



Dec 16, 2023

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### **Randy Fontaine, Hope-Net Ministries - CB**



Randy Fontaine formed Hope-Net Ministries in Council Bluffs in 2006 as a result of the Hurricane Katrina victims who came to Council Bluffs from New Orleans needing help. It then evolved. A Sequels thrift store helps 230-300 women per year coming out of incarceration with obtaining items for their family.

In 2021 Hope-Net Ministries started working with the homeless population in down town CB by creating a Resource Center in the back of one Sequels store which became a place for meals (300 a week) for the homeless and a point of contact. This morphed in 2023 into a mission of working with other local agencies (Heartland Family Services, New Visions, etc.) to help get the homeless off the street and each into an apartment.

The homeless population primarily live north of the 300 block in CB with a third living in the Bayliss Park area. 81 have been chronically homeless for years and to date 61 have been placed in apartments, representing 20% of the total homeless population in CB.

But it's easier said than done! The homeless own only the clothes on their back and perhaps a grocery cart of finds. Donations are being used to provide basic furnishings for the apartment bathroom, kitchen, and for sleeping. Fox Run has contributed furniture when needing to clean out a living unit. Walmart makes available for \$90 a 4-piece pack of kitchen items including a microwave, coffee pot, toaster and crock pot to be donated for this purpose.

Very important is the 6-hour training being provided to the new apartment resident to help them understand apartment rules. An effort is made to do follow-up. After the first of the year Hope-Net has hired a full-time employee to help do follow-up and assist in case problems.

Hope-Net also conducts a feeding program to the street population in CB have provided 3000

meals since Aug. 1. Meals are also being taken into public housing to assist low-income seniors.

The goal is to end chronic homelessness in CB. People who live on the street for over a year have more physical and mental health issues. Randy stated most homeless used to be older men. Today half the homeless population are women in their 30's and single. There is no emergency shelter for women in Council Bluffs and they are very vulnerable.

Randy shared that the common denominator of people becoming homeless is that usually a trauma has happened. He stated that a gentleman, who owned a roofing company with multi million sales and was a gifted musician, took a pill at a party and lost everything. With women, it's usually that they were molested as children. Drugs, mental health, losing your family, and losing a job add to the issue.

Anawim Housing, a property management company, holds the apartment master lease and does the sublease. They make sure the landlord gets paid and the apartment is in good shape in case there is a failure. They also help the renter get into programming for help if there are issues.

Rent is paid in multiple ways, through HUD which can be as low as \$50/month for the renter and up to 30% of any income they receive. For instance, if they are disabled, 30% of their SSI becomes rent. Some who hold down jobs are able to get subsidized help.

Randy stated a difference is made when a person is helped to get off the streets, get sleep, food, get regimented and everyday support. This results in helping the homeless have hope. The ultimate goal is to help them get employed and help them to be who God wanted them to be.

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**January 6, 2024 Program:**

**Joel Beyenhof,**

**Treynor Community School Superintendent**

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## Meeting Minutes

Jordan Campbell called the meeting to order. Sixteen members were present. Guests were Cindy Biederman, Cub Scout Leader, and scouts Marty Wilson-Stepan, Ethan Jones, and Greyson Mrsny and family, Randy Fontaine, Terry and Kay Bahl.

The group recited the pledge and Dennis White offered the prayer.

**Jokes:** Keith Denton, Jordan Campbell, Steve Chambers Glenrose Meier, Bill Vorthmann, Kay Bahl.



Cub Scouts (L-R) Greyson Mrsny, Ethan Jones, and Marty Wilson-Stepan and Leader Cindy Biederman led the Optimists in Christmas carols

and served cocoa, cider, and cookies. Thank you! Cindy stated the group has grown to 16 members.

**50/50:** Dennis White

**Attendance:** Glenrose Meier, but she was not present last week.

**Birthdays/Anniversaries:** Kevin Underwood's birthday was celebrated. Glenrose and Bob Meier will celebrate 54 years on Dec. 27. Gary and Dee Gutttau will celebrate 57 years on Dec. 27. Note the change on the calendar for Dick and Sherry Fox's anniversary.

**Football Bowl Contest:** Jim Clausen said this was the last day to pick up your form to participate.

**Bragging Rights:** (Dollars are contributed to benefit local youth programs.)

- Steve Irvin bragged on his 7<sup>th</sup> grade granddaughter who attends Siouxland Christian school in Sioux City. She knew nothing about basketball but is playing this year and her goal was to make 2 points in this final game, and she made 11 points, with three being 3-pointers!
- Glenrose Meier shared she and her husband had a successful 14 day cruise to Hawaii.
- Jordan stated the Billy Ballenger concert at Zion on Wednesday was good and he had a chance to

perform for the middle and high school Wednesday morning.

### Business:

- Can kennel sorting will take place next Saturday at 9:45 am even though there will not be a meeting.
- No meetings for the next two weeks. We resume Sat. Jan. 6.
- John Klein stated the new Home Depot manager was happy to provide five boxes of large clear can kennel bags. Home Depot is still willing to provide materials to replace the mural board south of the post office. However, the work needs to be done by someone or a group. It was suggested that the board discuss this further.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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## HUMOR

**“What did one Christmas tree say to the other?”**

**“Lighten Up!”**

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## Famous Quote

**“It is Christmas in the heart that puts Christmas in the air.”**

**W.T. Ellis**

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## Calendar

### Events

Dec 23 9:30 AM Can Kennel Sorting

### Birthdays

Dec 23 Chuck Nielsen

### Anniversaries

Dec 27 Glenrose and Bob Meier  
Dec 27 Gary and Dee Gutttau  
Jan 7 Dick and Sherry Fox

### Programs:

Jan Dale Willenborg  
Feb John Klein

### Speakers

Dec 23 No meeting  
Dec 30 No meeting  
Jan 6 Joel Beyenhof, Treynor School Superintendent

