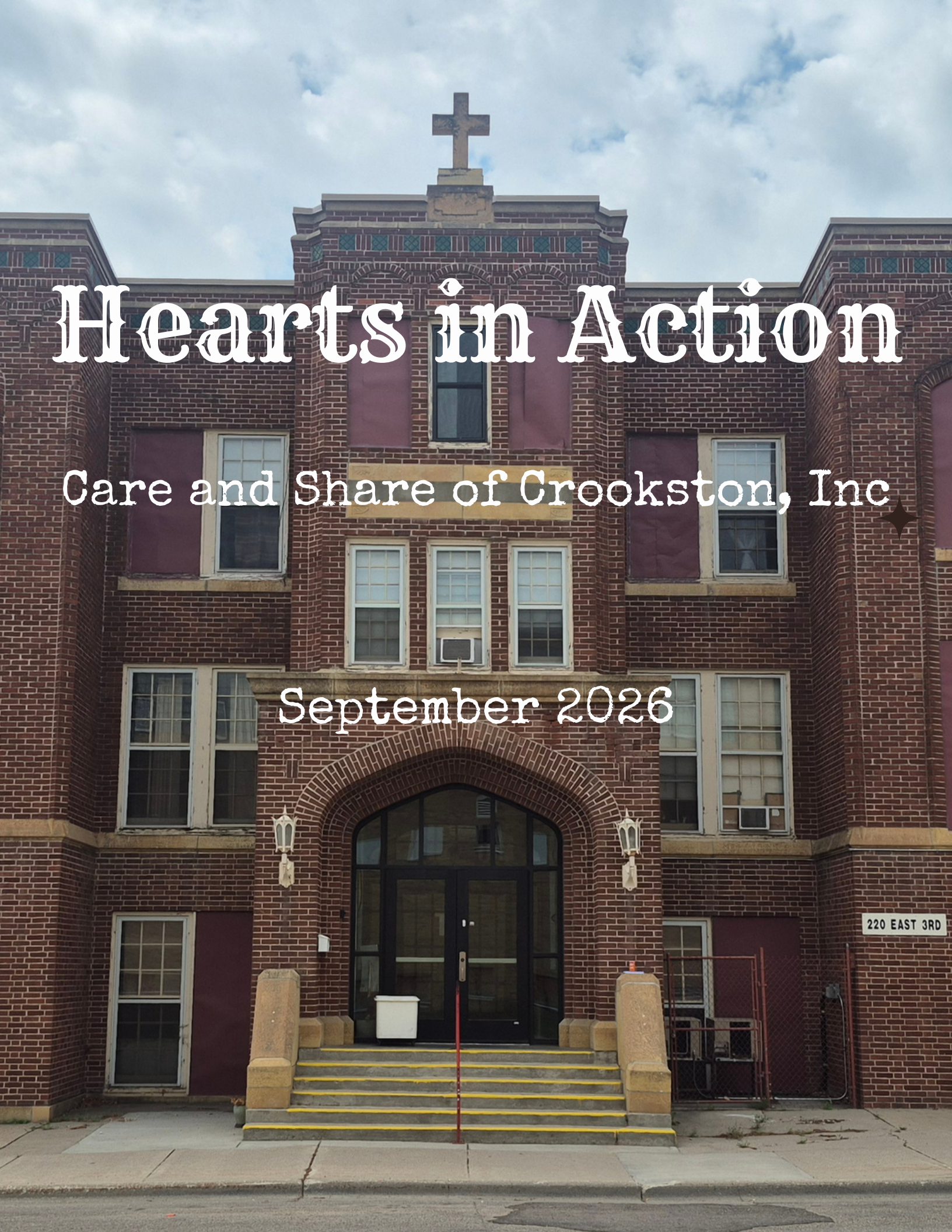




Hearts in Action

Care and Share of Crookston, Inc

September 2026

220 EAST 3RD

Executive Director's Memo

HOMELESSNESS: A CRISIS THAT CALLS FOR COMPASSION

Homelessness remains one of the most urgent challenges facing communities across America. The latest HUD data found that 745,652 people experienced homelessness on a single night in January 2025, including more than 266,000 people living without shelter. While this represented a decline from the record-high 2024 count, the numbers remain deeply concerning.

At the same time, communities across the country continue to debate and enact restrictions on public sleeping and camping. Following the 2024 Supreme Court decision in *City of Grants Pass v. Johnson*, governments have greater authority to enforce certain public-camping restrictions. This raises an important question: What happens when someone has nowhere else to go?

Punishment alone cannot create affordable housing, provide a meal, or address the circumstances that pushed someone into homelessness. The crisis is also closely connected to food insecurity. The latest USDA figures show that 13.7% of U.S. households, 18.3 million households, experienced food insecurity in 2024, while 7.2 million households experienced the more severe condition of very low food security. This is why shelters matter. A shelter is more than a bed. It can provide warmth, meals, safety, showers, supportive services, connections to housing, and a place to regain stability and hope. For someone experiencing a crisis, that support can be the first step toward a safer and more secure future.

And shelters cannot do this work alone. They are strengthened by their communities. Volunteers, donors, churches, businesses, food drives, clothing drives, local organizations, and neighbors who simply choose to care all play an important role. Every donated meal, every warm blanket, every hour volunteered, and every dollar given can make a difference.

We are grateful for the people in our communities who continue to stand beside those experiencing homelessness, not with judgment, but with compassion and dignity. Change begins when we stop seeing homelessness as someone else's problem and start seeing unhoused people as our neighbors.

Our goal should not simply be to make homelessness less visible. Our goal should be to help people move from crisis toward stability, safety, and a place they can call home. "A strong community is not defined by how it treats those who have everything, but by how it cares for those who are struggling to find their way home."

With Gratitude-
Carolina Diaz

LIVED EXPERIENCE

story



Aaron has a different kind of story that has led him to where he is today. Aaron was working, renting a house, and living what we would think to be a “normal” life here in Crookston. Aaron is originally from Mississippi. He was previously

incarcerated and before he was released, he arranged a job, housing, and parole in Crookston. He had 3 major deaths in his family in just a month. Crazy how life just happens. He spoke with his job and explained the situation, and they agreed to let Aaron take a leave of absence and attend the funerals. Once he attended the funerals and came back he returned to work he was told “We aren’t as busy now and have no work. We will call you when we get busy again.” Without a job he lost the house he was renting and became homeless. He stayed in a hotel as long as he could but money runs out fast. He was staying in his car for a bit to try and get by. He continued to look for jobs but it’s hard to find work in a small town. He heard about the Care & Share from a previous client here. He called, made an appointment, and came to check in. Aaron says he feels more hopeful, safe, not discriminated against, supported, and confident to continue his job hunt. He is grateful for the shelter, meals, and friendly staff at the Care & Share. “Those that walk together stay together, those who walk apart fall apart. LIFE.”

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