

I-HELP NEWS

I-Help Newsletter for Desert Cross Lutheran Church, Volume 9

God's Plan She was sitting on a bench outside of the Azcend office when she saw me. "They left without me," she cried, "I called to tell them that I would be 5 minutes late but no one answered the phone!" Sitting beside Ann (not her real name) was a woman named Denise who was surrounded by 8 plastic bags filled with food items. She came to Azcend to access the Food Shelf. She looked familiar and it was as if she knew me. "Could you give me a lift to Alma School" she asked as Ann was putting things in my car. Denise started walking toward me with needy eyes. I nodded for her to join us, not really sure what I was agreeing to. I was in a hurry, knowing that everyone would be waiting for me back at the church, but I couldn't just let this woman sit there in an empty parking lot. It's 5:20 p.m. on a Tuesday night and the traffic was crazy. I turned onto Alma School and asked, "where are we going?" She responded, "The light rail on Main Street in Mesa." "What?" I muttered quietly to myself. Then the phone rang. It was Lee (my spouse) who was back at the church, "Where are you?" She asked, "the bus is already here." I said that I would be a little late. I needed to drop someone off. Meanwhile I got an earful about life on the street and how wonderful the I-Help churches have been. It was now 6:00 pm and I pulled into the Circle K gas station beside the light rail stop. I asked Denise if she wanted me to carry her bags to the train station. "Oh no, help me carry them into the store" she said. As we opened the store door the cashier said, "Hi Denise!" She told me to place the bags on a table near the cash register. I gave her a hug, and said, "Take care of yourself". Now I'm back in the car with Ann. She shared the tale of her homelessness. She was rear-ended and then hospitalized. It was then when she decided enough was enough. She had been living with a man who she called evil. He would beat her. She said that she became numb to the abuse. But after the accident she knew something had to change. She left. She lived in her car for several days until the car would no longer run. Then her car was towed away. She had her backpack, a sleeping bag and a piece of cardboard. For the first time in her life she slept in the bushes outside of a gas station. She said it was cold. She met some people and heard about I-Help. Two weeks later she was part of the program.



That Tuesday night I had an agenda. I was to pick up some people and rush back to the Tempe campus. That Tuesday night God had a different plan. God sent me two people. I don't think they were angels, but they made me stop and think about the bigger plan, God's plan. Yes, we were going to feed and house people, but God knew I needed to hear the reason this ministry was so important. Join me in sharing this ministry. I believe it will change you as it has shaped me.

Peace & love,

Glen Stadler
I-Help Coordinator for Desert Cross Lutheran Church



I-Help Schedule 2024

Date	Serving Dinner - 6:00 pm Tuesday	Breakfast Club - 6:00 am Wed.
January 23, 2024	Thursday Morning Men's Christ Care	Thursday Morning Men's Christ Care
February 27, 2024	Perkins/Stutz Family	Tony & Donna Tainter
March 26, 2024	Esperanza I-Help Team	Open
April 23, 2024	Nancy Barnett Friends Group	Open
May 28, 2024	Thursday Morning Christ Care	Open
June 25, 2024	Esperanza I-Help Team	Open
July 23, 2024	Church Council	Open
August 27, 2024	Gilbert Chamber	Open
September 24, 2024	Esperanza I-Help Team	Open
October 22, 2024	Thursday Morning Christ Care	Open
November 26, 2024	Esperanza I-Help Team	Open
December 24, 2024	Open	Open

Esperanza Lutheran Joins Forces with Desert Cross

Esperanza Lutheran Church in Ahwatukee will be hosting our Wednesday Night I-Help dinner in March. The Esperanza Team started assisting the Desert Cross' I-Help program in 2023 by hosting three dinners. In 2024, this group has continued to volunteer signing up for four dinners. The team feels like their own church facility is inadequate to house I-Help guests, so they have joined Desert Cross in this ministry. It's a great reminder that we are all in this business of sharing God's love together.



Help Needed for I-Help Breakfast

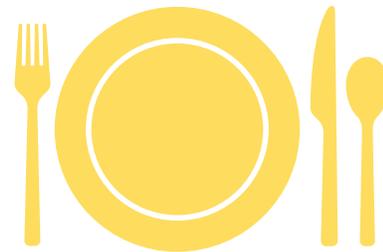
The Wednesday morning after the fourth Tuesday of the month, our I-Help volunteers serve a breakfast to 20-27 unhoused guests. This meal is very different than the Tuesday evening dinner in that our guests come into the Fellowship Hall, two to three at a time, generally around 6:10 a.m. It's a slower pace and there is time to chat and be present. Fresh hot coffee is always a big hit, but also bagels, English muffins, yogurts, fresh fruit and hard boiled eggs have been appreciated. Occasionally, our hosts have served some sort of egg casserole or egg bites which creates a buzz. Given the early morning hours, egg dishes are not expected but for those who do it, it's a wonderful treat. As of this writing, every Wednesday morning breakfast date is open in 2024. If you would like to serve a breakfast, just text me, Glen Stadler at 480-233-5667 for more details.



The Fellowship Hall doors are opened at 5:50 a.m. on Wednesday morning. Guests are waken at 6:00 a.m. Guests start coming for breakfast at 6:10 a.m. Guests leave on Azcend bus at 7:00 a.m.

Suggested menu:

- Bagels, English muffins, different breads
- Juice
- Fresh Fruit
- Yogurt
- Boiled eggs



Please note that small packets of butter, cream cheese, peanut butter and jellies are provided by I-Help with all needed coffee, sugar, creamer, cups, plates, plastic ware and napkins.



Pray for I-Help Guests

Please join me in praying for our homeless I-Help guests. The names below are the guests we served in February 2024. Generally we see over half of them the following month. Some guests find housing, some drop out of the program, while other guests move to a different location. Each guest carries a unique set of circumstances and they are all in need of our support.

Kenneth
Douglas
Bradley
Carla
Diane
Geraldo
Joanne
Daniel
Robert

Robert
Teresa
Christopher
Daryl
Michael
Amy
Brenda
Salvador
Tsuki

Ramiro
Jesus
Carl
Tammie
Calvin



The Perkins, Stutz and Tainter Families Rock

I had someone ask me what we served the homeless. He continued, "I suppose you make them hot dogs and chips" I laughed because his thoughts couldn't be further from the truth. I'm constantly in awe of the work and the generosity that I see in our hosts that serve in the I-Help program. The meals are all different, but they are beyond one's imagination. The quality of the meals are only out done by the love and concern our volunteers show our unhoused guests. The month of February we hosted 21 guests with the evening meal shared by the Perkins and Stutz families. Our Wednesday morning breakfast volunteers were Tony and Donna Tainter. Please know that God is using these individuals in a special way to bring comfort to a community experiencing rough times. They all deserves accolades of thanks!



Tuesday Night Hosts

- Jordon Sturtz
- Lori Sturtz
- Carolyn Perkins
- Dwight Perkins
- Jaimie Plute
- Addy Plute
- Nicholas Sturtz
- Lee Stadler
- Wendy Sontag
- Staci Smith
- Cindy Delano



Wednesday Morning Hosts

- Tony Tainter
- Donna Tainter
- Cindy Delano

Wednesday Morning Community Center Clean-up Person

David Fleming



December 26th - A Night to Remember @ I-Help

More than 30 people were players in our first I-Help Christmas Candlelight Service. It was an amazing night with musicians, teenage readers, food servers, little people distributes gifts, choirs and the magic of celebrating the birth of Christ. It was a night that I will never forget.

