

immeasurably more compassion

Annual
Report
2021



MEL TROTTER
MINISTRIES

from the president & ceo

Dear Friends,

As I reflect on last year (already three months into this year!), I am reminded deeply just how quickly time passes. King Solomon said it best in the Old Testament: for everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven.

The season we are in at MTM is an exciting one. Covid is no longer running rampant. Heartside Ministry is comfortably operating in its new space at 200 S. Division. Phase 1 of our Immeasurably More Capital Campaign is completed. Phase 2 has begun. Spring is in the air. We are blessed and grateful.

I am often asked to give a “quick overview” of everything we do here at Mel Trotter Ministries. As you can imagine, that is a tall order given the number of guests we serve and service tracks we offer, all in the name of providing pathways out of homelessness.

And yet, there is a very clear picture I’d like to paint for you that summarizes our mission here. To be at the forefront of battling homelessness through community partnerships and innovative solutions, we focus on three areas of intentionality:

1. Prevention and Diversion
2. Guest Services
3. Housing and Jobs

Prevention & Diversion

By going upstream and preventing individuals from becoming homeless in the first place, not only are thousands of taxpayer dollars saved, but more importantly—the trajectory of lives are changed. In the last two years, our Diversion Specialist diverted 163 families from homelessness. That is over 400 children who will never have to live in a car or under a bridge. Over 400 children who are able to stay in their own bed and home. Data indicates that for a one-time help of less than \$500, families can be diverted from becoming homeless. When that does not occur and an individual (or child) enters into the system, it costs an estimated \$35,000 taxpayer dollars annually.

In this season, we have hired two additional Diversion Specialists and plan to add even more staff focused solely on this endeavor. If one Diversion Specialist can divert over 200 children per year, imagine what 3 or 4 or 5 Diversion Specialists can do!

Guest Services

We have outreach teams, a shower truck, and medical outreach teams of staff and volunteers who go out to those who are living in encampments or under bridges. Jesus told the story of the shepherd who had 100 sheep. One wandered away and was lost. The shepherd went out to find the lost sheep. When he found the sheep, he did not judge or condemn; rather, Jesus said he gently carried the sheep back to safety and was happier about the one sheep who was found than the 99 who never wandered away. That is outreach.

We also provide day center services at two locations and shelter for all those looking for safety, a warm meal, and hope. We work with guests to determine the best path to move out of homelessness. For some, that includes recovery programs or workforce development training. For others, it may look like just a little help and they leave homelessness forever. We also offer medical, dental





and vision clinics, as well as opportunities to grow in faith and discover the life God created for each person to live.

Housing & Jobs

There are many open jobs. Everyone is hiring. It is tempting to look at those experiencing homelessness and think, 'why don't you just get a job?' The truth is many of those we serve have jobs. Yet these jobs do not pay enough to be able to afford the skyrocketing cost of housing in our community. Others who do not have jobs may struggle with severe mental and/or physical disabilities that render them unable to hold down a job. Still others need a workforce development training program so they can learn job skills that include the soft skills needed to be able to get a job and keep it. Many of these guests simply lack confidence and experience. No one ever told them or instilled in them that they can do great things. Generational poverty is a major cause of this challenge. So we offer a robust workforce development program through Next Step of West Michigan, a division of MTM.

What about housing? A housing needs study conducted by Kent County determined we need an additional 1,900 housing units for people at the lowest income rates. 1,900! MTM owns and operates several transitional housing facilities where guests who have a steady income live, pay rent and utilities, and are case managed as needed with the goal

of moving out of the MTM home and into their own home within 1 year. We have plans to add a significant number of addiction recovery homes in the future.

There is so much more to unpack in each of the above three areas of our focus. I invite you to attend one of our monthly Meet the Mission Luncheons, one of our annual events, or into the mission for a tour to learn more. We have many volunteer opportunities available as well, along with a weekly podcast called Everyday Humanity where you can plug in and listen to real-time updates and stories.

Friends, I hope this brief overview of the exciting and transformational season we are in gives you an idea of where MTM is heading. As we continue to be in a very active season of our ministry, I ask for your prayers and am grateful for your incredible support.

We cannot do this work alone, and we are humbled by your ongoing generosity—not only during this time and season, but always. Thank you.

Grace and Peace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dennis Van Kampen".

