

# HANDS & FEET GRANT: HATS FOR THE HOMELESS

AUTHOR: HEATHER VANDE KIEFT

## Background

Creighton University's campus is located near downtown Omaha and has a large homeless population that lives around or near our campus. Creighton serves the homeless population in Omaha in various ways including offering free healthcare clinics and screenings, encouraging students to volunteer at local charities, and much more. Creighton's CPFI Chapter was approved as an organization on campus for its first year this year. We as an executive team wanted to apply for the Hands & Feet Grant to offer another way for our student members to give back. Our CPFI Chapter has also organized and led 2 mission trips in its first year, and several volunteer opportunities. Students have risen to the opportunity to give back to their local community and to show Jesus' love to everyone in Omaha.



## Purpose

Creighton University teaches its pharmacy students about *cura personalis*, which is a Jesuit value that means caring for the whole person. When our executive team helped create our CPFI Chapter at Creighton, it was important to us that our chapter offered students a different type of professional organization that talked to students about caring for people as a whole. We have had speakers that talked about their work with single moms, homeless patients, and much more. Our theme for our CPFI Chapter that year was "More Like Jesus." Our speakers geared their talks toward this theme, and we hosted several mission events both in Omaha and outside of the state to allow students to have an opportunity to love people how Jesus does. We wanted to offer students an opportunity to love people beyond what we do for them in the pharmacy and the Hands & Feet Grant allowed us to not only bless 100 homeless people, but also blessed the several students that were able to help with the project.

## Methods

Once we were notified of the grant we were receiving, our executive team searched online for hats & gloves in bulk to purchase. We were able to purchase 96 hats and 96 pairs of gloves. Our original plan was to pass out the hats and gloves to the homeless population around campus, but due to some safety concerns the university had, we had to change our course of plans just a bit. We set up a "Hats for the Homeless Event" at Creighton and invited all pharmacy students to participate. We hosted 4 different events that we hoped would allow for more student participation.

The first event was offered over the noon hour, where we opened with devotions and prayer and then filled bags, each with one hat and one pair gloves. We had about 20 students show up to help pack the hats and gloves and so that event went very quickly. We then brought these bags to the local homeless shelter that is just down the road from campus.

The second event was offered during an early evening. We met in a classroom on campus and made Valentine's Day cards for the same homeless shelter we packaged the hats and gloves for. We made cards for 100 of their guests staying in the shelter that let them know Jesus loves them!

The third event was another event over the noon hour where the director of the homeless shelter came and talked about the people that received these hats, gloves, and cards. He shared their missions' vision with us students and explained why volunteers are so crucial to keeping their shelter going.

Our final event was hosted over a weekend. We started Friday evening with a prayer meeting. On Saturday, local students came together to work at a food pantry in the morning and the homeless shelter in the afternoon. Our distance students participated virtually by sharing their "Missions from Home" that they were able to do via Instagram. We sent packets to local and distance students with ideas of how they could give back in their own communities. All the students that participated and shared how they were giving back on Instagram were entered to win a \$25 Starbucks Gift Card!



## Results

While we used the money offered to us from the Hands & Feet Grant to purchase 96 hats and 96 pairs of gloves, this grant turned into so much more for our chapter. We were able to turn the hats & gloves packing into 4 separate events that led to so many lives impacted. This impacted the people we helped, but also impacted many students lives as well. Some of the students shared they had never done a service project before doing this and now our chapter is trying to host monthly mission events because students can't get enough of serving others.



## Conclusion

We are so grateful to the National Chapter for their generous grant that allowed us to help so many people. We are hopeful that this was just the beginning of our CPFI Chapter's service projects, and they will continue to grow as our chapter grows.