



2526 Broad Street
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37408
friendshelpingfriends.org

Jim Neutron
Assistant to the Chairman

McKee Foods Corporation
PO Box 750
Collegedale, TN 37315

Mr. Neutron,

On behalf of *Friends Helping Friends*, I am reaching out to invite McKee Foods to contribute to this year's fundraising efforts. Our goal is to reach a total of \$100,000 in corporate donations. Past contributions of McKee Foods have enabled us to help some remarkable individuals in our community. We are incredibly grateful for your support and are hopeful that you might be willing to join us on this next endeavor.

In Chattanooga, over 4,000 individuals experience homelessness each year in our city; each night, an estimated 600-700 individuals sleep outside or in shelters. The economic repercussions of COVID-19 have inevitably increased these numbers, which are only continuing to rise.

The Chattanooga Community Kitchen is one of the most well-known agencies that aid individuals experiencing homelessness. Although Friends Helping Friends is different in how our aide is distributed, we have modeled aspects of our agency from the Community Kitchen. When it comes to funding our agency, we look to similar nonprofits in the community doing similar outreach and the Community Kitchen is the number one contender. According to their 2019 annual report, they were able to give away more than \$300,000 in clothing to those in need, on top of serving over 175,000 meals.

We want to maintain realistic expectations of our capacity with aiding those experiencing homelessness. We are a much smaller organization and our monetary fundraising goals reflect this. It is extremely important to us to demonstrate financial transparency with our donors and to utilize funds received on the immediate, essential needs of our friends experiencing homelessness. Your donation will assist us in supplying food, clothing, sheltering materials, propane, blankets, and hygiene essentials to as many individuals as possible.

Over the last year, we have established and maintained a strong rapport with many of the individuals in our community experiencing homelessness. Babs, a 47-year-old woman, has been homeless in Chattanooga for a few months shy of 20 years. She was diagnosed with stage II breast cancer last year and has been receiving our assistance since we opened our doors in the fall of 2020. Last month, Babs celebrated her fourth year of sobriety and, through a referral made by Friends Helping Friends, is able to receive ongoing recovery support. Additionally, we have been able to build a reliable shelter for her, provide weather-appropriate clothing and supplies, and provide transportation to and from



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her radiation therapy appointments. She has also played an active role in referring many of her friends to us for support.

Johnny is a 28-year-old man who became homeless after not being able to find a job when he finished his Masters in Business Administration from UTC. He began drinking excessively as a result, and, because he lacked a stable support system, things quickly spiraled out of control. Shortly after connecting with Friends Helping Friends, Johnny was referred to a reputable in-patient rehabilitation program. Following completion of the program, Friends Helping Friends assisted Johnny in building a resume. From there, Johnny enrolled in interviewing classes and was able to eventually land a job working as a Team Lead at Walgreens. He is now on track to become the assistant store manager next year.

It is the powerful stories of individuals like Babs and Johnny that serve as a reminder of how important this work is. There are many others like them in Chattanooga; individuals experiencing significant hardship, who have been cast to the margins of society and made to feel insignificant, unloveable, and unworthy. Each story is different, but one truth remains evident: each person in our community is as deserving as any of us of support, of love, and of the chance to lead a fulfilling life. At Friends Helping Friends, it is our mission to ensure that the most vulnerable in our community are given this opportunity with an approach that reflects dignity, compassion, and understanding. We have the privilege of bringing this vision to life through meeting and assisting these exceptional individuals each day. With your assistance, we will be able to continue to do so for another year.

We know that at McKee Foods, you too cherish this community and share our values. We are grateful for your contribution thus far, and would be extremely grateful for your ongoing support. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Yates, BSW, Program Manager | Fundraising Chair

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