

ARISE

HELPING HOMELESS PEOPLE SURVIVE, FIND HOUSING AND REBUILD THEIR LIVES



VOLUME 14 ISSUE 1 | WINTER 2025

"In Joppa, there was a disciple named Tabitha; she was always doing good and helping the poor."



JENN JASS, FINALLY HOME

CLIENT STORIES

A Parent's Unthinkable Grief

Jenn Jass, 44, has faced every parent's cruelest nightmare: the loss of her children. She was devastated when she gave birth to stillborn twin boys. Then, in 2006, Jen was working as a manager at McDonald's when she got the shocking call that her baby daughter had died of SIDS. "If I would've known that was the last day I was gonna have with her, I wouldn't have went to work... But nobody ever knows," she said. "It's the worst thing a parent can go through... So I had my tubes cut, tied and burned 'cause I didn't wanna bury any more babies."

Stricken with grief, she parted with her boyfriend and decided to start an independent life for the first time. She impulsively drove to Des Moines, but without a plan for housing, the only place she could go was the homeless shelter. She had no idea the danger it posed for women. Her new phone was stolen while she slept, and she was constantly racked with fear for her safety. She was terrified of falling asleep, so she took a man's suggestion and started taking meth to stay awake and alert.

Jenn felt her luck had begun to turn once she met DJ. He would come to the shelter for hot showers and with each visit their relationship grew. He

CONTINUED...

OUR MISSION

To create communities of unconditional love, support and hope for the homeless as we work together to end homelessness.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTHLY VOLUNTOUR
6:00 PM – 7:30 PM
Each second Tuesday at Joppa

SECOND SATURDAY WORKDAY
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Each month at Joppa

♥'S FOR THE HOMELESS
Through Valentine's Day
at Thriftmart

JOPPA ANNUAL GALA
November 7, 2025

IOWA HOMELESS MEMORIAL
December 21, 2025

JOPPA CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION
December 21, 2025

A Parent's Unthinkable Grief, *CONTINUED*

moved her to his camp in the woods and helped her adapt to life in a tent. He showed her how to use the river to wash clothes, cook over a bonfire and protect herself. "I chose that life to be with him. It seemed like I had everything else in life, but I didn't have love and I wanted that..."

Their time in the woods was balanced with love for each other and the hardships of survival. The winter months, in particular, were taxing. "If we didn't

"IF WE DIDN'T HAVE JOPPA THERE TO HELP US WITH THE HEAT, THE FOOD, THE CLOTHING, THE BLANKETS, WE WOULD'VE NEVER MADE IT." — JENN

have Joppa there to help us with the heat, the food, the clothing, the blankets, we would've never made it. We would've been literally sleeping outside by the fire pit which is not safe at all," Jenn stressed.

The time out in the camp grew harder when Jenn discovered that DJ

had cancer. "I was preparing myself from the day he told me he had cancer...to lose him that way—not the way he was taken out." Jenn and DJ even discussed quitting drugs and seeking counseling. They decided they wanted to make the most of the time they had left by embracing hope and planning for the future.

But one day, Jenn awoke from the tent to discover that DJ had been murdered and hung from a tree with a noose. "I had to cut him down outta that tree. And that was hardest thing ever because when I cut him down, he fell on top of me. I wasn't strong enough to hold his body weight up..."

"And it's one thing to lose the love of your life...I felt like I couldn't breathe without him. What I want for myself more than anything in the world is just to be a part of the world again. I want to feel loved. I want to be happy. I want to be able to go out and work an everyday job like I used to."

Watch the rest of Jenn's story and see how she's doing now.

Visit jop.pa/jenn or scan this QR code:



I Serve at Joppa

VOLUNTEER: Steve Miller

INVOLVEMENT: I got involved 3 years ago. After delivering heat to the homeless in the bitter cold, I knew I couldn't walk away. That night, in my warm bed, I kept saying to myself: "They're still out there." Right then, I committed to getting involved.

BACKGROUND: Our church leads a Winter Heat Team each week. I've also taken the initiative to raise funds along with inviting others to become involved.

DRIVING PASSION: I truly believe that my purpose on earth is to help those who can't help themselves.

ON MY OWN: My wife, Joan, of 38 years, has blessed us with 3 children and 8 grandchildren. Our faith has given us everything we need and so much more. Joppa is one way we can give back.

BECOME AN EVERYDAY ANGEL

Help homeless people every day of the year by setting up monthly giving!

