

Hands of Hope Ministries

295 Gentry Way, Suite 19 & 20, Reno, NV 89502
Phone/Fax (775) 284-8878 www.handsofhope.us
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Welcome to the second newsletter for the Hands of Hope Ministries, a project of Empowering Parents, Inc. Since our first newsletter published a year ago March, we have had a vast number of changes in our program, and seen major transitions in our methods of operation, and our facilities. Our vision still remains the same. Our goal is to help the working impoverished with a “hand up” rather than a “hand out” in these trying economic times.

As our address and phone number show, we have moved our offices and operations to a new facility. We have only been able to do this through the support and participation of our local community in the area surrounded by Plumb Lane, Moana, South Virginia and Hwy 395.

Shortly after our last newsletter, we moved from our location at Harvest to a facility at 220 Linden St., where we continue our work. When we moved, we also stopped using the Food Bank of Northern Nevada. In this transition, we were able to continue with the corporate accounts that had



Beginning of the line at our new facility

been established by Harvest, and which they graciously transferred to us. As we worked at the new Linden Street location, it soon became apparent that the small donations that we were receiving, and the funds coming from the yard sales would be insufficient to cover the ongoing



The participants extending around the facility

expenses that were occurring for the facility, transportation and other overhead.

The Board of Directors reviewed this and the options that faced us were: Joining with another Church group. Continual and dedicated fund raising (which would have entailed a project in and of itself). Government grants (which would restrict our ability to provide the services

and products to the participants). Becoming an empowerment program. In reviewing these possibilities, the empowerment path was determined to be the most suitable. In implementing this, we reviewed a large number of options, and decided on a Shared Maintenance Fee (SMF) based on the model that the Food Bank utilizes with its distribution organizations. In our case, the Shared Maintenance Fee would be borne directly by the participants, and the Ministry would become truly community based. If the community supported it directly, it would flourish, if they did not, it would disappear.

In the short time period of July to December of 2008, the participants paid enough shared maintenance fees (\$5 per family per visit) to allow the Ministry to continue, covering the operating expenses as we continued moving forward, and allowing us to obtain a lease on the new facility. We moved in mid December. The past two months have been hectic with facility licensing, preparation and approval. We have had out of work skilled tradesman and professionals volunteer and help, as well as homeless volunteers that see the benefit in our Ministry. We now have both a walk in refrigerator and freezer, pallet jacks and racks, and a fork lift on loan to handle the increasing donations from our corporate donors.

With our new facility we are now serving 150 families or 750 individuals every Saturday. We are also open two other days a month where we provide products provided by Petsmart. In addition to serving these families, we also redirect our overflow to other organizations such as

Evelyn Mount and the Salvation Army. We also provide food to 45 homeless families in Reno/Sparks several times a week through our dedicated volunteers.

We just started fund-raising in the community (via a weekly drawing at our pantry) for a refrigerated vehicle to allow us to expand the product line that we provide to our participants and procure additional sponsors. Recently two of our staff completed their certification with Washoe County and became Certified Food Protection Managers.

The continued support of our sponsors has been critical to assisting our participants survival in the declining economy, and we would like to specifically thank the following sponsors and encourage you to shop at their stores or buy their products:

Costco - Reno, Crystal Ice and Fuel, Evelyn Mount, Orowheat/Entemanns - Reno
PetSmart, Ralston Foods, Safeway (Vista and Kietzke stores), SaveMart MaeAnne (we have SHARES cards available for SaveMart), Trader Joes - Reno, Winco - South Meadows.



Walk In Refer and Freezer



New Pallet Jacks and Racks

Preparing for distribution