



AFTER A LIFETIME OF SERVICE, JAMES BEGINS AGAIN

At 17, James left high school and joined the U.S. Air Force, beginning a life of service that would eventually lead him to a long career caring for others. Decades later, at an age when most people expect stability and security, James found himself facing homelessness. During his four years in the Air Force, James served as a medic, an experience that shaped the course of his life. His military years included parachute jumps and more than a few close calls. During one jump, his parachute opened when he was just

200 feet from the ground. He also survived frightening incidents aboard military aircraft, including one flight when both engines failed. James had hoped to serve in Vietnam, but instead was assigned to a remote radar station in Northern California. The change in orders may have saved his life. His best friend, who had joined the Marines at the same time, was later killed in a military training accident. After leaving the Air Force, James built a successful career in healthcare. He earned a degree in radiology, oversaw radiology departments at three hospitals, returned to school for a nursing degree, and spent years working as a travel nurse along the East Coast. But life changed. After a divorce ended his 25-year marriage, James watched the financial security he had worked decades to build disappear. Eventually, he was living in a motel with his savings dwindling and no place to call home. James reached out to the VA and was connected with Rowan Helping Ministries. As one of the oldest Veterans we have ever served, he reflects a growing reality: older adults are one of the fastest-growing groups of people experiencing homelessness. Through our VA GPD program, James moved into Eagle’s Nest III, where he had a safe, stable place to live while planning his next chapter. His case manager, Pam, worked alongside him to identify his needs and find an apartment that was right for him. Today, James is settling into his new apartment. He is spending time helping his son as he recovers from cancer, working out at a local gym and focusing on his own health and fitness. After a lifetime spent serving his country, caring for patients and supporting others, James needed someone in his corner. Rowan Helping Ministries was there to help him move from homelessness back to a home of his own.



SELF-SHOP PANTRY: CHOICE ON THE SHELVES

For years, Rowan Helping Ministries had hoped to create a different kind of food pantry, one where neighbors could choose the foods that worked best for their households instead of receiving a prepacked box. We were preparing to make that change when the pandemic put those plans on hold. This year, we were finally able to make it happen. Our pantries transitioned to a self-shop pantry, giving neighbors the opportunity to walk through the pantry and select their own groceries. It may seem like a simple change, but it makes a real difference. Families can choose foods their children will eat, older adults can take home what makes sense for a smaller household, and neighbors can select items based on dietary needs, preferences, and what they already have at home. It also means less food goes to waste. When people are able to choose what they need and know they will use, the food we receive from our generous community can go even further. For a pantry that distributes nearly one million pounds of food each year, this was a big change and one we had looked forward to for a long time. We are grateful for our many volunteers who assisted with the transition and have taken on new roles in the pantry to make sure our shelves are stocked each day. We’re proud to finally give our neighbors something that matters when putting food on their tables: choice.



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OUR MISSION

Our mission is to serve, through cooperative community action, our neighbors in Rowan County who are in crisis, by providing essential life needs and educating and empowering them to break the cycle of crisis.

IMPACT REPORT

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JULY 01, 2025 - JUNE 30, 2026

- NOURISHED OUR COMMUNITY**
Jeannie's Kitchen served **95,474** hot meals so that no one had to face hunger alone.
- SHARED ABUNDANCE**
Our food pantries placed **743,583** pounds of food into the hands of **4,558** households.
- OFFERED REFUGE**
747 men, women, and children found safety, shelter, and compassionate care in our shelter.
- FED YOUNG MINDS**
We delivered **34,003** weekend food bags to students, ensuring no child went hungry when school was out.
- PROMOTED HEALTH AND HEALING**
321 unsheltered neighbors took **2,239** showers, **186** accessed primary care, **107** received mental health support, and **54** joined healing group counseling sessions.
- KEPT FAMILIES HOUSED**
We helped **1,045** households avoid eviction with **\$490,228** in financial assistance, while **104** guests transitioned from our shelter into permanent homes.
- BUILT BRIGHTER FUTURES**
520 guests strengthened their skills in classes on resume writing, financial management, and life planning.
- CELEBRATED VOLUNTEERS**
2,811 volunteers gave **43,808** hours of time and talent—service worth **\$1,386,096**—to lift up our neighbors in need.





