

Outreach SLG Annual Report 2023
Author of this report: Beth Walker

List of the members currently serving on your ministry or leadership team:

Deanna Salpietra Greta Stewart
Nancy Fleming Mike Wass

In addition to the above individuals who attend meetings, we thank the following members of Old First serve as regular Leaders at our Saturday Morning Breakfast and Clothing Cupboard and Sunday Community Dinners:

Clark Dingman John Upton
Greta Stewart David Killian
Suzanna Amour Beth Walker

We give thanks to our members who regularly volunteer on Saturday mornings in the cupboard and in the kitchen. A special shout out to Diane for taking the lead in toiletries, Barbara for her faithful presence, pouring coffee and helping with personal shopping and John for inviting the volunteers to a post cupboard trip or other adventures. We have community members, who come and serve almost every Saturday. We have high schoolers, college students, people who may have a few extra hours to spare on a Saturday morning. We are blessed in many ways.

There is a great benefit in our members leading the Saturday and Sunday programs, but these leaders and volunteers do not have the additional time to regularly reach out to volunteers and groups when their time is best used in leading the event. There is a good bit of outreach, planning, organization, and coordination necessary to ensure that we have enough people, food, supplies and adequate coverage for each breakfast, cupboard, or dinner. There is also a great deal of work to do in hosting summer camps including recruiting, planning, and coordinating with ministry sites, preparing campers for what to expect, supporting their learning experience, and debriefing with participants.

Prior to the pandemic, we had a 20 hour a week staff person, we see the need to restore that position to meet all our outreach needs including summer camp. The staff position is needed to coordinate among all our leaders, volunteers, and individual and organizational partners and contributors. Thanks to all who make these ministries places where people feel cared for and that they belong.

As you look at the goals you had planned for 2023, what were you able to accomplish?

We started the Sunday Community Dinner, anticipating that we will be offering this event to residents of Old First House once it is occupied. These have been remarkably successful, though we had to pause from July through the middle of September as it was not possible to find groups to cook dinner in the summer. We regularly get 25 to 30 guests at these dinners, and they are a fun time. Our Saturday Breakfast and Cupboard guests average between 45 and 55 with some weeks as many as 60 guests. We had 6 service camps this

summer. We give thanks that Janice and Rubin turned the bathroom in the nursery into two shower stalls for our service camp attenders. That was a real treat. We believe that there is something meaningful to offer those interested in learning about what it means to be disciples of Christ in the heart of the city.

How has your ministry's or leadership team's work and goals shifted throughout 2023?

We learned this year how important it is for us to be intentional in our partnering with others. While we are present weekly to see how positive an impact, we have on the lives of those we serve, our partners who bring the food, drop off the clothes and toiletries or cook a meal get just a snapshot. We would like to visit our partners in this ministry and honor their contribution to the communities of faith out of which they are called. We hope we can do more of that in 2024.

Where is your group or ministry area stuck? Do you need help in discerning who to ask to join your group or to get more involved?

We need volunteer and staff support for the breakfast, the cupboard, the dinners, and the Service Camps.

What has changed since returning to in-person/ hybrid ministry? How does your group imagine continuing to bridge the in-person/ hybrid gulf in 2024?

The services we provide, and the volunteer work we do is in person and on site. We do see a place for a video orientation of what to expect when you come to volunteer that we send out to those who sign up. It would be a fantastic way to incorporate technology into our Outreach Program. A volunteer or a staff person could help equip us with videos and flyers soliciting volunteers and supplies. We could do a hybrid service camp, one day.

What do you hope to accomplish in 2024?

More clothing drives.

More thank you moments to our partners in ministry

More groups signing up to provide Saturday breakfast and Sunday Dinners

More service camps in the summer of 2024 to share opportunities of urban discipleship and see some of the systemic ways we perpetuate poverty and how to reach people who have been left out, dropped out and cast out.

Exploring new ways, we can invite others to join in the web of care that Old First, as a church in the city, is called to be especially reaching out to include the residents of Old First House.

What are the ways that the church can support your team in achieving your goals for the upcoming year?

Volunteering your time, and talents.

Financial support for a staff person to support the Outreach ministries in the budget.

Think of the creative ways that you can collect items for the cupboard.

Say yes when asked to prepare a meal on a Sunday night or breakfast on a Saturday,

Stay after church to help sort the clothes when we get a whole bunch of donations.

Fund an account for regular supply of underwear/t-shirts and toiletries when needed.