

Philadelphia Family Church helps serve and fed over 300 homeless people

Shota Iwasaki
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More than 500,000 Americans are homeless. In the city of Philadelphia alone, over 5,000 people do not have stable housing. In partnership with an organization called SPEAK (Staying Positive Equals Amazing Kids), six Unificationists of the Philadelphia Family Church served and fed over 300 homeless men and women for the 2017 Helping Hands Volunteer Project on the morning of November 12.

The previous day, the city of Philadelphia activated Code Blue for the weekend, providing resources and housing for the homeless due to frigid weather. Housing was available for only 4,000 people, however, leaving 1,000 people remaining on the streets.

SPEAK founder Jeff Templeton created the Helping Hands Project in 2009. On the second November of every year, community members gather outside of city hall to provide for individuals and families in need. Jeff hopes that the Helping Hands project will put names and faces to the homeless so that children will better understand the issue. He is optimistic that children who participate in Helping Hands will learn to approach others with compassion and understanding.

Local Unificationists decided to join Jeff in his efforts create a safer and better community after meeting him at [last month's American Leadership Conference in Philadelphia](#). Upon learning about SPEAK's Helping Hands project, Unificationist Pastor Shota Iwasaki was inspired to actively help those in need. Soon, Pastor Shota would find five others to go to city hall on a cold Sunday morning. With each service they provided, they practiced a heart of giving and understanding for those who are most in need in their community.

“God tried to show me that homeless people went through deep challenges in their lives,” said Pastor Shota on his experience. “I need to treat them as respected fellow human beings, and love them as my brothers and my sisters.”



The family church of Philadelphia plans to continue working with Jeff on future projects.

Find out more about SPEAK by visiting their website at www.phillyspeak.org.

