

## **OFEC is Impacting, Expanding, and Connecting**

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Oklahoma Family Empowerment Center

NBA Incubate Partner

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Oklahoma Family Empowerment Center (OFEC) serves an average of forty persons per day. Over the last six months, OFEC has given over 3,900 meals to the homeless, 900 meals to seniors, 100 plus hygiene care packages and the number of new clients served each month continues to increase. These increasing numbers are attached to real people.

### ***We are impacting the lives of people***

People like Jodi who was addicted to drugs. She supported her habit and made her living through prostitution in the hotel next door. It has taken some time, but Jodi is now drug free and no longer prostituting. She recently completed fork lift training. But, with no work history for the past twenty years, it has been difficult to find a job placement. While Jodi admits that there are times that she gets discouraged. She is sometimes challenged to see anything beyond a life in the streets, but she said, "I am not turning back and not giving up!"

Then there is Craig. Craig was coming to eat each day at OFEC, breakfast and lunch. He came not because he was homeless. With a terminal ill wife at home and too many absences, he lost his job. Now a widower and unemployed, except for periodic side jobs. Jobs that barely afforded him enough to pay his rent. His utilities were cut off. With gas, water or electricity; OFEC served as a resource to help him make it through the difficult times. OFEC provided job referral, which led to later securing employment. While it will take some time for him to catch up on everything, Craig now has hope! He has since made the decision to become a member of In the Spirit Christian Church (founding church of OFEC). He is actively involved as an usher and volunteers at OFEC on his off days. Craig said, "this place and the people has become my family now!"

### ***We are expanding capacity***

OFEC is expanding capacity through its agreements with American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Foundation's Senior Community Service Program (SCSEP) and AmeriCorps.

May 2018 OFEC received its first SCSEP worker, Patia Wright. Patia has worked as an office assistant for over twenty years. But after having a stroke, which left her paralyzed on her right side, she was out of work for several years. Now on the road to recovery, she is walking, talking and reentering the job market. As part of OFEC's job training program, Patia serves as our office assistant and works to maintain client files and track the number served.

To further our efforts in addressing the critical need of hunger and homelessness, OFEC entered into an agreement with AmeriCorps, September 1, 2018. This agreement provides on the job experience and training for the AmeriCorp member. Additionally, the member performs a variety of tasks that may not be accomplished because of a gap in funding. OFEC benefits from an expanded workforce and gives us the opportunity to improve services.

### ***We are making new connections***

Our latest connection is with Tulsa Dress for Success. While OFEC has a clothing pantry for clients, most of the attire available are casual; with no available space to expand. Connecting with Dress for Success, September 18, 2018, affords us the ability to refer women clients to be outfitted for office job interviews. With a like mission to empower women, we can also refer our clients, when they have secured employment, to be outfitted in attire that will empower them to thrive in a business environment.

Oklahoma Family Empowerment Center staff, volunteers and job trainees are honored to serve the community. We recognize that it is a gift to work together and are strengthened by the continued relationship building and connections that empower us to empower others.

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*The NBA incubates new ministries, supporting social entrepreneurs of faith who are serving their communities in a variety of innovative ways and empowering these Disciples-led health and social service projects to focus on growth, impact, and sustainability. Learn more at **[nbacares.org/incubate](http://nbacares.org/incubate)** or by contacting Rev. Ayanna Johnson Watkins, Director of the NBA Incubate Initiative, at **[awatkins@nbacares.org](mailto:awatkins@nbacares.org)**.*