

Lee’s Summit woman founds non-profit for “Hope & Help”

BY RUSS PULLEY  
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Giving Hope & Help is getting ready for its next event, delivering gift bags to cancer patients at KU Medical Center.

It’s a step in a big dream for founder Jessica McClellan, who plans to grow the organization to serve people by providing aid to domestic violence or natural disaster victims, education and helping cancer patients.

The fledgling non-profit is looking for donations, corporate sponsors and volunteers, she said.

On Valentine’s Day, she’ll deliver 50 “Love Bags 4 Cancer” to hospitalized patients who are being treated at the medical center.

The bags will have inspirational or useful items from toothbrushes, some patients need to switch toothbrushes daily, or bottles of hand sanitizer, McClellan said, or gifts like word search and Suduko books for entertainment. Bags also will include a small box of chocolates, notepad and journals and inspirational CDs “that would uplift their spirits.”

She’s been asking for more donations via Facebook and a website at: [www.givinghopeandhelp.com](http://www.givinghopeandhelp.com). Or call 816-607-1813 for more information. They’ll need donated items by Feb. 9, to allow time for making up the bags, she said.

McClellan, a Lee’s Summit resident for six years, said she founded Giving Hope & Healing in October of 2013. It started when MClellan, a couponer, realized she’d stockpiled more toiletries than he or her daughter could use. “I must have had a five-year supply,” she said. She thought about giving them to relatives, when the idea struck her.

She’d give them to Hope House. So she held an event for her birthday to collect even more and made a donation there in 2013.

In 2014 she had a drive in December to gather more of those items, doubling the amount collected the year before.

She said she wants the charity to provide aid to domestic violence or natural disaster victims, education and helping cancer patients.

She was first in her immediate college to graduate college, she has a master’s degree from Baker University, and realizes the challenges some youths face reaching that goal. She was a graduate of INROADS Kansas City, where she was an intern for St. Luke’s Hospital in Kansas City, which helped her get her start.

“I have always, since I was a little girl, had a heart to help other people,” McClellan said. “I finally accepted the call.”

She said her plan is to build the organization until she can come out of the corporate world. She’s a consultant who travels teaching clients how to use Cerner software, to be executive director of the charity.

The group is working on a Back to School event in July, for kindergarten to adult students who are leaving for college. While adult students may have scholarships to cover school, the foundation would provide other assistance, such as laptops or dorm furnishings.

She said she has registered the foundation with Missouri and in September filed application to become a 501© (3) organization. McClellan, executive director, said she’s looking for volunteers, such as accountants or lawyers to be additional board members or on an advisory board for the effort that is all volunteer for now.

Kimberly Phillips, a friend of 10 years and a board member said she thinks the organization is building a firm foundation. It’s gaining contributors and preparing for future events.

“I’m excited, we’re on track, and looking forward to greater things to come after this year,” Phillips said. “People want to help, they just need an opportunity.”

McClellan said the organization got a boost when she won a contest by Barclay Card Master Card “Be Your Possible” contest, which she entered, telling them about her ambition for Giving Hope & Help. She said she’d forgotten about entering, but then won a grant.

“I had to get busier and push for this thing,” McClellan said. “My goal is to write them and let them know what’s going on and that they planted their seed in good ground.”

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Jessica Mccallop-Mcclellan · Baker University

Thank you Lee’s Summit Journal-Russ Pulley. I appreciate this article. I am excited and feel happiest when I am helping others. Giving Hope & Help looks forward to serving our community and beyond. Together we can meet community needs and make a difference. Jessica McClellan Executive Director- CEO

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