Joppa Everyday Angels contribute monthly to:

- Help families and individuals get off the streets each week
- Educate and engage the community in working together to end homelessness
- Prepare to build the Joppa Village to help reduce chronic homelessness in Des Moines

Sign up at: Joppa.org/Angels



Matthew 25:35-40

BECAUSE OF YOU

- JOPPA LIFTS FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS OFF THE STREETS EACH WEEK
- WITH YOUR SUPPORT, NEARLY 700 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN LIFTED OFF OUR STREETS
- MORE THAN 80% OF THESE MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN REMAIN IN HOUSING TODAY
- JOPPA IS HELPING 579 HOMELESS PEOPLE SURVIVE AND STAY WARM SO FAR THIS WINTER



REMEMBERING THE NAMES OF THOSE WHO DIED HOMELESS

Iowa Homeless Memorial & Joppa Christmas Celebration

On Dec. 21, the first day of winter and the longest night of the year, Joppa holds two events each year that have become treasured traditions for people who've experienced homelessness in central Iowa. "I look forward to these events all year long," long-time client Donnie said with tears in his eyes.



Iowa Homeless Memorial

At 5:30 p.m., we hold a candlelight vigil outside on the Iowa State Capitol West Terrace. It is a time of music, poetry and prayer. This December, we remembered 37 people who died homeless in Iowa last year.

For the sixteenth consecutive year, Joppa acquired State and City proclamations from the Iowa governor and Des Moines Mayor, declaring Dec. 21, 2024, as National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day.

Joppa Christmas Celebration

Immediately following the memorial service, Joppa holds a warm and welcoming Christmas celebration for the homeless. This year's festivities included a hearty meal, live music, a hot chocolate station, a photo booth, free supplies, wrapped Christmas gifts and a visit from Santa Claus.



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

SCHEELS

SCHEELS is a national employee-owned retail outfitter with a store located in Des Moines, Iowa. The company's top priority is serving its customers and community as it strives to support as many local nonprofit organizations as possible.

Eric McEntee, public relations at SCHEELS, expressed the company's pride in partnering with Joppa. "The missions and values of Joppa that they stand behind also resonate with us as a company. It is a perfect fit, sharing similar traits and values," Eric said.

SCHEELS began its partnership with Joppa by donating clothing and other items. The company also supports Joppa financially during its annual Day of Giving each December. They describe the event as a way to say, "Thank you, and we see the work you are doing."

In 2024, SCHEELS expanded its partnership with Joppa by choosing us as one of five qualifying organizations for a new payroll-deduction giving program. This enables employees to personally contribute monthly by automatically deducting a portion of their paycheck to the causes they care about.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

GIVE:

Your generous contributions provide critical funds to lift families and individuals off our streets each week:

- *Helped 91 people off streets last year*
- *Awarded Candid GuideStar Platinum Transparency Seal 5 consecutive years*
- *No federal or state funding*
- *Joppa is a 501(c)3 nonprofit*
- *All gifts are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law*

GIVE ONLINE OR MAIL TO:

Joppa
2326 Euclid Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50310

joppa.org/giving



VOLUNTEER:

Volunteer opportunities are available for groups, families and individuals, including:

- *Cook meals for outreach*
- *Help in the resource center*
- *Make heater fuel deliveries*
- *Recover heaters from camps*
- *Do outreach or aftercare*
- *Sort donations*
- *Work in our thrift store*
- *Help plan events*

BECOME A VOLUNTEER:

We depend on volunteers like you! Sign up at joppa.org to attend a VolunTOUR or email to learn more.

Email: volunteer@joppa.org

DONATE:

Provide survival items & Thriftmart goods:

- *Men's clothing*
- *Blankets, sleeping bags & pillows*
- *Coats, gloves, hand & foot warmers*
- *Backpacks & cases of bottled water*
- *Headlamps, AA & AAA batteries*
- *Pop-top canned goods & meats*
- *TP, paper towels & antibiotic cream*
- *Cleaners, laundry & dish soap*
- *Home goods & home décor*

BRING SUPPLIES TO JOPPA:

Monday – Saturday, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM
2326 Euclid Avenue, Des Moines
Or call (515) 288-5699, Ext. 3

Thank you for your generosity!

