

2023 Annual Report



Watered Gardens
Ministries



JUMP! It was the only word I could think at that last moment before I leapt from the tiny step on the wing of a small twin-prop Cessna buzzing through the clouds at 10,000 feet. Of all the things to recall about this first sky-diving experience, that moment I had to jump was the most peculiar to me. Forcing myself to “jump” when everything in me was yelling “don’t” demanded such a focus that I became unaware of the rushing wind, the sound of the plane’s engine, or the impossible distance to the ground below. Commitment commanded one word that overrode the situational stress: Jump!

I’m thankful to be ministering alongside a team of committed Christians who remain steadfast to execute in the face of various situational stressors. They know how to “jump.” When mental and physical health issues challenged our success at helping people find employment, we responded by launching regular mental health screens and physical health assessments in conjunction with KCU Medical School and Mercy Hospital. Even while working through the challenges of ministering to moms and their kids at Washington Family Hope Center, we continued to receive calls from yet more moms in need of shelter. We “jumped” and executed a million-dollar renovation of the upstairs that added space for an additional nine families. As the winds of cultural change and so-called social justice drove against our traditional values, we continued to boldly carry the message of True Charity around the nation. And in a year of record low giving to nonprofits nationally, the team tightened their belts and pressed ahead into the new fiscal year, committed to whatever it takes for the mission of Watered Gardens to succeed.

The success and stories you’ll read in the pages of this report are the result of 45 staff, 1758 unique donors, and more than 3000 volunteers who served the ministry this last year. Many of them experienced unique and difficult stressors that often accompany front-lines ministry work. Brokenness, bondage, madness, depression, and suicide may seem to the world an impossible gap to close. But with God, all things are possible and even more certainly when a committed and faith-filled team looks at that great distance, tunes out the fear, and with firm resolve, jumps.

James Whitford, Co-Founder & Executive Director

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.



"...when God led me to Watered Gardens...I found the safe environment and structure I needed to recover. I surrendered and submitted to God, the people, and the process, and today, I'm restored because of it."

-Walter, former men's shelter guest



146

GUESTS MOVED
TO INDEPENDENT
HOUSING

104

EMPLOYED AT
SHELTER EXIT

78

FAITH DECISIONS
FOR CHRIST



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.



"It's been great getting to know the women at Watered Gardens. They've always treated me just like I know they'd want to be treated and have shown such love—I don't even know how to explain it. They have true servants' hearts, and that's helped me lower my guard about being prideful and not wanting to ask for help.

In just one night of shopping each month, I'm able to get two really big totes of food that I can use to cook lots of different meals and make up the difference in our grocery budget. But it's also been really encouraging to work with the ladies on setting goals and finding ways to earn more."

- Kindel, a former guest now living independently who returns regularly to earn basic needs

23,606

BASIC NEEDS
EARNED

\$34,917

REVENUE
GENERATED

74,471

LBS. OF MATERIAL
RECYCLED

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, self-insured, off of all government assistance, and active in a local church.



"As an addict and dealer, my life was total chaos; I didn't want it anymore. I got desperate, dropped to my knees, and said, 'I can't do this anymore.' I wasn't trying to pray; I was just at the end of myself, but that little opening was all God needed. Everything that happened from that moment on led me to the Forge where I found faith, a whole new understanding of life, and community."

- Riley, Forge graduate



28

STUDENTS
ENROLLED
FOR THE YEAR

5

STUDENTS
GRADUATED
FOR THE YEAR

41

STUDENTS
EMPLOYED SINCE
PROGRAM START

A 3-year-old campus designed to keep children with their mothers in times of crisis or chronic homelessness, Washington Family Hope Center currently provides 6 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.



"Every day here is amazing. We get comfort, love, support, and prayer. I'm so grateful for a second chance here. Without it, I really believe I would be dead. I had gotten suicidal—in a really dark place where I thought my kids would be better off without me. As soon as I got to the door (of WFHC), I knew everything would be okay. It was overwhelming."

- Kiarra, WFHC guest



45

INDIVIDUALS
SERVED
(14 Moms, 31 Kids)

6

FAMILIES MOVED
TO INDEPENDENT
HOUSING

4

MOMS FOUND
EMPLOYMENT



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.



“I didn’t want to come to Watered Gardens, but God put me here because it’s where I needed to be, and I’m not done yet. I already knew God but had been losing my way. I was looking for someone to help me really change and not fall back into old patterns. I’ve found them through Watered Gardens—people to help mentor me, a new church family, and even a job with a much healthier work environment. God is my father, but I’ve found a family here.”

- Christian, former guest



1514

GOALS MET
BY GUESTS

264

PHYSICAL
WELLNESS
CHECKS

355

MENTAL HEALTH
SCREENINGS



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.



