

Compassion Coalition Furniture Ministry



Compassion Coalition's furniture ministry is an initiative that unites church teams and referring ministries, agencies, and case managers to collect and deliver quality, used furniture to those in crisis. Every Saturday morning families receive needed items from volunteer church teams, sometimes allowing a child to sleep in a bed for the first time in many days. The furniture ministry has been meeting a basic need of people in crisis since 2005.

Furniture Ministry Accomplishments:

- Hundreds of volunteers are mobilized and spend thousands of hours delivering quality furniture to hundreds of families and individuals in Knox County. Compassion Coalition organizes with churches and nonprofit organizations to make this ministry possible.
- Since the conception of the furniture ministry in 2003 significant increases have occurred each year in the number of furniture donations, volunteers, and families served.
- The furniture ministry meets the needs of furnishings for people referred by numerous Knoxville agencies including, but not limited to, Knox Area Rescue Ministry, Salvation Army, CAC's Homeward Bound, Helen Ross McNabb Path Program, and Peninsula Independent Living Program. These agencies address the issues of those affected by, or about to be affected by homelessness.
- The Community Action Committee's Homeward Bound program commented in a recent survey that Compassion Coalition's furniture ministry is vital to the success of the Homeward Bound Program. It is essential that people trying to rebuild their lives have not only a roof over their heads, but also the furnishings necessary for setting up their homes.

Volunteer opportunities and the **furniture ministry referral process** may be found on this web site.



Volunteer Opportunities Compassion Coalition Furniture Ministry

Mary lived alone, in an empty apartment. She is in her mid 70's and had no furniture except an old broken bed held up with cinder blocks. Imagine the joy of delivering her a bedroom suite, washer, dryer and refrigerator. The team who delivered to Mary picked up the used furniture from a family, and took it to her. She had been moved into subsidized housing and had no family to help her. Her bedroom suite was delivered in the evening and the other items taken to her early the next morning. She told the team she hadn't slept much during the night as she was so excited about her "new furniture," she had "never had anything so beautiful before".

Gerald, one of our drivers, has other stories to tell. There is Joe, a 6'2' man, who now sends Gerald Father's Day cards, because of the difference the driver has made in his life; and the three children who were frequently ill as they slept on the bare floor, because they had no beds.

The Furniture Ministry has many opportunities for volunteers to make a difference in the lives of others. You will be trained, supported, encouraged, and blessed by the opportunity to deliver furniture, pick up donations, return phone calls or help in the warehouse. Our current needs are listed below.

- **Individuals with trucks who are willing to help with the deliveries** - Please consider making this a part of your church's ministry to the community; 2 individuals with a truck make a team. Many churches provide 6-8 people with 3 or 4 trucks, but if your church can only provide one or two teams, that is certainly appreciated. You can choose to work as often as you are available. The donations are scheduled for Saturday mornings from 9:00 - 12:00. Some teams work monthly, some every other month, and others quarterly. It is important that there be 2 people in each truck to facilitate carrying the furniture. Teams often serve with men from other churches.
- **Individuals to work in the office** - We receive at least 20 to 30 calls per day from folks who need furniture and those who wish to donate. Office volunteers help take voice mail messages off the phone, read e-mails requesting furniture, and enter necessary data into the computer as well as other tasks that assist the Furniture Ministry Coordinator.
- **Donations of furniture** – We can arrange to pick up the furniture or to meet you at the Garage. The following items are essential to the continuation of this ministry: dressers, beds, chest of drawers, appliances, kitchen tables and chairs, and living room sofas and chairs.

For more information about any of these opportunities please contact our Furniture Ministry Coordinator, Charlotte Mack, at 251-1591 ext. 3 or charlotte@compassioncoalition.org.

*"No need to come to Calcutta. Start working in your country. Begin in your house, in your neighborhood, in your town, in your district. Discover the people in need."
Mother Teresa*

Referral Process Compassion Coalition Furniture Ministry

Who is eligible to receive furniture?

Any individual who lives in Knox County and is in need of furniture items and have no other resources to meet the need. The ministry is not designed to replace items, but to meet the needs of those who have no furniture. *Individuals can only receive furniture one time period except in cases with an extreme emergency such as a fire or robbery. All three steps in the referral process must be completed.*

How much furniture can a person receive?

An individual can receive two large items and two small items if needed.

Who can make referrals to the Furniture Ministry?

Any authorized individual from a church, organization, agency, or ministry. Potential recipients can not make the request.

How do I make a referral to the Furniture Ministry?

Step 1: The referring agency or church authorized representative must call and speak with the Furniture Ministry Coordinator (FMC) in order to start the process. The FMC will determine eligibility at this time.

Step 2: If the person being referred is determine eligible in step 1 the FMC will ask that the authorized representative complete the Referral/Intake Form. The form should be faxed, mailed, or emailed to:

Charlotte Mack
107 Westfield Dr.
Knoxville, TN, 37919
Fax 865-588-2876
charlotte@compassioncoalition.org

Step 3: When step 2 is complete the FMC will contact the client to make arrangements for pick up or delivery of furniture.

Saturday Morning Furniture Ministry Procedure

- Warehouse hours are from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m.
- Teams should come equipped to serve with trucks and/or trailers. Large trucks are especially helpful.
- Teams gather by 8:45 a.m. at the Furniture Warehouse at 733 N. Hall of Fame Drive Knoxville, TN 37917.

- Compassion Coalition staff or a designated volunteer must speak to furniture recipients before we make a delivery. At that time, we will confirm that they will be home for the delivery.
- Teams will be given the information regarding the deliveries to be made, or the donations to be picked up that day. If it is a furniture delivery, the men serving together will find the items approved for delivery and load their truck.
- Teams picking up donations should not accept furniture that is in such poor condition that they could not, in good conscience, deliver it to someone's home. Teams should not feel obligated to pick up unusable items. (Compassion Coalition ultimately has to pay to have such objects removed from our warehouse.)
- Before leaving the warehouse the teams gather together for prayer. They pray for safety, for the families they are delivering furniture to, and that they will be ambassadors of Christ to the families they encounter.
- Teams take a Bible to each of the families and are urged to pray with the families before they leave the home. With every encounter, volunteers are encouraged to be prayerful, warm, caring, interested, and uplifting. Some teams, when asked about their faith in Jesus, gently share the gospel. Be prayerful about this opportunity and respond as God leads. Be careful, though, to never be pushy, rude, or overpowering with your faith. Simple kindness and gentle words go a long way.
- Individuals who have gone through the intake process and have transportation can come and pick up their items. Compassion Coalition staff and volunteers greet them, verify the items they have requested, and help them find furniture that will work for them.
- Individuals who drop by, requesting furniture, that have not completed the intake process will be given instruction on what steps to take to receive furniture.