

# THE MICAH MINISTRY

April 2, 2021

Dear Friends of IBCC & Micah Ministries,

We want to thank you for all of the ways you have joined Independence Boulevard Christian Church in our efforts to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God through Micah Ministries. Your prayers, countless volunteer hours, and generous donations have taken what began as Robert's Café serving a few neighbors into a multi-faceted ministry offering basic needs and sharing ~900 meals a week in early 2020. Even during COVID19 when all services are outdoors, ~400-450 meals are provided each week.

As today is our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we invite you to celebrate the ways people have encountered the love and presence of Christ during Micah Ministries. Please think of the specific stories of how you've met Jesus in the neighbors with whom we gather. Consider the ways you've felt the joy of knowing that the Holy Spirit is at work through you. We would love to collect your stories and make them available throughout this year for others to give glory to God. (Please avoid using the real names of anyone but yourself or someone whose permission you have obtained.)

As you may know, Micah includes hot food, clothing, hygiene, free medical care, relational engagement, and support with registering for stimulus checks. Over the years, Co-Directors Darrell and Rev. Sharon Cantrell have helped cultivate a volunteer and donation base of hundreds of individuals and organizations from secular to multiple religions. Through the relationships they have helped to build, IBCC has been expanding our partnerships with others serving the historic NE. For IBCC, Micah Ministries embody Christ's good news and extreme hospitality, often without words. Below are just a few of our most recent celebrations.

Five years ago, IBCC opened our building to Care Beyond the Boulevard so that Micah guests could receive free medical care, but also so that CBB could have a home base & office from which they could provide regular care via a medical bus to houseless neighbors living all around the downtown area. CBB, under the direction of KK Assmann, supervises KU and UMKC Medical students learning to offer care among people experiencing houselessness during the Monday and Saturday free clinics here at IBCC.

About 6 months ago, during the COVID19 pandemic, the Lykins Neighborhood Association, including IBCC member Diana Graham, knocked on doors around the neighborhood to determine who had needs for food. As Lykins committed to meeting the need, IBCC immediately said "yes" to the request for space to assemble and distribute boxes of food to 350 households. With Diana organizing volunteers, each household continues to receive food twice a month.

Ryogoku Soccer Academy's founder, Brad Leonard, wanted to connect with IBCC largely because of his appreciation of all that Micah Ministries is doing. He wants his school to be connected with this investment in the community. Knowing how much the young men in NE Kansas City need opportunities for hope, IBCC agreed to partner with RSA by offering the entire third floor of the building for them to renovate and utilize for schooling which begins August 2021. RSA seeks to educate and empower high school males through a learning model that is student-driven, community-based, and trauma-informed. With mentors and project-based learning, students will develop job & life skills, discover their own gifts, serve the neighborhood, and exercise their voices to become community leaders.

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This Fall, regular Micah volunteers from the Ismaili Jamatkhana Mosque in Olathe, did a food drive and donated it to our office. We created space for a small pantry to meet needs by request. Then, member, Ron Lewis, aware of the growing food insecurity in our neighborhood, proposed an outdoor “little pantry” on IBCC’s property. Staff, neighbors, partners, and members continue to stock the pantry which gets emptied by hungry neighbors every day. One guest shared his story & gave thanks to God for providing just what he needed by allowing him to see the pantry just at his hungriest and most desperate moment.

God has already touched more lives in more ways than anyone had imagined 20 years ago. And now, as we look toward the future together, we dream of deeper relationships with our neighbors and of partnering in ways that change the systems which wound them. We invite you to dream with us, and to even join the vision.

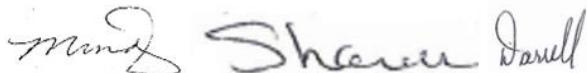
Especially when we can gather again indoors, we look forward to listening more deeply. As guests wait to be seated for their meal, we hope to host monthly conversations in our sanctuary between community organizers and our neighbors. The goal is to hear and amplify their voices as they speak for the healing changes needed in the neighborhood. We also hope to invite community leaders once a month to come for Q & A with our guests who rarely have the chance to be heard by those who create, legislate, and enforce the policies that impact them the most. We envision another monthly offering of live music to share a blessing that many rarely get to receive, and to provide a chance for some to share their gifts.

For guests seeking spiritual support, connection, and expression, we plan to offer brief, justice-centered worship back in the sanctuary near the conclusion of the Micah’s serving times. We believe the Spirit continues to move and is already preparing the space in hearts and facility for what God has in store.

As you can imagine, our dreams won’t be cost-free. After COVID-19 opened our eyes to the impact and transmission of airborne contagions, we especially want to bring HVAC to our Fellowship Hall which currently has no moving air or heat. The estimate for that investment is \$200K. If you feel moved to share from stimulus checks or other resources, we would be grateful to apply them to this renovation or to the operational expenses of Micah.

Regardless, we celebrate the ways God has already been at work through you, and the joy of getting to share some of that effort with you. We cherish your ongoing prayers & welcome your partnerships.

May all of the NE Corridor of KC feel Christ’s embrace and experience the fruition of their own potential,



Sharon, Darrell, & Mindy

Rev. Sharon Cantrell, Co-Director of Micah

Darrell Cantrell, Co-Director of Micah

Rev. Mindy Fugarino, Executive Director of Micah & Pastor of IBCC