Our community’s health is our top priority. By the end of this meeting, we were all clear on each set of priorities, each one having priority. This was a major step in the right direction. We still need to continue moving forward and give more attention to the ongoing issues that we have. In the end, I feel that our teamwork was effective and we are making progress towards improving the overall health of our community. #HeartsUpForHealth

A Heart of Missouri United Way partnership with publication in partnership with the Columbia Daily Tribune.
Love INC partnering for change

How wide a net shall we provide?

Raj Chetty’s Economic Index, a Harvard economist, has brought the concern that we have “two Columbias” into sharp focus. According to him, “two Columbias” have emerged, and one has any means to help you while the other is experiencing a challenge that impacts everyone.

As we respond to requests for assistance at Love INC, we see that many of our neighbors do not have the resources to help us or to respond to an expected or unexpected expense such as a car repair or medical bill. Others are regularly unable to pay their monthly bills. Still others are in transition from such situations as incarceration, hair care, emergency shelters, or an individual with low basic skills in employment. We receive a variety of one-time requests for assistance each month.

For instance, we have a regular visitor who needs some money to get to the doctor or to pay rent. In March, we helped a man present his children with some basic school supplies. Sometimes, even though you might prefer to spend your money for utility bill and, because it’s a weekly expense, you might also need to pick up mousetrap drug prescription and be asked to provide a co-pay of $5 or less in addition.

You say, “But I need to eat from the grocery store every week to keep my bill.”

It’s that pack of diapers – for those who are struggling, who can’t afford a new home. For a second child, the safety net is there to match the need in our community. And, if the baby is newborn, we will also provide a new pack of diapers.

The nuts and bolts stuff: Our primary purpose at Turning Point Day Center is to provide day-to-day support to people in transition, offering basic support and services such as food, clothing, and other social connections to move people from one place to another place.

Bridges across the “two Columbias.” Love INC provides structures and support for the formation of two-way, life-changing relationships. Through our coaching and practical help services, we bring people together from diverse backgrounds who would have most likely never met.

Bringing together people from diverse backgrounds who would have most likely never met.

Support of Heart of Missouri United Way and Love INC provides Love INC and us with the vision to bridge the “two Columbia’s.”

We assess each situation with a view toward long-term solutions.

NICK FOSTER
Director/Executive Director
LOVE INC
PASTOR
BRAD BRYAN
PASTOR
JANE WILLIAMS
PASTOR

Creating turning points by providing basic necessities and support

Two communities: 

One needs help for basic necessities, including food, clothing, and other social connections to move people from one place to another place.

One community: 

Our neighbors who need us are anxious to hear our answer.

F ortunately, Columbia has seen livability.com Columbia is ranked #2 for livability in the U.S. in the Columbia Tribune. However, there’s a need for more resources to help our neighbors who are persevering despite challenges.

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The face of poverty, is a single father doing his best to raise two children while working three part-time jobs. In his case, utilities were going to be shut off and he didn't know where to turn.

The face of poverty, is a woman whose life was destroyed by drugs. She lost her work, her home, family, partner and everything else that had been important. With nowhere else to go, she found herself at The Salvation Army Harbor House shelter. Another face of poverty is a man, who through personal decisions and life's circumstances, needed shelter, a hot meal and help to get back on his feet. A more faceless description of poverty is being provided a monthly Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefit of $750, but paying out $6-700 of that for rent. The father with the three jobs received help on two months of outstanding expenses plus assistance with the current utility bill. He will not owe anything more until December's statement comes due. His response? A grateful hug and relief that a huge burden had been lifted, at least temporarily.

The woman who had lost everything when her husband and everything that she treasured was lost to drugs. She was recently shopping and had a conversation with a sales clerk. Her story is that she is a single mother with a very young child. She currently lives in one of the shelters in our community. This young lady is trying and is grateful to have a job, but it pays out $6-700 of that for rent. The money she makes isn't enough to help her get back on her own. My guess gave her a business card and asked her to call. Through our available resources and other community partnerships, there may be other ways this struggling mother could be helped.

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Support to the Heart of Missouri United Way helps organizations like The Salvation Army make a difference. The United Way believes that support to the Heart of Missouri United Way is “investing.” Their goal is to “invest in services for families and individuals experiencing times of need and ways greater than available resources.

Another significant group needing to be part of any discussion on poverty is the “working poor.” They are defined as employed people whose income falls below a set poverty line due to lack of work hours and/or low wages. It’s a complete circle asking yet another question, “is the problem wages or jobs?” The poverty level in Boone County is 19.3% which is almost 1 in 5 individuals living in our community.

