

Pastor's Notes: The RISE UP Cooperative - Part 2 of 2

February 21, 2021

On Feb. 5, 2021, I interviewed Sandy Pricer, Basilica parishioner and President/Co-founder of the RISE UP Cooperative, a social service initiative that I am supporting as a board member, to help at-risk teens and young adults gain life skills. I shared the first part of my interview in the Feb. 14 pastor's notes. The conclusion of our interview is presented here.

Fr. Carter: What is your vision for the next five years, and what impact do you hope to have?

Sandy Pricer: It starts off with me, but other people join on. I would really love when we have a location to make it a drop-in center, to have people available when teens are. Because everyone's schedule is different. They might not be able to make it to a workshop, but they can drop in and get some one-on-one, like a teen mentor program. Transitional living has a huge deficit in our city. As the kids transition out of foster care, there are programs available, but they're for the most part left on their own and, again, lacking some of these things that they haven't gotten that that RISE UP is striving to incorporate, but they haven't gotten it yet. To be able to help in that arena, so that they don't become homeless, because around 50% of teens become emancipated from foster care end up homeless.... The transitional living programs here in town are working to prevent that from happening, but they need more hands, and they need more programs, aiding in that. I would love to be able to help in that. We also have a RISE UP adventures and center program, that as soon as we can get in person, I want to take advantage of, with places like Lookout Conservatory. And there's another one. They do a lot of free outdoor things for kids, and the outdoors is so healing and helpful. They come to workshops. To be able to go rock climb, to be able to go canoeing with a group and do things that they maybe wouldn't otherwise be able to do.

Fr. Carter: Awesome. If somebody's listening to this interview, what action can they take to assist your work? How can people get involved to support your work?

Sandy Pricer: With our workshops on Tuesday evenings, we've been blessed to be able to have a different leader from the community, every single week, come and present those. I'm always looking for people that have a passion in helping teens. In their job or career, if they have a niche that they are really passionate about, come lead one of these workshops right now. Additionally, financial contributions to help these upcoming programs that I mentioned, to help us rent or buy a place to be able to meet these teens in person. Because everything that we do is free. And again, once we get in person where we will offer snacks and different things like that. And of course, that costs money on our end.

Our parent workshops, too, I'm super excited about. The first one is on February 15. The parents can't help their kids if they're struggling with things themselves. The first one is on Internet safety, because that's a huge one. There are so many things out there that can hurt them on the internet. And so many times parents have no idea how to protect their kids. We have a former police chief coming in who is an internationally renowned speaker to speak on this topic for us in February. Each month we're going to offer a parent workshop so that we can help parents help their teens, making that cycle better.

Fr. Carter: There are some awesome things that you have cooking with this RISE UP Cooperative. If you're looking for more information, it's riseupcooperative.org, a very well-done website. If you can donate, I'm sure that would be a great help to the work of the RISE UP Cooperative. And it can tell you how exactly you can help and be involved, more information about who you serve, what motivates you, and then you can stay up to date with the blog. I am just very impressed by the work that you all do, happy to highlight it here in the in the parish, impart ways that our parishioners can get involved in the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, and to know that we're all in this together and each one of us has a part to play in in the common good.... Thank you for all you're doing. Keep inspiring so many more of our young people to RISE UP and to grasp life and all that's out there for us!

The full video and transcript of the interview are available on the Basilica's website, along with the pastor's notes for Feb. 14 and Feb. 21, 2021.

In this Year of St. Joseph, Pope Francis has granted a plenary indulgence to those who fulfill a work of mercy in the spirit of St. Joseph. Those who work in the field of helping others to better themselves, so that they can feed, clothe, and shelter themselves, as well as those who support this work financially, are performing these works of mercy. I am happy to encourage this good work of the RISE UP Cooperative!

Rev. Fr. David Carter