

# Bishop Sullivan Center

March 2016, Vol. 22, No.2

## “WHAT’S THE BIGGEST WOLF AT YOUR DOOR?” PROTECTED AND UNPROTECTED

*By Tom Turner, Director*

Your husband has been diagnosed with cancer and right now he cannot work. You are a stay-at-home mom with two pre-school aged children, one in diapers. Your husband’s work doesn’t offer long-term disability insurance. Suddenly, you’re stuck with no income and the bills are piling up!

This is the situation facing Juan and Delia. Delia plans to babysit other children and prepare meals to sell to make some money. When Juan is well enough to care for their children, she will look for full-time work.

When I visit families like this one and listen to all their needs, I always ask, “What is the biggest wolf at your door?” I’m trying to see which of their bills concerns them the most. We usually cannot help with all bills, but we can



Juan and Delia try to keep things as normal as possible for their children, as Juan wrestles with cancer.

take care of one or two, and that way we get rid of the biggest wolf at their door.

Peggy Noonan, a columnist for the Wall Street Journal, recently described the poor and those with means as the “unprotected” and the “protected.” It is an apt description. When you simply don’t earn enough to have a “rainy day fund” and emergencies come along, you are “unprotected” and that means you may be evicted, you might have your water or your electricity shut off. When you are unprotected and the wolf comes, you feel scared, especially, when you have little ones who depend on you.

Thanks to your generosity, we are able to provide some protection for families like that of Juan and Delia. We cannot solve all their problems, we can’t cure Juan’s cancer, but we can help keep some of the wolves from their door, and that makes life more secure for them and their children.



# DISCOVERING A NEED THAT WAS RIGHT UNDER MY NOSE

*By Nick Porto, Bishop Sullivan Center board member*

**T**hey're right in front of us. They're right here in Kansas City. Children so poor they don't have one decent pair of shoes. I drove right past them every day. I saw them every morning on my way to work, but I never knew it until I got involved with Bishop Sullivan Center. Now I know it, and everything has changed. Now my daily drive from Johnson County to Downtown Kansas City will never be the same.

In October of 2015, we launched Operation Heart and Sole. Our mission is to find every child in Kansas City who needs shoes and bring them shoes so that he or she can do the things other children do at school: run, jump, and play at recess, just like my kids. Since October, we have delivered hundreds of pairs of shoes to children in Kansas City's urban core. In the next 60 days, we will have delivered hundreds more. Many of these children don't have the stable family life I had growing up, with mom and dad, and a home. Many stay in a shelter, or with a grandmother, or an uncle, or whoever will take care of them for however long.

I have seen the look on their faces when they pick out their new shoes. I have seen them dance with joy, literally. It's an overwhelming feeling for sure. But here's what I've learned: it's not about me. It's not



matter how much money you have or don't have: It's unacceptable to have young, innocent children right here in Kansas City in such dire need.

Will delivering a pair of shoes to a child make everything better for that child? Probably not. But Ralph Waldo Emerson once said "Treat a man as he is, and he will remain as he is. Treat a man as he could be, and he will become what he should be." That's what Bishop Sullivan Center is to me. It's more than a meal, or help finding a job, or a pair of shoes for a child. It's about showing someone who lives right here in Kansas City that you care about their existence and maybe they will care about someone else's existence. And when enough people care about each other, I believe no child in Kansas City will ever be overlooked again. Until that day arrives, Operation Heart and Sole will be delivering shoes. Come join us.



It's a family affair. Nick, his wife (upper right) and his aunt (lower right) help kids in need try on their new shoes at a local school.

even about the children. It's about us: the haves and have-nots, all together in the same community. It's about one thing I think everyone would agree on, no



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