2026 Annual Report











WateredGardens Ministries



Co-Founders, James and Marsha Whitford

Courage is a necessary virtue for advancing the Kingdom of God.

Over the years, the team at Watered Gardens has demonstrated courage, faith, and hard work in developing our ministries, each of which meets a unique need in our community. These additions have included overnight shelter services in 2009, Forge residential recovery program in 2016, the Worth Shop in 2018, Washington Family Hope Center for moms and kids in 2020, and the WG Marketplace thrift store in 2025. I'm blessed to work with a team whose actions flow from a courageous response to God's desire, expressed in Isaiah 58:10, that we extend ourselves to those in need.



We're extending ourselves even more this year. As I write this, we will soon break ground on a 57-unit permanent supportive housing tiny home community for chronically homeless individuals who are elderly or disabled. It's one addition of a two-part capital campaign. The second addition will be a larger, trauma-informed transitional shelter to meet the need of a growing homeless population with histories of trauma and poor mental health.

We've named the campaign Take Courage. As much as it is the title of a capital campaign, it is also a message from Jesus that I want you to hear and share with those in your spheres of influence. From John 16:33:

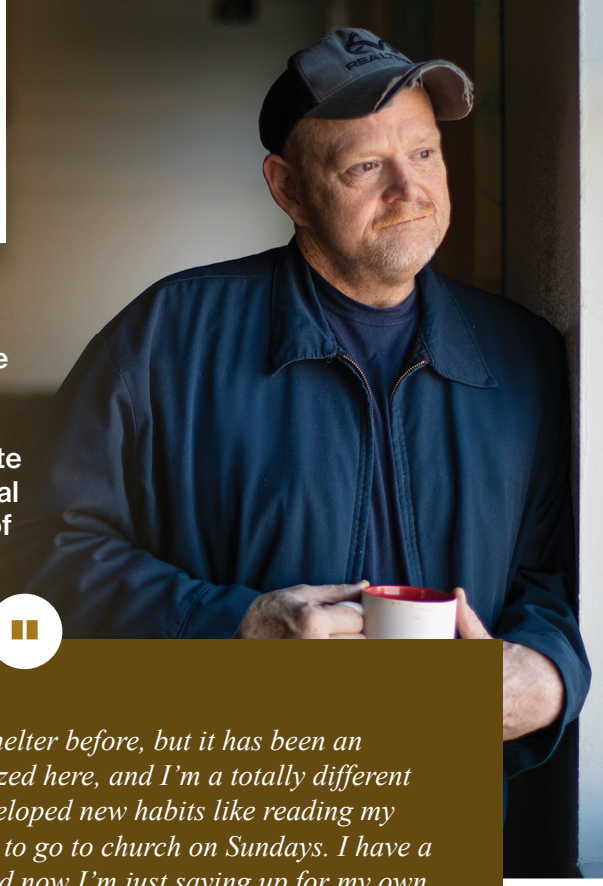
"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

I hope you're inspired by the stories and information from our various ministries in this year's report. I also hope it compels your unwavering support of our future endeavors. There is certainly a great deal of tribulation on the streets of our city today, but together, we have good reason to take courage.



James Whitford, Co-Founder
& Executive Director

OutreachCenter
Watered Gardens



A front-line ministry to those needing food, clothing, and a place to lay their heads. The Outreach Center provides over 50 beds for men and women, including a respite shelter for those needing additional time to recover after leaving one of our local hospitals.

"I'd never been in a homeless shelter before, but it has been an amazing experience. I was baptized here, and I'm a totally different person from who I was. I've developed new habits like reading my Bible every day, and I can't wait to go to church on Sundays. I have a full-time job and my own car, and now I'm just saving up for my own place. So much of the anger that I used to have is gone, and I've developed great friendships with the staff here, at work, and at the church." — Mike, Former Mission Guest

89
SHELTERED EXITS

159
GUESTS GAINFULLY EMPLOYED

26
DECISIONS FOR CHRIST



ProjectWorth
Watered Gardens



Project Worth leverages the power of business to lift people out of poverty. We implement the principle of exchange, which affirms human dignity in our clients who learn work skills while generating revenue for the ministry through goods made and sold.

