLC** and **Yettke & Rapp, LLC** have been **One Winter Night Business Sponsors** since 2014 and 2015, respectively.



Martin Hood LLC offers the full range of assurance and attest services, tax planning and preparation, and business advisory services. Learn more at <https://martinhood.com/>.



Yettke & Rapp, LLC offers franchise accounting, tax planning and preparation, and wide range of personalized accounting services. Learn more at <http://yettke.com/>.

Thank You for your support!

A Word from... *Aleta*

"The Bottom of the V"

My husband and I attended the launch of the Hope Givers campaign in the summer of 2018 as intrigued yet somewhat far-removed community members. At that time we had participated in a couple of "One Winter Night" events and would get an occasional email update. Sitting at the table with strangers (who have now become friends!), I had no inkling that my life would change drastically as a result of that night.

It was an easy "sell" for us to partner as Hope Givers after listening to testimonies and stories of lives that had been changed. That lead to receiving a "thank you" in the mail. To that I was prompted to reply with an encouraging word. That lead to "hey did you know we are hiring?", which lead to a whirlwind month of conversations and prayers and ultimately taking a leap of faith and joining this small non-profit ministry that was making a giant impact in the lives of our community's most vulnerable people.

The Hope Givers launch was the night that I was introduced to the "Vulnerability V", but it wasn't until I began working at C-U at Home that I got to meet and get to know those friends that had fallen to the bottom of the "V". Some of them come and go before we find out what brought them our way. Some friends stick around a little longer and we get the joy of not only getting to know them but of helping them move on to better situations. And some of our friends have been here long before I arrived and may continue to rely on the staff and our friends and supporters in the community long after I'm gone.

But whether they come for one night or are with us for years, they have one thing in common. They are our friends.

They give us purpose. They give us joy. They give us hope. Many times they give us grace. They understand we are not perfect, but we strive for excellence in all that we do. They give us the privilege of loving them.

They give, and they forgive. And for all of those things I am so grateful that I am on this journey with my friends, for as long as their address is 70 East Washington, Champaign, Illinois.