FROM THE HEART

"What I want for myself more than anything in the world is just to be a part of the world again. I want to feel loved. I want to be happy. I want to be able to go out and work an everyday job like I used to..." — Jenn Jass (see cover story)



2024 Joppa Annual Gala

Nearly 600 people attended our 16th annual fundraiser: The Joppa Annual Gala was held at the Hilton Cloud Ballroom in November. Previously called the “Down & Out Homeless Fundraiser,” this event helped raise awareness and financial support critical to our ability to help so many people survive and get off the streets each year.

Alan Graham, visionary and CEO of Community First! Village in Austin, Texas, was our special speaker. He highlighted the importance of their relationship with Joppa as a Replication Partner in building the Joppa Village in Des Moines.

“There have been about a thousand people that have come from around the United States to learn from us about building a village, and I will tell you 90% of them are “wanna-bes,” very few are “going-to-bes,” exclaimed Alan. “But I’m gonna tell you right now... the Joppa Village is a “going-to-be!”

LEFT COLUMN: PASTOR BRIAN BROWN, HOPE ELIM • JOHNNY & LEXI WITH JULIE & DOUG KLEIN, AMERICAN DREAM MACHINES • CARL & SUSAN VOSS

RIGHT COLUMN: TIM & FAITH STEVENS WITH JACKI & JOE STEVENS • ALAN GRAHAM, COMMUNITY FIRST! VILLAGE • CAROL VANKIRK HOLDS A HANDMADE TINY HOME



HOW WE DO IT

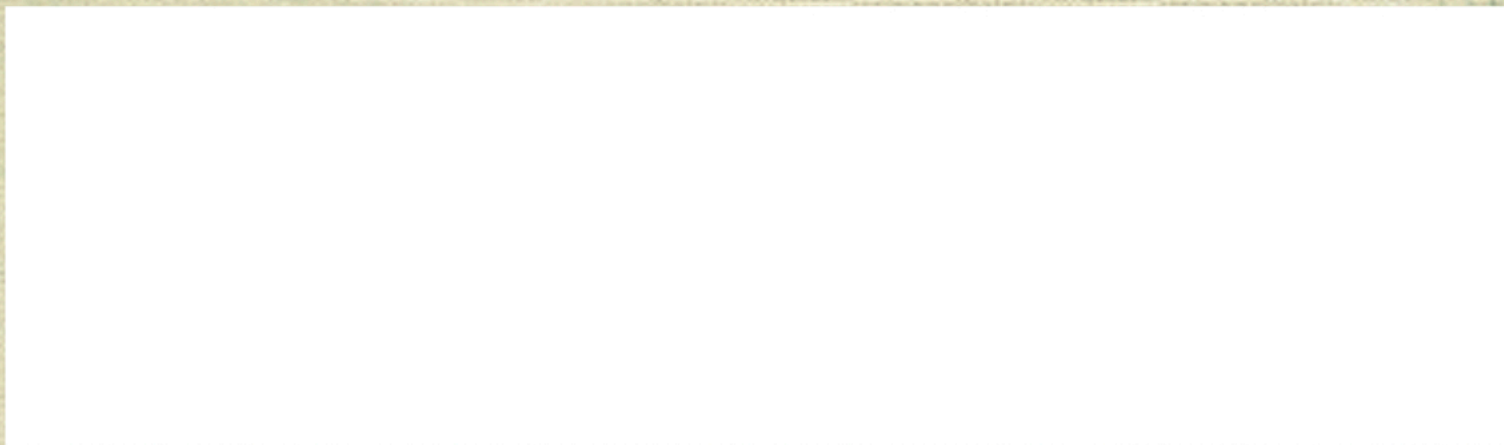
JOPPA ENGAGES THE COMMUNITY TO GIVE THEIR TIME, TREASURES AND TALENTS. WE WORK TOGETHER TO HELP PEOPLE ACCESS RESOURCES AND FILL GAPS IN HOMELESS SERVICES, HOUSING AND EDUCATION.



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INSIDE

Three Kids Gone: A Parent's Unthinkable Grief

Nearly 600 people attended the Joppa Annual Gala – See photos!



JOPPA.ORG

(515) 288-5699

EXPLORE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Attend a Joppa VolunTOUR

Overview | Tour | Q&A

Email: volunteer@joppa.org

VolunTOURs are a good way
to learn more about Joppa,
tour our facilities and find
your place to volunteer.

**Second Tuesday Each Month
6:00 – 7:30 PM at Joppa**

WHO PAID FOR THIS NEWSLETTER?

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