



SME SHARE

Student Led Volunteer Organization

Dear SME Class of 1973,

Thank you so much for your generous donations to the SHARE program. We are very proud of our school's tradition of excellence in academics, athletics, the arts, and most importantly, service to our community. Clearly that tradition lives on in your class after 50 years.

Our student leaders (Execs) are so honored to have received \$2400 from your class and are excited to be able to use that money to buy supplies for Uplift (uplift.org), a mobile street outreach for the homeless of Kansas City. Uplift is 100% donation-based and completely run by volunteers, so every donation counts. In this case, we are able to make a huge impact.

Our SHARE Execs (i.e. student leaders) volunteered at Uplift in September, first sorting supplies in the warehouse and then going out in the mobile vans to distribute food and supplies. They were impacted by the different world they saw outside of northeast Johnson County and also surprised by the similarities they shared with the homeless people they met. It is not unusual to run across people their age and even SME alums on this trip.

As they went out in the vans, they were struck by some of the supplies that people asked for that they take for granted, like flashlights with batteries and water-proof shoes. It was hot the night they volunteered but they also wondered how people were going to survive during the upcoming fall and winter months as temperatures began to drop. We talked about these experiences and researched Uplift's Amazon wish list when deciding what to buy. The Execs wanted to make sure we bought several of each item, as they were disappointed when they ran out of items at the later stops. Here are a few of their comments about the experience:

"I found that having conversations with the people was the highlight of their day. I feel that being with the houseless people and just talking with them helped them to feel less dehumanized. Being kind is just as important as providing the things they need." - Millie

"I found that the conversations and interactions that I had with the people were enlightening and eye opening for me. I learned that these people have histories and stories that are worth being heard." - Ryan

"I am excited that we chose to give the money to Uplift. The population of the homeless in Kansas City is way higher than it should be and we need to do what we can to give some of what we have to them." - Laynie

“It was very eye opening to me to have been around so many houseless people. It was heartbreaking to not be able to give them something that they asked for. It will mean a lot to me and to them to be able to go back and to give them some of the things that they were asking for that we are able to purchase with the money donated by the class of 1973.” - Ginger

This week, we placed our order for 20 Coleman 4-person tents, 20 collapsible solar lanterns (no batteries required and easy to carry/pack), 10 pairs of waterproof shoes in a variety of sizes, and several pairs of long-johns in a variety of sizes. The items should arrive early next week and our Execs will deliver them to Uplift soon after. We are hoping to pair that delivery with another opportunity to volunteer in the Uplift warehouse.

Thank you again for showing your support for SHARE and for being excellent examples of what it means to be a Lancer.

Best wishes,

Erin Billingsley and Sheryl Kaplan, SHARE co-directors and
Ryan Dehan, Maddie Doyle, Blake Hanson, Nora Hill, Ginger Hawes, Laynie Manning, Grace Milroy, Katie Murphy, and Millie Norden, 2023-24 SHARE Execs