



KCAPS
Kingsburg Community Assistance
Programs and Services
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AUGUST 2020

NEWSLETTER

STAFF PERSPECTIVES

We thought you would like a peek at what it has been like to work at KCAPS the last few months. As you are aware, everyone has a unique viewpoint. If you doubt that, just ask a policeman who has interviewed multiple witnesses to an accident.

For starters – you should know that Monday, March 16th started with a staff meeting. As businesses were being shut down we knew that our stores were being closed as well. Store sales cover 100% of our payroll related expenses. Our staff meeting involved all staff, and they were told that our intent was to keep everyone on the payroll for as long as possible; and as safe as possible.

Our next order of business was to figure out how to feed people. The initial weeks took everyone on deck. Later, some were sent home to split our staff. The theory being that if half of us went down – the other half could keep the food bank going. Our entire staff was working Emergency Services – ordering food, delivering food, working the phones, receiving and sorting donations, bagging beans and rice, entering data into computers, praying with people, disinfecting everything we touched, and in some downtime – taking the opportunity to clean and reorganize the stores.

Richard Hallsten is a former KCAPS' Board member. On Monday, March 16th he was scheduled for a job interview. He had just retired from his former job and was willing to fill a position with us. He walked into KCAPS for his interview and was invited to listen in on the staff meeting. After the meeting we shouted as we ran past him "You're hired. Get to work!" His was our shortest interview ever.

We asked him what he remembers about the first weeks of the pandemic. He responded: "Probably getting the food pantry supplied. I was assigned to receiving, there was a constant stream of cars as all the churches and youth groups were bringing food in. It was pretty neat to see people from Kingsburg Community, as well as so many I knew from the Baptist and Covenant churches donating food and toilet paper. Obviously, there were others I didn't know, or what organization or church they belonged to. We had several individuals and businesses that were incredibly helpful. Especially in the early days.

I also got to deliver food to senior citizens that were shut in – particularly in Park Kingsburg. Some of the residents were so confused. There were signs telling them to either wear a mask or stay in their rooms. Some thought they had been locked in and couldn't leave their rooms at all. They just didn't understand what was going on. (That was quickly clarified.) They were so grateful to receive any food that we had to give. I'm still able to deliver food to some people that shouldn't be out and about. They are so thankful."

Richard says that his favorite part of at working at KCAPS is the people. "I get to meet and build relationships with so many people. I get to talk to people donating their deceased loved one's clothing, and pray with them. I get to have relationships with store customers, and the people I'm delivering food to. I wish people knew how much really goes on at KCAPS. As a board member I thought I knew – but until I was here every day I didn't *really* understand. We have deep ministries in London and Traver as well. We have a close and fantastic team of people who work here. People that really care. Some days are hard and some days here are easy. Either way, I was blessed to be a volunteer, and now working here is a blessing to me!"

(Richard is a huge blessing to us too!)



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NEWSLETTER

STAFF PERSPECTIVES – Continued

Patti Blayney has been with KCAPS on and off for over 20 years. She has been our bookkeeper, but also has done administrative work, handles our desktop publishing, has worked and volunteered in Emergency Services, and serves as our Project Manager. She has served under three different directors and moved with KCAPS from the feed store location to our current building. For some years in the middle she took a different position, working as the Project Manager for a manufacturing company.

We asked what she remembers about the first weeks of KCAPS and the pandemic. She responded: "Initially I was shocked! My husband and I had been in the mountains and came home to stores with empty shelves and were told that we were locked down and weren't allowed to leave our homes. Being a quiet rebel, that didn't sit too well at first. I fall into the more vulnerable category – but obviously I came to work anyway. I'm Aida's assistant and we spent a lot of time discussing options prior to our staff meeting. We wanted to be sure that our staff knew we would do our best to take care of them, and to find out where everyone was with regard to their willingness to continue serving. I am so incredibly proud of this team of people that has served, and served, and served!

I'm the numbers lady – and we hadn't started out the year in a particularly strong way. Our donor base is aging and our community has gone from two strong charities to about seven. People's pockets are only just so deep. Now we were faced with an incredible challenge both financially and logistically. Where do you get food when there isn't any? How do we pay for that kind of volume of food? How do you keep people on the payroll when the stores are closed? I'll tell you frankly that creating order out of chaos and meeting a stiff challenge gets my juices flowing. I remember pacing and praying – 'Jesus, it's just you and me in that office and we need to get moving! We have people to feed. You've told me more than once to "feed your lambs". So let's go!!' and we did.

We contacted churches, we sent out text blasts, we asked the Chamber of Commerce to help get the word out that we needed help – BIG TIME! We applied for a PPP loan (We were among the first to get one – with due thanks to a board member who put us in contact with the right lender.), we wrote grant requests that were funded. I have watched people come to our door with bags of food and \$500 in cash. I've watch checks roll in from all over this community and the Central Valley. My husband has served Kingsburg as a volunteer fireman, an EMT, as a City Councilmember, and as a member of the Planning Commission. But even he hasn't been as privileged as I have been - to watch a community reach out and love each other through acts of giving.

KCAPS is a unique organization serving in a difficult time. KCAPS was founded over 40 years ago in a spirit of love, and it continues to love and serve people in three connected communities. The depth of this ministry is amazing. It has never lost its focus – and that is to love people in the name of Jesus; to heed the call to feed the widows and the orphans. When we serve people here we don't discriminate on race, gender, religion, political beliefs, nationality, cleanliness (or lack thereof), or even soberness. We don't always get it right – but we try our very best to just love people."

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ☞ Please be in prayer for our staff as we make some transitions ☞ Some of our staff's family is struggling with health concerns – please pray for all concerned.
- ☞ Pray for our teachers, students, parents – for all of them – all over the country
- ☞ For those experiencing isolation
- ☞ For our elected leaders – that they would make reasonable, informed, and non-partisan decisions (we're glad we aren't in their shoes)
- ☞ For our local businesspersons & pastors
- ☞ Thanksgiving for God's faithfulness – even when times are scary.
- ☞ For wisdom & new ways to do ministry effectively