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Helping the Homeless in Any Way They Can

The economic crisis that our country is going through has showed us how quickly a family can be devastated by difficult financial issues such as job loss and defaulted mortgages. One of the most troubling circumstances that a family can face is homelessness. Fortunately, our district is served by one of the most devoted and successful organizations dedicated to recovery and self-sufficiency, the St. Patrick Center at 800 North Tucker Boulevard. I recently visited the center and had the opportunity to meet their clientele and witness firsthand the difference that it has made in their lives.

The St. Patrick Center aims to provide those who are homeless or who are facing homelessness the opportunities to achieve permanent and positive changes in their lives through affordable housing, mental health services, employment and financial stability.

There are 28 housing, employment and mental health programs, with classes that teach everything from adult basic education and GED to living skills and intense computer skills training, within the St. Patrick Center. They also have McMurphy's Grill – the first program in the nation in which a full-service restaurant instructs clients on how to discover successful careers in the restaurant industry. The center has programs that allow for children to be in a safe environment while their parents receive support, and they have built a housing complex for chronically homeless men and women. Perhaps most importantly, the center assists and facilitates the gathering of several local entities in order to work together to address this issue that affects us all.

During their latest Casserole Program – which the center has been doing for 25 years – more than 2,000 volunteers, including 87 church and community groups, were brought together to serve 155,823 hot and nutritious meals for every day of the year that St. Patrick Center participates in outreach efforts. This is just one way the organization gathers the resources and people needed to make a difference in the lives of those who often have no where else to turn. Last year, the center served more than 11,400 clients and families. Sadly, until the economic recovery fully takes hold on the country, I'm afraid that number could grow larger.

Please take a look at the center's website at www.stpatrickcenter.com to watch videos that show the impact the St. Patrick's Center has made on many lives. Find out how you can volunteer and use your skills to help those who need it most.

After all, when we take on these issues together, there is nothing we can't accomplish.

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