"I really appreciate the tough love here at Watered Gardens. To stay here and be successful, you need that. Those firm boundaries have also helped me learn I can simply refuse what's harmful. I've had a hard time saying no to alcohol and lots of harmful things. So my mantra right now is 'No is a complete sentence.' I don't have to discuss or debate. I'm free to simply say 'yes' to the Lord and 'no' to anything that's from the enemy. That's been a liberating truth."

Casey, Former Mission Guest and Project Worth Partner

30,828
NEEDS EARNED

37,563
NEEDS MET

21,686
HOURS PARTNERED

$87,051
Generated at the WORTH SHOP

$323,930
Generated at the WG MARKETPLACE

ForgeCenter

For Virtue and Work | Watered Gardens



A long-term residential recovery program, Forge Center for Virtue & Work welcomes men coming from poverty, addiction, and incarceration into a 16-month focus on character development and work readiness. Graduates are full-time employed, independently housed, off of all government assistance, and active in a local church.

"Being surrounded with people who truly had my back and wanted the best for me was the best part about being in the Forge program. And I'm thankful knowing that just because I graduated, it wasn't the end of the relationships and life with these people. They have become family. And when I wholly and completely committed to the Forge program, it showed me how to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. It absolutely changed my life."

Austin, Forge Graduate



21

MEN STARTED THE PROGRAM

4

STUDENTS COMMISSIONED

42

STUDENTS COMMISSIONED TO DATE

WashingtonFamily
Hope Center | Watered Gardens



A 6-year-old campus designed to keep children with their mothers in times of crisis or chronic homelessness, Washington Family Hope Center currently provides 14 family units, each able to house a mom and up to four children, while the family re-stabilizes and sets a new course for holistic flourishing.

"This place is perfectly named, because when I came to Washington Family Hope Center, I felt hope for the first time in a long time. At that point, I was just done with life. But here it's Christian-based, they love you, and they help you stay sober, teaching you how to have a healthy routine. I know God has a plan for me, and so far I've just been trying to follow Him. I've noticed every time I rushed things or have done things on my own timeline, it just doesn't go well. Now I'm back in school studying to be a surgical tech, and for years I thought this dream was gone."

- Ariana, Washington Family Mom



30 + 43

MOMS + CHILDREN FOR THE YEAR

7

SUCCESSFUL EXITS TO HOUSING

8,651

NIGHTS OF SHELTER PROVIDED

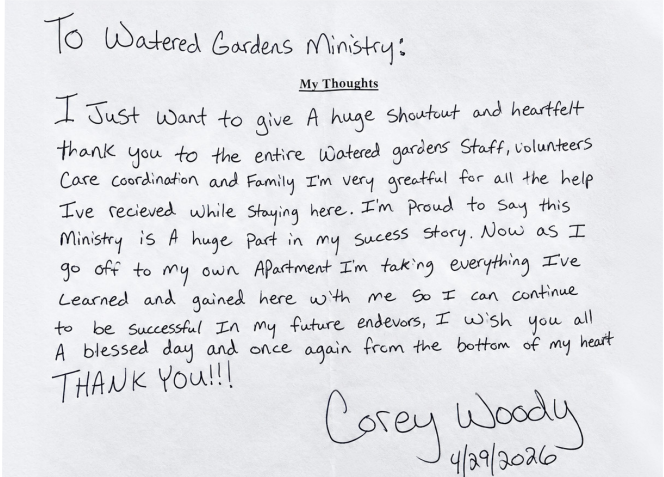
CareCoordination

Serving all campuses and neighbors in need, the Care Coordination staff and volunteers meet regularly with guests and friends in the community to set and achieve goals toward health, wellness, and self-sufficiency.



"When I came back last summer, the staff welcomed me with open arms. It makes me tear up when I think about how much love and encouragement I receive here from staff and volunteers. Everyone is so kind. I've needed reconstructive surgery on my ankle for over 25 years, and I'm finally having that done this spring at the urging of Watered Gardens Care Coordination team. It just shows how they don't just love on you; they stay on you, too, to keep meeting goals and stay on a good path toward a better life."

