

Charity Profile: Takin it to the Streets

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Name: Takin it to the Streets, Inc.

Location: 727 Flournoy Lucas Road, Shreveport.

Mission: To gather together local ministries and community resource agencies and provide information, provision, entertainment and also extend the invitation to discipleship by establishing a spiritual relationship in Christ.

Director: The Rev. R.A. Hampton.

Board of directors: The Rev. Terrance Trammell, Gwen Tennell, chef Ernest and Tina Marie Palmisano, the Rev. Jermaine Randall (resident agent Washington, D.C.), the Rev. John Shropshire (resident agent Maryland).

Signature event or fundraiser: Takin it to the Streets Community Outreach annual summer event is usually held in June or July. This year's event will be noon to 5 p.m. June 20 at Ernest Orleans "Orleans Field" annex, 1601 Spring St., Shreveport.

Fundraising is by free-will donations to P.O. Box 4007, Shreveport, 71134, from those that believe in our mission knowing that we are good stewards over the funds provided to us that help conduct our community outreach events and bring awareness to those not aware of resources that can help improve their living and spiritual condition.

To volunteer or donate: Go online to www.taketostreets.com.

The Times: How many other organizations are involved with Takin it to the Streets?

R.A. Hampton: In the Shreveport community, there are over 150 ministries and resource organizations that partner with us. In the Washington, D.C., and Maryland area, there are about 15 ministries and organizations that partner with us.

TT: What was your vision for Takin it to the Streets?

R.H.: To target the homeless, addicted and poverty-stricken population of our communities and provide a spiritual resource of hope and strength in a centralized location, partnering with ministries and resource agencies that provide for particular needs to bring those from poverty to promise.

TT: On average, how many people attend Takin it to the Streets each year? How much has it grown since the first year it started?

R.H.: Takin it to the Streets community outreach events serve over 3,000 community residents at our annual summer Shreveport event. The Washington, D.C., teams serve about 1,500 residents of Ward 7 in partnership with Upper Room Baptist Church, a historic church in the city as our host. We have also served in Baltimore, Maryland, Arlington and Alexandria, Virginia., Passaic, New Jersey, Garfield, New Jersey and District Heights, Maryland, to about 1,000 per event. In our seven-year existence we have served over 60,000 in 10 cities over four states.

TT: Are volunteers an important part of your mission?

R.H.: Volunteers are the backbone of our ministry. Without them, there would be no Takin it to the Streets. For people to take time from their busy schedules to help those that need it most is a tribute to the character of the citizens of Shreveport and the other areas we cover.

TT: What motivates you to do this?

R.H.: Love God, love people. I have had an interesting spiritual journey that has brought me to this special place in my life to be of service to those that, like me, have or are suffering and need or have a desire to feel God's presence in the midst of their circumstances and know that they have value and are loved in God's eyes.

TT: Is there something about Takin it to the Streets that people might not know?

R.H.: Takin it to the Streets is solely supported by the “free-will” donations of those that believe in what we’re doing. We have no corporate funding, we are all volunteer with no paid salaries. Each event is absolutely free of charge. No ID required, no proof of income, no proof of government assistance. We share God’s love to those that need most. We are not religious (in the legal sense), we are not judgmental and we are not churchy (in the ritualistic sense). We perform authentic ministry meeting people where they are and showing the love of Jesus in an “out of the box” style of ministry because we believe “we have to catch them before we clean them.”

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