
Homeless Services Advisory Committee Community Capacity Building Subcommittee

Date: May 11, 2023

Item: GP Care Packages and Blankets of Love Mayor's Fund Application

Staff Analysis:

The staff reviewed the proposal by GP Care Packages and Blankets of Love on April 24, 2023, by Eloise Parker.

GP Care Packages and Blankets of Love is a nonprofit organization started in 2014 by Eloise Parker. Formerly homeless herself, she, and some of her first donors/volunteers got together and remembered how it felt to live on the street and feel forgotten. That feeling helps mold the nonprofit's mission as they work under the guiding principle to be a blessing for anyone in need or homeless. Together they are a tight-knit family that looks to provide essentials and blankets to the unhoused in the City of Long Beach. For the past eight years, she has held an annual event two weeks before Christmas to hand out care packages and blankets to those in need. Within the last year, GP Care Packages and Blankets of Love have developed a growing group of volunteers and partnerships with other nonprofits in the area to donate and help pass out care packages to the unhoused every other month. Some of their events were able to help 300 individuals each.

The project proposal requests \$5,000, half to be issued in advance payment to fund the cost of the care packages. The care packages include a blanket, toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, razors, socks, beanies, soap, and gloves. They have recently added tennis shoes and a ten-dollar gift card to fast-food restaurants. The cost per care package is \$15-25 dollars. With this funding, they expect at least to provide 200 care packages for the unhoused. They focus on the unhoused individuals near 14th Street Park to provide these essential items.

This proposal aligns with the intent of the Mayor's Fund for Homeless Action as it provides services through a critical need for immediate shelter needs. City staff requested additional clarification from GP Care Packages and Blankets of Love, included below. Staff recommends approval for this funding application as it funds a grassroots organization looking to serve the unhoused in Long Beach by giving them essential items to weather the outdoors.

As of April 30, 2023, the Mayor's Fund for Homeless Action has a balance of \$130,956.60 with \$79,678.19 in available funds.

Clarifying Questions via E-mails and Phone Call:**1. Why did you decide to start a nonprofit? How did you realize this was the service you would like to provide? What is the intent of your organization?**

GP Care Packages and Blankets of Love started in 2014. The vision of GP Care Packages came from her own experience with homelessness. After stabilizing herself, she knew that it had been her goal to get together with other individuals with similar past experiences to bless those less fortunate. That has since grown, and she has worked with volunteers from all walks of life, working together like a tight-knit family to bring blessings to others.

Being homeless causes a lot of emotional turmoil, and she would like to help alleviate that, even for a few hours, by showing individuals that they are not forgotten. Everyone is important and God's people.

2. You started in 2014. What have you been doing since? Have you ever held events or worked with organizations to provide services?

Since 2014, GP Care Packages has held one annual event two weeks before Christmas. They make care packages to distribute at the 14th Street Park in Long Beach. In 2022 she was able to expand the dates of the care packages giveaways from annual to once every other month (6 times a year). They were able to give it to 300 people.

Additionally, last year GP Care Packages was able to work with Christian Outreach in Action, Strength Church of Lakewood, and the Church of Latter-Day Saints to have them participate in a couple of their event. Having those groups participate has allowed the nonprofit to include more items inside the care packages and use some of its funds to give out food gift cards.

3. When you hand out the care packages, is there anything else happening? Are you looking to connect them with services?

At this time, GP Care Packages can only provide care packages, but they have worked with other organizations to come pass out food. They would like to expand and provide different types of resources in the future.

4. The budget, do you have one? What have you spent in the past to have the event?

There is no official budget, over the past several years, they have been budgeting about \$4,000, and with that, they have reached 300-plus people. They hope to continue getting

more volunteers and donations to grow the reach to more individuals experiencing homelessness; until all people have a place to live.

Staff did clarify that the cost per bag was from \$15-\$25. GP Care Packages has agreed that at a minimum 200 bags should be distributed.

5. Please provide an itemized list of the gift bag.

- Blanket
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Deodorant
- Razors
- Socks
- Beanies
- Soap
- Gloves
- Food Gift card (\$10) to fast-food spots (i.e., McDonald's, Burger King)
- In the past couple of years, they have included new tennis shoes and tents for shelter as additional items depending on their budget.

6. What is the total cost per bag?

The cost does vary depending on whether it will include the \$10 gift card in each bag. However, the total cost per bag is between \$15 and \$ 25. They purchase in bulk.

7. Have you ever applied for any other grant?

No, this is Eloise's first time applying for any grant whatsoever, but she recently used Long Beach Gives to be part of their organization for fundraising for this year.

8. How did you hear about the Mayor's Fund?

She was made known of the Mayor's Fund through a prior Mayor's Fund Recipient and partner, Christian Outreach in Action.

9. Where else would you secure the funds if you were not to get funded?

If they could not secure the Mayor's Fund grant, they would not let that stop them from providing care packages to the less fortunate. They would continue to reach out to their friends, family members, and neighbors to ask them to donate. As well as other means, like fundraisers, additional grants, and go fund pages like the one they have now, <https://gofund.me/d8a7221a>.

For more information, they invite you to look at their website gpcarepackages.org, and you can look at our past events. They want to team up with the City of Long Beach and show the community they can achieve anything for our people and live together in unity.