



WE ARE A
MATTHEW 25 PRESBYTERY

Actively Engaged in the World

I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I
was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked
and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took
care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.

Did you know that Medical debt is the leading cause of bankruptcy in the U.S.?

More than 1 in 3 Americans struggle to afford the cost of their medical care. In 2020, collection agencies held \$140 billion in unpaid medical debts. Such debts can be financially devastating to households that are already struggling, leaving them unable to secure housing, reliable transportation, or other daily necessities.

The Mission Committee of Blackhawk Presbytery and the Matthew 25 Task Force invite you to join with us in a spring campaign to eliminate medical debt . We are actively engaged in working toward the three main goals of Matthew 25: **building congregational vitality**, **dismantling structural racism**, and **eradicating systemic poverty**.

Many of our congregations are doing very well with building congregational vitality and many are working diligently to address the problems of racism. But many of us have been challenged by the call to address systemic poverty. We know that mission and charity work, such as food pantries and free meals, are good and beneficial in the short term, but do little to get at the root causes of poverty. In our research about poverty, we learned about **RIP Medical Debt**, a national nonprofit whose purpose is to abolish financially burdensome medical debt around the United States.

On April 18, we will kick off our 90-day campaign to raise \$15,000 in Blackhawk Presbytery to go toward medical debt relief.

This amount will wipe out \$1,500,000 in debt!

As much as possible, we will target debt in our region.

Won't you join with us?

Here's how to participate:

- **Meet with your congregation's leaders and determine your goal.**
- **Let the Blackhawk Mission Committee know your goal/pledge.**
- **Publicize the campaign in your church.**
- **Send your contribution to Blackhawk Presbytery with the memo "RIP."**

See the reverse side of this page for more on RIP and ways to raise funds!



What does RIP do?

One dollar donated to RIP erases an average of \$100 of medical debt. Prior to RIP's purchase, many of these bills passed through months or years of collection. Once RIP owns the debt, they notify the thousands of individuals whose debts were purchased that they are free of any obligation to pay and RIP will remove any negative credit marks associated with the debt.

Qualifications for RIP debt relief:

-People earning two times or below the federal poverty level.

-Those whose debt is five percent or more of their gross annual income.

Since inception, RIP has raised enough money to abolish over \$5.6 billion of medical debt for over 3.1 million families. To learn more or ask any questions, visit the website at

RIPmedicaldebt.org



Here are some ways you might raise funds in your congregation and community:

- Race for Change: Invite groups in your congregation to decorate cans or jars to collect loose change each week. Line up the containers and move them forward along a track based on how much money is given each week. At the end of the race, announce the winner and award them a certificate.
- Invite groups who gather in your church building to contribute.
- Buy a box of assorted size bandaids and “sell” bandaids for a donation. The bigger the donation, the bigger the bandaid.
- Hold a Facebook challenge. Invite members to create videos, photos or other images that reflect your church’s commitment to mission, and let viewers “vote” with their contributions.
- Share the info in your weekly worship, and ask Session to approve a special offering.
- Hold a talent show and take donations as “admission.”
- Provide paper plates and craft materials to make hats. Hold a contest to vote with donations for the best hat, most creative hat, funniest hat. If you’re brave enough, model the hats and post pictures on social media!

**Share your efforts with us via email:
office@blackhawkpresbytery.org**