



GENERIC MINISTRY

Generic Ministry – Annual Report 2019

Our Mission: To provide basic necessities and compassion to Boston's homeless

By all measures, Generic Ministry had a very successful year in 2019. Our volunteer base has grown, our finances are secure, and we have significantly increased awareness of our organization. In short, Generic Ministry's ability to achieve our mission is secure, thanks to the contributions of a tireless group of dedicated volunteers.

Our primary focus continues to be assuring that the Generic Ministry van is able to make a twice-weekly trip into Boston to provide food, clothing, toiletries, blankets and other essential items for life on the street. In addition to these necessities, we know that the conversation and friendly faces from our volunteers are equally important to our clients, many of whom live a relatively lonely life. The van is staffed by a team of approximately 30 volunteers who dedicate 3 hours on a weekday evening to ride the van. Many regulars who make the trip multiple times during the year.

This year we also introduced a new program called Tuesday Treats. Once a month, a separate pair of volunteers provide an additional special item for our clients, such as smoothies, cider and donuts, or hot chocolate. This has been enthusiastically welcomed. It provides a bright note for a population who otherwise lead a tough existence, as well as providing an opportunity for teenage volunteers to get involved serving clients in Boston. Teens must participate with a parent or adult who has volunteered on the van at least 2x prior. The adult/teen pair determines their own transportation to our Tuesday night Park Street location.

On average, we serve approximately 100 individuals each week. Of these, 60-80% are regular clients that use the van on multiple occasions, while the remainder we may only see once or twice.

Of course, the van can only go out thanks to support from multiple additional volunteer teams. Every Saturday and Wednesday, in all weathers, the restocking crew sorts donations, labels and folds clothes, and loads the van for the coming trips. Their dedication to this essential supporting task is amazing.

We distribute approximately 100 bagged meals every week. Families, youth groups, schools, and religious institutions all play their part in making sure that these meals are prepared and delivered each week, ready for the trip into Boston.

We benefit from numerous individuals and groups that donate gently-used clothing items. This is the primary source of the clothing that is so important for our clients, both for warmth and for their dignity. As well as individuals, in 2019 we also received generous clothing donations from several businesses, including Bombas (socks) and Charles River Apparel.

2019 saw the launch of our new website, following a complete re-design by Needham resident Lily Weitzman. With a vastly improved look, the new website is much easier for visitors to navigate and has been instrumental in increasing awareness for Generic Ministry and drawing new volunteers. The overhaul included design of a new logo, which was added to the van just in time for participation in the 4th July parade.

We were grateful to receive many financial donations in 2019, both from businesses and from individuals, including a large number in memory of our dear friend, Scott Muldoon. These were a fitting tribute to Scott, a wonderful man who was a key volunteer at Generic Ministry for many years, and played a huge part in making the organization what it is today.

As a result of these donations and our increased fundraising activities overall, Generic Ministry is now on a solid financial footing, with sufficient funds to support essential expenses, replace our van when that is eventually needed, and potentially to expand our mission.

Looking forward, we have made good progress against the 2-year objectives which we agreed in October 2018, and will continue to focus on these in the coming year. Those objective are:

1. Financial Security
2. Increase volunteer base
3. Taking the van out for an additional night
4. Increasing the leadership group
5. Broadening awareness of the charity in the community

Every week our van volunteers hear directly from our clients about just how much the Generic Ministry van means to them. On their behalf, a sincere thank you to all our many volunteers and supporters, as well as to our leadership team for all of their hard work and commitment during 2019 – you are all truly making a difference.

Alan Robins
President, Generic Ministry