



*Preventing homelessness with compassion.*

## Why We Do What We Do

On January 21st, I had the opportunity to join Homeward's twenty-four-hour in-person Point in Time count of all unhoused individuals who currently call the Des Moines metro home. Here are some of my reflections:

**It's cold in Iowa.** Our interactions were with individuals who are currently living in tents - in Iowa - in January. It took me most of the afternoon to warm back up, and I was wearing two coats! Many of the households CROSS assists are living in less than ideal situations - but anything, and I mean anything, is better than sleeping in a tent - in Iowa - in January.

**Relationships matter.** Our group was made up of me, one other volunteer (who had previously lived in their car), and Scott. Scott works for Primary Health Care Homelessness Support Services, and most of the people we engaged knew him by name. I didn't ask Scott why he took this job, but it was clear to me that he valued the work and valued the people. His presence evoked dignity, and I was grateful for the lived reminder that he provided.

**It felt overwhelming.** Honestly, one of the dangers (at least for me) in doing something like this is that I inevitably end up feeling like the problem is "too big" and the need to "too great." I use quotations because I'm not sure what makes it "too big" or "too great" other than the simple reality that homelessness will never be "solved." While feeling the weight of that isn't very enjoyable, I'm beginning to realize it's a lot better than not feeling it at all.

**Which leads me to my final takeaway.** For at least a decade, I've had a Richard Rohr question rattling around inside my head. In his book "Falling Upward," Rohr asks something along the lines of, "What is worth doing even if you know you'd fail in the end?" He says it's a question worth asking on a regular basis. I say it's annoying! Regardless, it stuck in my head because that's what this work feels like. It feels like in the end the fact that we won't be able to "solve" homelessness - ironically makes the work of "Preventing Homelessness with Compassion" all the more important. I'm not sure why that makes sense - but the Point in Time count reminded me that somehow it does.

- Gary Hanson, CROSS Executive Director

We are excited to welcome Kelsey Davis to the CROSS team as our new part-time Development and Communications Assistant.

Kelsey brings an impressive DSM-based background in marketing and non-profit experience.

Please help us welcome Kelsey by:

Visit the CROSS Facebook page and follow the latest information about what's happening at CROSS.

Share any foundations, grants, or organizations that you feel align well with CROSS's mission.

Introduce yourself by emailing Kelsey at:

[crossoutreachdevelopment@gmail.com](mailto:crossoutreachdevelopment@gmail.com)

Des Moines Public Schools Initiative continues to grow.

Thanks to a new partnership between DMPS SUCCESS Case Managers & CROSS Outreach 21, DMPS households have received assistance with rent or utility bills to help stabilize their current living situation.

The partnership aligns CROSS's commitment to "Prevent Homelessness with Compassion" and DMPS's goal to "Create a comprehensive continuum of internal and external supports to ensure students' personal and academic success."

After over 30 years of combined service on the CROSS Outreach Board, Joyce Hoffman and Jayne Owen have decided to step down and "give someone else a chance." THANK YOU both for selflessly giving your time and energy to the mission and vision of CROSS. You will be dearly missed.



## CROSS Outreach Fall Fundraiser

CROSS Outreach held its inaugural Fabulous Fall Fundraiser on Saturday, November 15, 2025, at Heartland Presbyterian Church. We are so appreciative to everyone who came out to show support for our mission.

It was a great evening, marked by delicious food, cordial company, fun trivia, and a silent auction featuring some fabulous prizes. The outpouring of generosity raised over \$25,000 to help CROSS "Prevent Homelessness with Compassion".

The CROSS Outreach Board and Staff would like to give a special shout-out to Heartland Presbyterian for hosting, our silent auction donors, and the small but mighty team of people who came together to make this event such a success.

We are truly grateful to everyone who supported CROSS at the fundraiser and continues to do so year after year. This work is essential, and it takes a village to ensure our neighbors receive the assistance they need.



## JOIN THE CROSS OUTREACH EXPERIENCE

CROSS Outreach is a 501(c)3 non-profit agency committed to providing emergency financial assistance for hundreds of at-risk households in the Des Moines metro area. Requests for assistance in the form of a one-time annual gift can be made towards: rent, utilities, security deposit and storage units. Learn more at: [www.crossoutreachdm.org](http://www.crossoutreachdm.org).



CROSS Office Phone: 515-279-8877  
CROSS Office Email: [crossoutreachdm@gmail.com](mailto:crossoutreachdm@gmail.com)

Donations can be made online - or mailed to:

CROSS Outreach  
P.O. Box 12121 Des Moines, IA 50312