The face of poverty looks like the single father doing his best to raise two children while working three part-time jobs. In his case, utilities were going to be shut off and he didn’t know where to turn.

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COLUMBIA HOUSING AUTHORITY, LOW INCOME SERVICES INC.
Independent Living Program
We provide community-based programs including resource and referral services to individuals living in properties managed by the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia (CHA). We strive to help children succeed in school and in life, support families working toward self-sufficiency, and enable seniors and persons with disabilities to live independently.

FIRST CHANCE FOR CHILDREN
CRIBS
We advocate for high-quality early childhood practices, programming and policy, while providing resources to foster healthy families and high-quality early childhood development programs and services. We serve as a home visitation agency working to build family resiliency, prevent child abuse/neglect and prepare children for kindergarten.

HARVEST HOUSE
Homeless Shelter
Each resident is provided a shared bedroom and access to a communal restroom, kitchen and living room. Laundry facilities, free internet access, computers, and local and long-distance calls to assist in job searches are also available. All of the amenities we offer serve to help our residents get back on their feet.

HEART OF MISSOURI CASA
Court Appointed Child Advocacy Program
CASA volunteers provide a voice in court to our community’s most vulnerable children. Serving as court appointed special advocates, our volunteers make recommendations to the judge regarding the child’s needs, placement, and permanency plan. CASA volunteers have only one case at a time and commit to stay with that case until it is closed.

LOVE INC
The Clearinghouse
The Clearinghouse offers a coordinated system of information and referral, a single point of entry to local church resources and connection to our individual life skills coaching, transitional homes and furniture bank. Efforts are made to look beyond the presenting problem to seek long-term solutions.

MID-MISSOURI LEGAL SERVICES
MMLS Housing Law Project
The Housing Law Project prevents homelessness by helping people avoid evictions. It also helps them by requiring landlords to repair living conditions that are unsafe and unhealthy.

RAINBOW HOUSE
Children’s Emergency Shelter & Advocacy Center
The Rainbow House Children’s Emergency Shelter & Advocacy Center temporarily houses children who are in foster care and assists parents who request placement for their children during a family crisis. We provide a stable, short-term home for children taken into protective custody as a result of abuse and neglect.

SERVICES FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (SIL)
Safe at Home/Senior Connect
Safe at Home/Senior Connect provides intensive case management and social supports, and matches volunteers to meet the needs of seniors to empower them to live independently in the community. We also provide personal safety services to individuals and families facing threats to immediate well-being.

THE FOOD BANK FOR CENTRAL AND NORTHEAST MISSOURI
Buddy Pack Program & Central Pantry
Buddy Packs provide weekend meals to children who rely on free and reduced-price school meals during the week. Each Buddy Pack contains two breakfasts and two entrees, as well as snack items. This consists of items such as ravioli, cereal, canned fruit and peanut butter.

As one of the largest food pantries in the state, Central Pantry provides essential food assistance to Boone County residents in need. Featuring a shopping-style layout, Central Pantry provides participants with staple items, as well as nutritious foods such as fresh produce.

THE SALVATION ARMY
Harbour House (24-Hour Emergency Shelter)
The Harbor House provides emergency shelter care to people experiencing homelessness. We offer this assistance in a manner that is both respectful and effective. We provide meals seven days a week to community residents, including daily Community Lunch, and residents participate in one or more of our three programs.

TRUE NORTH
Advocacy Services
We provide case management, housing advocacy, crisis intervention, counseling and domestic/sexual violence education to victims of domestic and sexual violence. These services work to improve the safety of survivors and their families, eliminate barriers to self-sustaining living and support survivors’ healing.

TURNING POINT DAY CENTER
Homeless Drop-In Day Care
Our program assists homeless individuals in meeting basic and long-term needs relating to physical and mental health. Clients benefit from a safe environment and a variety of services, as well as regular meetings with outreach staff from VA, health, mental health and substance abuse agencies. Our staff also provides information and referral services to meet immediate needs daily.

VOLUNTARY ACTION CENTER
Basic Needs & Emergency Services
We offer services in the areas of health, education, employment, housing, basic needs, and information and referral. Supports include prescription co-pays, work uniforms, IDs, food, motel stays, rent assistance and hygiene products. VAC also provides comprehensive information and referrals regarding other services available in the community.