Dennis Van Kampen
President & CEO



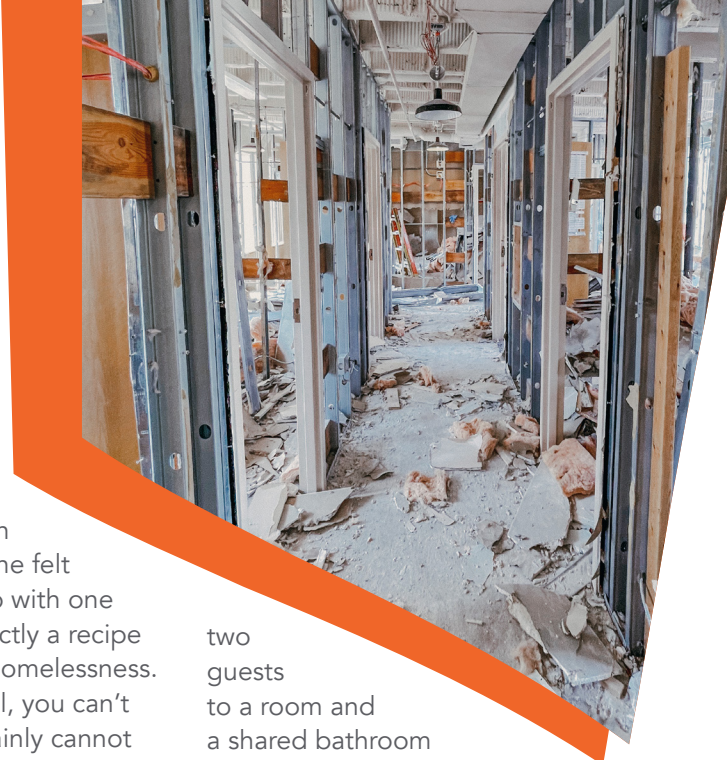
We are pleased to report several updates with regard to our Immeasurably More Capital Campaign. As you may remember, we began the entire journey back in early 2019. We started praying, planning and dreaming of what providing more dignity to our guests could mean in their own transformative life journeys. We knew that our building itself was long overdue for a renovation. It had been over fifty years since any kind of updates had been done! The roof was leaking. The HVAC system was not safe, as Covid immediately reminded us. The men's 113 bed dorm was unfriendly and undignified. It was time—that much was clear.

In fact, never do these things become clearer than when a guest shares a bit of their life and story with us. Marcus* lost everything after his mother died. He had no place to turn

and ended up at MTM, staying in our 113 bed shelter dorm filled with other men facing their own set of problems. The leaky roof and overpopulated space made for a smelly environment, one in which Marcus said he felt he needed to sleep with one eye open—not exactly a recipe for moving out of homelessness. If you can't rest well, you can't think well and certainly cannot work or otherwise get through the necessary steps out of homelessness.

However, in February when we opened the first section of newly renovated rooms, Marcus became emotional. The new rooms are designed so there are

two guests to a room and a shared bathroom among four individuals. It's a far cry from the 113 bed shelter, and yet that is exactly what Marcus did when recounting what this meant to him—he cried, both tears of joy and disbelief that he was "worth" having this kind of dignified space.



“Now I can sleep with both eyes closed, I have a place to read and think, and I believe that I can go after that promotion at work and get out of being homeless. I can get back on my feet,” he said.

We often take sleep for granted, but I can tell you how incredibly out of sorts I feel when I am tired. I am less productive and cranky. Imagine being unable to sleep night after night . . . and the difference it makes once you are well rested. The population we serve at MTM feels the lack of sleep and the lack of affordable housing on an almost insurmountable level. That is why the need for workforce development and paid job training through Next Step of West Michigan is so crucial for our guests on their journey out of homelessness. It

prepares them for success in the workplace so they can, in turn, make enough money to pay rent and become stable in a place of their own to call home.

Peter* came to MTM and entered the Next Step workforce development program. He was part of the wood manufacturing training cohort and upon graduation, landed an \$18/hr. job at a local wood manufacturing company. This not only provided Peter confidence and accountability, but it also allowed him to move into our transitional workforce development housing where he is paying rent and also saving to eventually move into a place of his own.

So while all of the necessary reasons to move forward with the Capital Campaign were clear, what was less clear to us in 2019 was how we would get there. With any Capital Campaign, the first step is to undergo a feasibility

study to determine if it is even “feasible” to launch a campaign.

The results of our feasibility study indicated that if we moved forward, we would most likely raise between \$8-10 million dollars in total.

As a result, we set a goal of nearly \$9 million to renovate the men's shelter. Then COVID hit.

Within a few months, we knew we had to change the focus of our campaign away from building a “barracks style” men's shelter to a shelter that featured smaller rooms with more privacy and less chance of the spread of disease.

With the blessing of our leadership team, we met with our construction partners and revised our plan. This added considerable cost, raising our new campaign goal to nearly \$15 million.



Fortunately, our campaign chairs and Campaign Cabinet threw themselves into this new challenge and we worked exceedingly hard to raise well more than the original feasibility study had suggested.

With God's blessing, we are proud to report that we have now raised \$17 million for the new shelter! We have exceeded our initial goal by nearly double and our revised goal by \$2 million! This is critical because, as you know, supply chain issues related to COVID and inflationary pressures have raised our construction costs to, you guessed it, \$17 million!