- Tanishia, Former Guest



To Watered Gardens Ministry:

My Thoughts

I Just Want to give A huge Shoutout and heartfelt thank you to the entire Watered gardens Staff, volunteers Care coordination and Family I'm very greatful for all the help Ive recieved while staying here. I'm Proud to say this Ministry is A huge Part in my Sucess Story. Now as I go off to my own Apartment I'm taking everything Ive Learned and gained here with me So I can continue to be Successful In my future endevors, I wish you all A blessed day and once again from the bottom of my heart THANK YOU!!!

Corey Woody
4/29/2026

59

FAMILY CONNECTIONS REESTABLISHED

276

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH SCREENINGS

246

HEALTHCARE GOALS MET

Volunteer Update



With a ministry designed to serve the Church in its mission to help the poor, Watered Gardens only has 24 full-time employees across all ministries, relying on the church to provide volunteers who love Jesus and are ever-growing in their understanding and administration of effective charity.

"As a physician, I learned the value of hope in people's lives. If you want someone to heal, you've got to give them hope—never want to take it away. In my experience, Watered Gardens is a leader in knowing how to give hope. They offer the opportunity for real spiritual and physical healing.

In volunteering, I meet a lot of people who have a sense of calling from God they've walked away from—and often think they've lost for good. Working alongside them, we get the privilege to call them back and help restore that purpose and hope God has for each of us."
—John, Volunteer

467
TOTAL VOLUNTEERS

11,650
VOLUNTEER SHIFTS FILLED

44
VOLUNTEER GROUPS



Advancement Update



As a 100% privately funded organization, Watered Gardens has never received a government dollar and relies solely on the generosity of individuals, churches, businesses, and private foundations.

$4,642,092

TOTAL REVENUE

1773

TOTAL DONORS

399

NEW DONORS

79

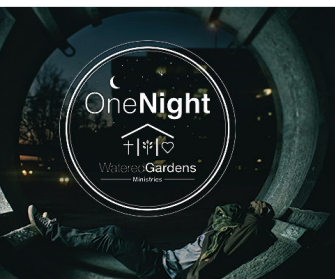
CHURCH FINANCIAL PARTNERS

19

NEW BUSINESS PARTNERS

$418,741

IN-KIND DONATIONS



77% *We have 1884 out of the 2447 monthly partners needed to fully fund overnight shelter.*

BECOME A PARTNER TODAY.

True Charity

Real compassion. Real results.

The national educational subsidiary of Watered Gardens, True Charity provides workshops, online resources, and educational tools in an effort to make local, outcome-driven, privately funded charity the norm again in the United States.

> *"The True Charity Initiative is today's most promising effort to show compassion without creating long term dependence." — Marvin Olasky, Editor in Chief, Christianity Today*



300+
Network Members in 36 States

8
Member Orgs Added Per Month

1.4M
Clients Served by Members

15
Model Action Plans for Program Development

7
Operational Toolkits for Program Development

226
Summit Attendees from 25 States

The True Charity Network is a national coalition of churches and nonprofits that serve people in poverty. We provide our members with extensive practical resources to operate their programs with excellence, connect with like-minded peers, and influence their communities.

Visit truecharity.us to learn more.



TAKE COURAGE

Every day in Joplin, approximately 600 men, women, and children experience homelessness – many of them living on the streets and in the parks of our community.

Watered Gardens serves hundreds of these individuals who need help and hope, yet the need remains great. That's why we launched the Take Courage Campaign, a bold effort to raise $9 million in order to construct a tiny home community and trauma-informed transitional shelter.

As of June 2026, God has already provided $8,430,538.50 through grants, pledges, and gifts – nearly 95% of the goal. To Him be the glory.



A Christ-centered permanent supportive housing community will provide stabilization, community support, purpose, and dignity.

The first set of homes is tentatively scheduled to open spring of 2027.



A 110-bed trauma-informed transitional shelter will provide stabilization, restoration, work, and prosperity.

Construction begins in fall of 2027.



WateredGardens
Ministries



Let's do more than alleviate poverty.

Let's resolve it.

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