Dear Friends,

This year reminded us of something we've known for a long time: when our neighbors need help, this community shows up.

As Rowan Helping Ministries celebrates our 40th anniversary, we find ourselves reflecting on the extraordinary community that has made four decades of service possible. Since our incorporation in 1986, thousands of volunteers, donors, churches, businesses, partners, and staff have joined together around a simple belief: our neighbors should not have to face crisis alone.

We saw that spirit throughout this past year, perhaps nowhere more clearly than after the fire at Wiley School Apartments displaced dozens of our neighbors. In the days and months that followed, our community came together to help families navigate the crisis and begin rebuilding their lives. It was a powerful example of the collaboration that has defined Rowan Helping Ministries for 40 years.

That same spirit is behind every accomplishment in this report. Every meal served, night of shelter offered, family kept in their home, and person connected with housing represents a neighbor whose life intersected with ours during a difficult moment, and a community that made that help possible.

As we celebrate where we've been, we're also looking ahead. Our commitment is to build on the past 40 years while responding to our community's changing needs, strengthening programs and partnerships, expanding pathways to housing and stability, and looking beyond the immediate crisis to what comes next.

Our vision for the future is the same one at the heart of our mission: a community where fewer neighbors face repeated crisis, and more have the opportunity to build stable, independent lives.

Thank you for being part of these first 40 years. We look forward to what we'll accomplish together in the years to come.

With gratitude,
The Rowan Helping Ministries Leadership Team

Thank you to our 2025-2026 Impact Report Sponsors:

DAVID B. JORDAN
LEI SYSTEMS
DR. & MRS. THOMAS CARLTON



FIRST HORIZON NEIGHBORHOOD: MAKING HOME POSSIBLE

A place to call home changes everything.

This year, Rowan Helping Ministries celebrated the groundbreaking of the First Horizon Neighborhood, the final phase of our Miracles on the Horizon Capital Campaign. This transformative project will add 10 units of permanent supportive housing to our campus, creating safe, affordable homes for individuals and families experiencing chronic homelessness.

For those who have spent months—or even years—moving between shelters, temporary housing, or life on the streets, permanent supportive housing offers far more than a place to live. It provides the stability needed to rebuild a life. Residents will pay rent based on their income while receiving access to ongoing case management, employment support, life skills education, healthcare, and other wraparound services that help them achieve lasting stability.

The groundbreaking also became an occasion to honor a remarkable legacy. In recognition of her decades of leadership and steadfast commitment to our mission, the development was officially named the Kyna S. Grubb First Horizon Neighborhood—a fitting tribute to a leader whose vision helped shape the future of Rowan Helping Ministries and expanded opportunities for our neighbors experiencing homelessness.

This project marks another meaningful step toward breaking the cycle of homelessness in our community. We are deeply grateful to the donors, partners, public agencies, churches, businesses, and community members whose generosity and collaboration made this vision possible.

Together, we are building more than housing. We are creating opportunities for individuals and families to find stability, regain independence, and build brighter futures.



GATHERING AT GOD'S TABLE

For many years, God's Table has drawn churches from across Rowan County to Rowan Helping Ministries each Sunday, a gathering of God's people to worship, break bread, and sit awhile with our neighbors in need. At its height, 52 congregations took part, each claiming a Sunday of their own to serve. Then the pandemic changed everything. One by one, churches stepped back, until only a single faithful congregation remained, quietly keeping the tradition alive.

This year, we have been working to rebuild God's Table, reaching out and inviting churches to once again take their place at it. That effort is bearing fruit, and it has encouraged our hearts. New congregations are stepping forward, old partners are coming home, and each one brings a genuine spirit of worship and a desire simply to be present with our neighbors. We know the people who walk through our doors carry more than a need for food or shelter. There is often a deeper hunger too, for prayer, fellowship, and someone to remind them they are seen and loved. Tending to the whole person, body and spirit, has always been part of our calling.

God's Table offers that connection and gives our churches a chance to live their faith beyond their own walls. As it grows again, we give thanks for an old tradition finding new life, and our community gathering once more around the table.