If you want proof that our good God still performs miracles—this is it!

When people of faith come together in God's name to serve his people, immeasurably more than we expected can be accomplished! In fact, we believe this so strongly that we are already in discussions about what

else can be done to help change the lives of those we are called to serve.

The transformation to date has been amazing—and I'm not talking about the external physical changes. Much like the stories of Marcus* and Peter*, a former guest recently told us how well she is doing.

"I am so grateful for Mel Trotter. When I stayed with you all, I connected with God and the staff helped me get back on my feet. Now I have a house of my own and a job in a church that I love. I get to give back, just like folks did for me during my hard times," she said.

When we hear transformational stories like these, it confirms once again that this campaign, and what lies ahead, is not only about bricks and mortar. Rather, it is about life change just as our mission and vision statement says: Through the power of Christ bring an end to homelessness one life at a time...

Friends, these renovations matter and are changing lives. As you can see from a few of these photos, God continues to do more than any of us can ask, think, or imagine!

Thank you for coming alongside us on this Immeasurably More Capital Campaign journey. I pray that you will continue to do so as we are hoping to complete the remaining two phases by the end of the year. In fact, Rockford Construction said their goal is to "give it to Mel Trotter as a Christmas present for their guests."

We feel very blessed and grateful.

Grace and Peace,

Dennis Van Kampen
President & CEO

**Names have been changed to protect privacy.*



“Now to him
who is able to do
immeasurably more than all
we ask or imagine, according to
his power that is at work within us...”

Ephesians 3:20



immeasurably more:
progress report

response to covid-19

On March 10, 2020, Governor Whitmer declared a State of Emergency as COVID-19 cases began to rise in Michigan. Out of an abundance of caution and to protect our guests and staff, the leaders of Mel Trotter Ministries made the quick decision to implement a routine deep cleaning schedule, social distancing, mandatory health screens, and limit the number of individuals allowed in the building. Additionally, we implemented a temporary wage increase for front-line staff, allowed other staff to work from home, and offered 80 hours PTO to staff who tested positive for COVID.

We moved to pre-packaged meals for our guests and staff, started bio-fogging the building, and provided PPE to essential staff working onsite. Guests were relocated to hotels or other buildings ensuring MTM had enough room for social distancing and to isolate guests testing positive.

Throughout all of this, MTM officials were on regular calls, multiple times a day, with the Kent County Health Department, community partners, city officials, Citygate officials, the US Inter-agency Council on Homelessness, and the CDC.

As positive cases grew among staff and guests, MTM had to pivot from our original COVID-19 plans. We

transitioned to a multi-location shelter. We moved guests to schools, churches, hotels and buildings downtown. COVID-19 cost the mission over \$1.7 million in added expenses that were unbudgeted. But thankfully, prayerfully, exceptionally! - the donor community and foundations, along with city, county, state and federal government agencies rose to the occasion and helped cover the costs so we could stay open and continue serving our guests.

Now, two years later, we continue to be overwhelmingly grateful for the many blessings bestowed upon us throughout the pandemic, yet we also find ourselves mourning the loss of two beloved staff members.



rhonda van dyk events & corporate sponsorship specialist

Tenure at MTM: 2/25/2019 – 11/18/2020

Rhonda's spirit was one of unparalleled care for others. She exemplified selflessness. From making sure our guests secured food, shelter, and programming to making sure her fellow team members received birthday, anniversary, and frequent inspirational thank you cards—Rhonda loved others well. She showed up. She listened. She demonstrated her care and concern for others each and every day in both words and actions, which was exactly in line with her real and strong faith in Jesus.

There is no question the kind of smile that she had on her face when Jesus took her home. Her pain is now gone, but ours is great with her loss.

lisa brocker intake specialist

Tenure at MTM: 5/3/2021 – 12/16/2021

Lisa was a program guest here at MTM who completely turned her life around, to the point we hired her as a member of our intake staff. Lisa served our guests—and each of us—with respect, dignity and a bright smile that will never be replaced. She laughed and cried alongside everyone in our building, as she understood firsthand what it was like to experience homelessness, and also what it was like to come out of it and live the life God had planned for her.

Lisa was filled with humility and gratitude, and was a shining example for everyone who knew her. Her kindness and her friendship will never be forgotten.

Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

Matthew 5:4



Nothing about these losses feels right, yet we know that God is in control. May we take comfort in knowing that both Rhonda and Lisa are now with our Lord and Savior.

In spite of the heartbreak and hardships the pandemic has brought, our staff never stopped showing up for those whom we serve. We continued then and we continue now, to help our guests find housing, employment and grow in their faith. We continue to go upstream to prevent and divert homelessness, including the addition of more Diversion staff specialists to aid in this very intentional and impactful effort. We merged with two organizations (Heartside Ministry and Next Step of West Michigan), added transitional homes, added a shower truck, a medical Ambu-cab, and grew our outreach team. In summary, Covid did not detour this mission.