"God works in some mysterious ways, and He definitely works through Watered Gardens. The people here don't force Jesus on anyone, but they inspire you—the staff, the volunteers, everyone. They help you believe you really can live a different life if you're walking with God and empowered by Him. They've made a world of difference to me—and now I want to be that hope to someone else."

- Carley, former Washington Family Hope Center guest



86

NEW
VOLUNTEERS

30

GROUPS FROM 4
DIFFERENT STATES

745

AVERAGE VOLUNTEER SHIFTS FILLED EACH
MONTH BY 455 DIFFERENT VOLUNTEERS
(73% of the 1032 Shifts Needed)

98%

VOLUNTEER
RETENTION

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.

\$2,226,777.05

TOTAL GIVEN, MEETING THE BUDGETARY NEED
(Does Not Include The "Immeasurably More" Capital Campaign)

58%

DONOR
RETENTION

1757

TOTAL
DONORS

12

NEW CHURCH FINANCIAL
PARTNERS (77 Total)

40

NEW BUSINESS PARTNERS
(124 Total, Financial and In-Kind Gifts)



1853

ONE NIGHT
MONTHLY PARTNERS
(88% of the Need)



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.

"I know the solution to homelessness is not simply providing someone with a home. Homelessness is complex resulting from root causes, like broken relationships, trauma, substance abuse and mental illness. Our intention (at First Stop) is to empower lasting and life-changing behaviors among the individuals experiencing homelessness that we encounter each day. We have proudly joined the True Charity Network and will continue to learn more ways to measure our outcomes while respecting the dignity of those we serve."

-Jennifer Geist, Executive Director, First Stop of Huntsville, AL



Foundations Workshops

5 Workshops

4 States: Oklahoma, Michigan (2), Texas, Oregon

Webinars

6 Real Results Webinars

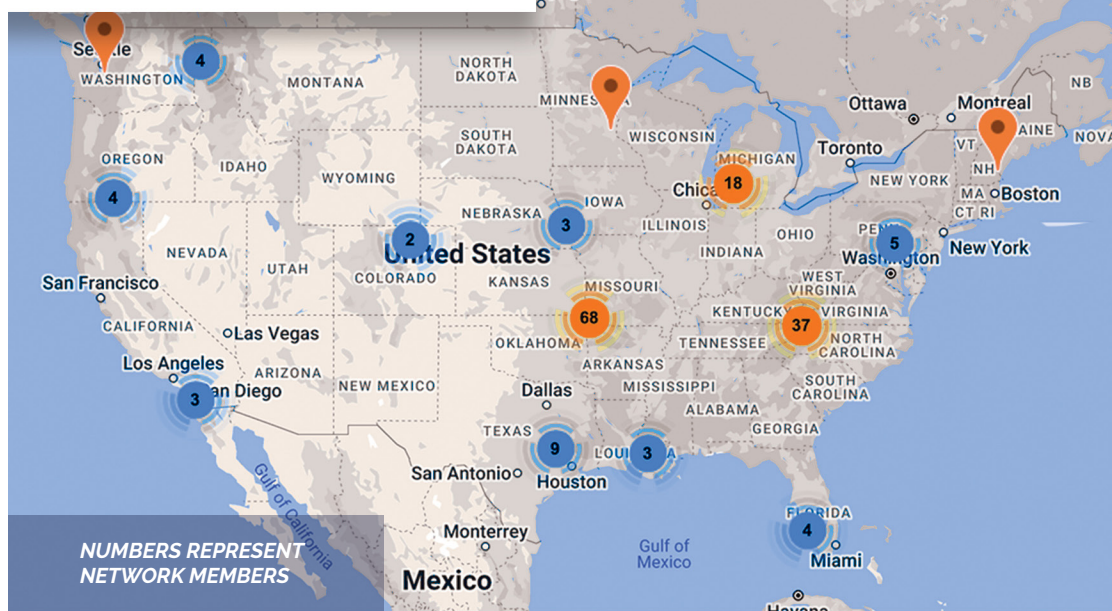
299 in attendance

Summit

169 in attendance from 63 organizations

Over 100 attendees were from out of state, with 22 states represented

100% of respondents agreed that they were likely to implement a change to their charity



NUMBERS REPRESENT
NETWORK MEMBERS

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/join to learn more.

155

Member Orgs
in 30 States

6.2

Member Orgs
Added Per Month

600K

Clients Served
by Members

2X

Nearly Doubled
Members Year
Over Year,
From 81 to 155

48%

Members
Reporting Changed
or Improved
Practices

699

Individuals with
Access to Member
Portal Resources
(10,000+ Views)



Let's do more than alleviate poverty.

Let's resolve it.

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