August 2024

DONOR Connection

PITTSBURGH MERCY
A HERITAGE OF HOPE

Operation Safety Net Stars in New Documentary

Pittsburgh Mercy's own **Dr. Jim Withers** and Operation Safety Net are about to hit the big screen in a new documentary by local filmmaker **Jeff Sewald**.
Titled *Go to the People*, the film shares the incredible story of how Dr. Withers started one of the first street medicine programs in the U.S.—from the late 1960s when he began serving homeless people in Pittsburgh, to founding Operation Safety Net under Pittsburgh Mercy, to then replicating the successful program on six other continents when he formed the Street Medicine Institute in 2008. For his incredible work, Dr. Withers was named as one of **CNN's Top 10 Heroes** in 2015.

Sewald shared the making of the documentary in an August 13 **Pittsburgh Post-Gazette** article. "I wanted to do a film about the movement, and that's exactly what [Dr. Withers] wanted to do, so we joined forces," Sewald said.

Beginning in 2016, he began researching Dr. Withers' story, with funding from numerous sources. Together, the pair traveled to places in the U.S., Europe, Africa, and India where Operation Safety Net has influenced street medicine programs.

Go to the People has been shown at 30 film festivals to date and won six awards, including an Award of Outstanding Excellence at the Documentaries Without Borders International Film Festival and an award for Best Feature Documentary at the Vegas Independent Film Awards. Earlier this month, the film had a free showing at the **Lindsay Theater and Cultural Center** in Sewickley.

Learn More About Operation Safety Net

Under Pittsburgh Mercy, **Operation Safety Net** now reaches thousands of people experiencing homelessness, including 1,575 in 2021. Today, Dr. Withers serves as Operation Safety Net's full-time medical director and as medical director of homeless services for Pittsburgh Mercy. Throughout the Pittsburgh area, staff members make 'home calls to meet people where they are'—in camps, under bridges, or in alleys.

Want to help with this important work? You can donate**here**. *Thank you!*

Making Smiles Brighter: New Partnership Bringing Much-Needed Dental Care

Caring for one's teeth is one of the many challenges for those experiencing homelessness. But it's critically important, since research shows a clear link between dental health and many chronic health problems, including diabetes and heart disease.

Good news: Pittsburgh Mercy has partnered with **Metro Community Health**, a local federally qualified health center (FQHC), to bring dental services to individuals experiencing homelessness. Metro's mobile unit is equipped to provide a full range of dental services. The unit made its first visit last week to the Reedsdale location that's serving as a temporary low-barrier shelter following the fire at Second Avenue Commons. All 10 appointments were filled, with more expected next month. Once Second Avenue Commons reopens, the mobile unit will visit on a regular basis.

Plans are also underway for Metro to offer dental care at our 905 Fifth Avenue Health Center location. With a full dental suite already in place at the Center, this partnership will allow us to greatly expand dental care to the homeless population on an ongoing basis.

“This is a much-needed service,” explains **Mike Turk**, Pittsburgh Mercy's VP for Community Wellness, “and we are very excited about this partnership with Metro Community Health.”

#ONEDAY Win for Pittsburgh Mercy

Thank you to all who supported us during The Pittsburgh Foundation’s 2024 #ONEDAY Critical Needs Alert! In less than 24 hours, nearly 50 donors gave **$13,638.75** to Pittsburgh Mercy’s homeless services—surpassing our $13,000 goal!

Support this year came from some of our closest friends, including the Sisters of Mercy and many new donors. Your generosity enables us to provide emergency shelter, medical care, housing assistance, and other services to those experiencing homelessness.

Miss this year’s #ONEDAY Critical Needs Alert? It’s never too late to help. Give to Pittsburgh Mercy anytime at this **link** on our website.

PITTSBURGH MERCY
A HERITAGE OF HOPE

Pittsburgh Mercy | 1200 Reedsdale St | Pittsburgh, PA 15233 US

Unsubscribe | Update Profile | Constant Contact Data Notice

Constant Contact

Try email marketing for free today!