As homelessness continues to rise in Grand Rapids, our singular mission remains: to be at the forefront of battling homelessness through community partnerships and innovative solutions. We will never stop striving to help individuals experiencing a season of homelessness so they can get back to the plans God has for their lives.

impact report

2021

617

appointments were provided at the new medical clinic

110,085

nourishing meals were provided with love and dignity

6,183

individuals were served at MTM and Heartside Ministry

802

unique individuals enjoyed the art studio at Heartside Ministry

143

individuals secured employment

201

individuals found stable housing

93

families were diverted from homelessness

266

individuals dedicated or rededicated their lives to Christ

92%

of guests who exit MTM programs successfully remained housed after one year

2,689

outreach visits were made

revenue

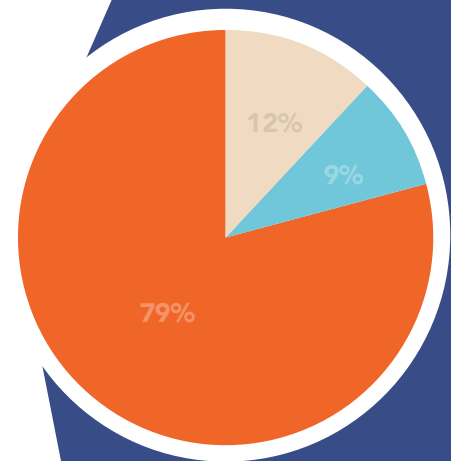
Total Revenue
\$28,507,160



*Funds designated for 2021 capital campaign

expenses

Total
\$17,804,816



sources of support



“Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done.”
Proverbs 19:17

financials





small steps:

paul's story

Paul Frerichs understands small steps. He has learned, through years of life experience, that taking small steps builds confidence in not only himself, but those around him who are eager to help.

Paul has been at Mel Trotter Ministries since April 2021. He chose Grand Rapids, after a stint in prison, because his sister lived here. With help from a social worker, Paul was able to connect with Mel Trotter Ministries and came here

directly from the out-of-state prison. He roomed with several men, built credibility and trust, and eagerly participated in Next Step of West Michigan, a subsidiary of MTM that provides job skills training and employment opportunities in the woodworking field.

"I stayed in Next Step for three cohort classes that were seven weeks each and became an assistant teacher. Now I work at Joseph Jeup, Inc.," said Paul, who is

"The power of a few seconds of listening, followed by a word of affirmation and encouragement, did wonders for me. This is another example of the everyday miracles that happen a lot at Mel Trotter Ministries."

67. "I like learning about the different furniture styles. I have a long way to go to become a master craftsman, but I think I'm on track. Every day is more practice."

Paul is grateful for the shelter offered by MTM, for the roof over his head, heat, hot showers, and meals. After living on the streets and shivering through frigid nights, he's thankful for the room he shared. He had lost everything back in 2008, and is slowly building back his confidence. He's now in MTM's transitional housing, working full time, and saving money for an apartment, car, and other things.

"I was resentful about being deemed untrustworthy when I first got here, but I decided to stop resenting that. I wasn't making trouble, but I wasn't making the growth they were looking for," said Paul. "Now I'm taking the steps and building confidence. I have momentum and am doing some new things."

The spiritual side of the work Mel Trotter Ministries does is important to this man who has come so far. He attends chapel services, has found comfort in the posters and sayings on the walls around the building, and appreciates the morning prayers each day at Next Step.

"It's important to me that MTM has the great preacher Mel Trotter in its history and the fabric of its work. The spiritual part of MTM can be a powerful help to people who are overcoming more than homelessness," he said. "We have a healing God who wants to help those looking for ways forward."

It's the "everyday miracles" that also encourage Paul. He describes a recent encounter with MTM employee Andrew Sisson. Paul told him he felt "broken" after a tough weekend; Andrew listened and said "broken"

is just what was needed for him to move forward.

"Andrew's listening untied the knot of pain I was feeling. I was able to talk coherently [about my story] and put aside the overwhelming 'broken,'" he said. "The power of a few seconds of listening, followed by a word of affirmation and encouragement, did wonders for me. This is another example of the everyday miracles that happen a lot at Mel Trotter Ministries."



mission

Mel Trotter Ministries exists to demonstrate the compassion of Jesus Christ, through rescue and restoration for anyone experiencing hunger and homelessness.

MEL TROTTER
MINISTRIES

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vision

Through the power of Christ, bring an end to homelessness in West Michigan, one life at a time.

Mel Trotter Ministries exists to demonstrate the compassion of Jesus Christ, through rescue and restoration for anyone experiencing hunger and homelessness.



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