

Below is a link to a video that we made that briefly explains the project.

<https://youtu.be/Yd21HIZEd0Q>

## **Compassion United's Experience in the Community**

Compassion United, Inc is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that has been operating in Montgomery County since 2006. Our mission is to see churches, businesses, and individuals united to bring change to the lives of the poor, homeless, at-risk youth, and addicted in our community. We are realizing this mission in the following ways;

- **Breakfast In The Park** - A weekly breakfast, sponsored by churches and businesses throughout Montgomery County and serving the poor and homeless in southeast Conroe. Currently, 80-120 individuals are served each Saturday.
- **Conroe House of Prayer** (CHOP) - Established in 2009, the CHOP offers services six days per week to the homeless in Conroe. Breakfast is provided by local churches. Clothing and hygiene items are made available to the homeless. Additionally, worship, teaching, and spiritual support are available. No one is required to participate in religious services in order to receive aid. CHOP also serves as part of the "intake" process for our transitional living program.
- **Freedom House** - Freedom House is a transitional living facility for men who desire to exit homelessness. Our current capacity is 14 men. This program has been in operation since 2010.
- **Hosanna House** - Hosanna House was launched in 2014 as a home for women exiting homelessness. Our current capacity is five women.
- **Joy House** - The Joy House was launched in 2009 as a place for homeless women in crises pregnancy. The capacity of our last facility was 16, however, we lost that facility during hurricane Harvey. We have yet to find a new location.
- **Fresh Start** - Fresh Start is the empowering support service to our transition program. Through the Fresh Start program, residents attend classes, receive assistance with resume writing and job searches, and receive mentoring to help them overcome the obstacles created while they were homeless.
- **DESTINYKids** - DK began in 2012 as an outreach to children and youth in Dugan. It has evolved into an after school activity and mentorship program that offers services four nights per week.
- **Terry's Tables Food Pantry** - The Food Pantry is located in East County and services approximately 6000 individuals per year.

The result of these programs is that, in 2019 we

- Served over 40,000 hot meals.
- Provided more than 250,000 lbs of groceries.
- Facilitated 18,000 hours of volunteerism.

- Provided clothing and hygiene items to the homeless in Conroe and beyond.
- Helped 30 people get out of homelessness.

## Project Scope : Miracle City

The Project - "Miracle City" It is Compassion United's goal to provide an innovative, comprehensive, "whole-person" transformation complex that provides much needed resources in Conroe that benefit both the homeless community and the city at large. Miracle City will be a master planned community to both support people transitioning out of homelessness by providing them a place to live and grow, Empowerment initiatives such as vocational training and jobs in our marketplace will provide skills, income, and self-confidence to those in our program. Additionally, classes, group meetings, and health and nutrition programs will offer them an opportunity to overcome physical, emotional, and spiritual issues that have served to keep them bound. Our approach will be a holistic vehicle to bring total life transformation to the formerly homeless and addicted.

## Project Scope : Miracle City

### **How:**

Compassion United will consolidate services currently offered into one location and expand to support those in need of permanent supportive low income housing.

Compassion United's transitional housing facilities will be located inside of Miracle City. For those transitioning out of homelessness, all of the current support provided by Fresh Start and Fresh Start University will still be in place, including mentors, classes, and educational support. We will also extend these services to non-residential homeless as "day clients" of the Fresh Start Program.

Additionally, Compassion United will expand to include more advanced job training opportunities, such as a culinary program, automotive repair training program, a welding program, and a carpentry program. Through each of these programs residents will have the opportunity to learn a skill in a grace-based training environment while producing products for the Miracle City community, as a way of giving back, and for the community at large (Conroe), to be sold to provide income for the resident and revenue for the program. Products will include trailers and BBQ pits from the welding program, tiny homes from the carpentry program, and food to be sold in a food truck court from the culinary program.

As part of the long-term supportive housing component of Miracle City, residents will be able to access Fresh Start programming including classes on identity, relationship building, and life

skills. They will also be able to access training and micro enterprise opportunities as a way to earn wages to pay rent and expenses needed for daily living. Providing grace-based managed job opportunities such as working in the community garden, community maintenance, and working in businesses built by the community will allow the residents to contribute to their community and experience success while taking ownership and pride in the place they call home.

## **The Impact**

This project will serve to impact not only the homeless community, but the city as a whole on several levels.

1. Offer a greater availability of services, while changing the “traffic patterns” of the homeless - One of the consistent challenges faced in the ten years of operation in downtown Conroe has been to offer the services needed while working to minimize the negative impact that the homeless have had on the other businesses in that area. As a result, the hours of operation had to be reduced to just 3 hours per day. By relocating outside of downtown, Compassion United will be able to keep longer hours and offer more services such as laundry, showers and transportation. In addition to these services, we will also be able to offer case management, teach life skills, and offer assistance with job searches. Our belief is that this will ultimately change the traffic patterns of the homeless and avoid misunderstandings and altercations with area business owners and the patrons of those businesses.
2. Create healthy and positive interaction with the homeless - One of the goals of Miracle City is to change the perception that many have of the homeless. By operating commercial endeavors such as, a community market, an outdoor theater and a food truck court, we will invite the community to come to the campus, have a positive experience, while empowering the homeless population.
3. Help More people - When all phases of the project have been completed, Miracle City will provide transitional and long-term supportive housing for 92 people. This is nearly five times as many people as we are able to house, currently.

## **Project Phases**

**Phase 1 - Acquire land** - On July 17th, Compassion United signed the deed to 5 acres of land that was granted to us by the City of Conroe for the purpose of building Miracle City.

**Phase 2 - Relocate CHOP and Fresh Start** - This would replace our facility in downtown, as well as our office and empowerment center located on Cable St. The estimated cost of this phase is \$1 million, \$350,000 estimated for the “ground work” and \$750,000 of the building.

**Phase 3 - Transitional Housing** - In this phase, we would build transitional living facilities to replace the current facilities that we operate, JoyHouse, Freedom House, and Hosanna House. We have hired a grant writer who has begun to research grant options for transitional housing.

**Phase 4 - Additional Transitional Housing** - In phase 4, we will build an additional men home and an additional women' home. Upon completion of this phase, Miracle City would provide transitional housing for approximately 75 residents.

**Phase 5 - Empowerment initiatives and long-term supportive housing** - This phase would include the construction of our buildings for the purpose of vocational training, and the construction of small cabins for long-term supportive housing. Our proposed training opportunities would include;

- Welding
- Carpentry
- Auto Mechanics
- Medical Transcription
- Culinary

## **Conclusion**

The vision for Miracle City is one that Compassion United has had for many years. In the conversations that we have had, we have already seen a tremendous amount of excitement and momentum. We have had construction professionals, urban planners, builders and project managers offer their services for free or at cost. We have also had churches express a desire to see this happen. When we were notified that we would be beneficiaries of the reach campaign, we were told the the best project to select would be one that would be impossible without the resources of this grant. We are at that stage now. We believe that, with the help of The Woodlands United Methodist Church, we will see the realization of this vision and our community transformed.