



GOD'S MOVING CREW

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Think about the last time you moved, and my guess is that it doesn't conjure up fond memories. Most people don't like to even think about moving, never mind the actual moving process.

If you moved to Lindsborg, Kansas, you'd find a group of people who would gladly give up their Saturday morning just to help with your move. They'll show up when you want them to, work as long as you need, and bring their own vehicles to assist with your

loading, moving, and unloading.

The moving crew of the Lindsborg Evangelical Church has been moving people in our community for more than ten years. This ministry started out as a way to help church members who were without family members nearby. Brad Beckman, the church's part-time administrator, has run the moving crew since 2000.

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impact this ministry has on the people we move. But we know it eases their burden in a time of need."

Brad gets calls monthly from people in the community wanting to know if the moving crew is available. The ministry averages about eleven moves a year. One year the crew helped out on seventeen different moves. "Last December we moved two different families into three different places on the same day, with seven inches of snow on the ground," he says. "That was an amazing day."

When someone calls, Brad gets as much information as he can. He starts out with a “pre-move evaluation”—visiting the home to see what needs to be moved, determining how many guys he will need for the job, and how long the move will take.

“The prep work is needed so we can keep people busy from the time they arrive until the time they leave. I always estimate the job as taking longer than it actually will—that way it looks like we worked really hard, and got done early,” Brad says with a smile, adding that “most of the time we really do work hard.”

Once the move has been evaluated, Brad sends out the call for workers. Walking through our church on a Sunday morning, you will know if the moving crew is being mobilized. “Moving Crew Alert” posters are everywhere. Brad brings in his sense of humor by using catch slogans, funny themes, and national news topics to describe the moving crew event and recruit workers.

Thanks to Brad’s organization, each move is a success. His ability to predict “how long” and “how many” has streamlined the moving process to the point that workers know exactly when they’ll be done.

“My strategy is to keep them moving from the moment they arrive until they finish with the last piece of furniture. The last thing you want on a move is to have guys standing around—time is precious, and men are happiest when they are getting things done,” Brad points out.

Most of the long moves are followed with some type of meal. “You could say we follow the biblical model of fellowshiping with the breaking of bread, even if it’s sandwiches or sloppy Joes,” says Brad. “This is a good closing activity for the crew and those people we have just moved. Our work is done, so we celebrate by sharing food and drink together.”

The sharing of food and drink does

not signify the end of the project for Brad; he still has work to do. He usually spends a few hours afterwards writing up the “Moving Crew Report,” which lists everyone who helped out (each person is given a humorous nickname) and recounts any funny incidents that occurred during the move. The report is posted at church the following Sunday.

“The main thing is that everyone who helped can see his name in print,” says Brad. “Most of the discussion during the fellowship coffee time is focused on the moving crew event the previous week.”

Brad’s thank you is posted in places that can be seen by all that attend worship on Sunday morning. This is

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his way of thanking those who gave time and effort to help others. But the important thing is reminiscing about a job well done together. This recognition and the conversation that follows on Sunday morning build relationships among men in our church.

The ministry of the moving crew runs deeper than just helping people move from point A to point B. There is something about helping others that restores our own spirit. I guess I consider it a blessing from the Holy Spirit for doing God’s work. Kind of like having the batteries of your soul recharged for free. But in addition to the personal blessings you receive when helping others, there are a number of residual blessings that this ministry seems to spin off while helping those in need.

“I believe dynamic ministry occurs when everyone involved in that ministry is blessed,” says Brad. “The moving crew meets that criteria, from those individuals who we are moving, to those who are actually doing the moving, to

those who cook the food to serve those moving and being moved, everyone is blessed by this ministry!”

One of the many blessings of being involved in the moving crew is that it helps the men involved find a place of ministry and build relationships. Not all of us can sing, teach Bible classes, or tend kids in the nursery—the moving crew gives people a place to plug-in.

“One of my goals is that the men who help out with the moving crew ministry will get to know others in a non-threatening environment outside the church and become more comfortable inside our church body,” says Brad.

There is not a better way to get to know others than to work side-by-

side accomplishing a task that all can be proud of. Believe me, if you help three guys named Ed, Craig, and Steve carry an upright piano out of a basement on Saturday, you will not have trouble remembering their names on Sunday morning. You have a bond with them, and it starts in your lower back and reaches all the way to your neck. The war wounds are the first thing they will mention when they see you come in the doors on Sunday morning. (They will also point you in the direction of the community chiropractor that also attends your church.)

An additional blessing that has developed out of this ministry is the fellowship between generations of men who help with various moves. We have a number of senior men who regularly show up to help with this ministry. Even though they can no longer lift the

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piano up the stairs, they gladly haul boxes and light furniture. These older men bring life experiences, a willingness to share time and talent, and the model of their godly lives to share with the younger men in the ministry. Many of the moves boast a number of father-son teams as well. What better way to share a day together than serve others selflessly? Talk about a way of teaching Christ-like servanthood to the younger generation.

Well, there you have it in a nutshell. What started as a few guys finding a few hours to serve those who needed help, has developed into a local church ministry that involves approximately sixty-five men for as many as four to six hours a month. They come with trucks, trailers, packing materials, and a willingness to help. They leave with the blessings of church fellowship, a revived spirit, and the acknowledgment of a job well done.

As our interview for this article closed, Brad started his recruiting pitch: "We have a move coming up early next month," he said with a smile. I already have it written on my calendar to help out. And my guess is my eleven-year-old son, Seth, will want to help out as well. His specialty is moving boxes, some of the lighter stuff. The first time I asked Seth to help out, I nearly had to drag him along, but that was before he had experienced working with the moving crew. Traveling home from his first experience on the crew he shared his feelings. "I just feel good, Dad. That was hard work, but boy was it fun" he said, with a huge smile on his face. "When is the next move?"

You see, he feels that same blessing; that same joy I feel when I work with the moving crew. Sharing quality time with my son and our heavenly Father, while helping others when they really need a hand. What could be better? So, what are you doing next Saturday morning? Brad Beckman may be looking for another strong back. □