

2020 COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION GRANT

Los Samaritanos (Good Samaritans) \$3000

Project Report

The main mission of our project was to provide assistance to people who were released from the Federal Detention Center in Batavia. The assistance took the form of food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and travel necessities. In addition, they were given personal attention by our volunteers who provided compassionate interaction through non-judgmental listening and responding. Each applying the Biblical understanding of “hospitality” in welcoming the “strangers” among us. In addition, it was not out of the ordinary for participants to ask for prayer as they prepared for the next step in their journey. When needed we also provided the means for communication with others including: family members, lawyers, agencies, and others.

Since the beginning of our project in June of 2019 we have served over 127 individuals, age range from 18 to 30's. At least a third of which occurred since January of this year.

The grant was not only a benefit to those we served, but through interaction with the community at large it allowed others to join in the mission. There are workers at the Citgo gas station/bus stop and the Red Roof Inn that became advocates and showed compassion and care. Sometimes using their own time and resources to make sure needs were met. There were those at local thrift shops that refused payment as we shopped for clothing. Others from churches and individuals from the community that gave donations and continue to pray for those we serve. The Batavia Rotary Club got involved and donated \$500.00 to the cause.

Throughout the project we have developed a close relationship with organizations that work with this population. Including professionals and volunteers from the Volunteer Lawyer Project and Justice for Migrant Families in Buffalo.

It was gratifying to see God's spirit at work as the number of people who supported us grew and got involved in many different ways. We learned about and lived the true spirit of “Spirituality in our midst”. As our team expanded, we grew closer together, showing each other the same care and consideration, we give to those in need. It's what we know as “compassion in action” and everyone feels blessed to be a part of such a worthy endeavor.

Our next step is to continue with the mission of providing for the needs of this vulnerable population. We have developed a close working relationship with the organizations mentioned above and it has allowed us to fulfill our goal of assisting everyone and anyone that needs it. We continue to reach out to others in our community, Western New York and beyond as we partner with like minded people who share our vision.

We thank you for your generosity which has allowed us and the program to learn, grow and become “instruments of peace” in the world.

I've added [a reflection I wrote recently](#) that describes the experience.

God bless,

Reverend James Morasco, Pastor Morganville United Church of Christ