

DON'T CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROBLEM

Many of us feel compelled to help those who are, seemingly, helpless. However, in many cases, those who solicit are not homeless, or without help, but rather, taking advantage of what can be an easy way to support the need for drugs and alcohol. More disturbing are those who actually travel into the area regularly because it has proven to be financially rewarding. These, so called, "professional" panhandlers will not continue if their requests are regularly rebuffed. While it is understandable to feel a moral dilemma when approached for money, IT IS OK TO SAY NO. When asked for money, politely decline and offer the information card attached to this brochure which directs the individual to service providers for those who are truly in need.

YOU CAN EFFECT "THE ART OF CHANGE"

Throughout the downtown, riverfront and north shore areas are specially re-designed parking meters where you can "give your change" to "make a change". The meters are enhanced to make them a colorful and fun addition to the landscape but whose purpose serves a serious and important issue. The business community has partnered with the City of Chattanooga to support the program and those whose names you find on the meters have already made a financial commitment to the donor agencies.

MORE THAN MEALS...



All of the proceeds from the Art of Change meters and sponsorships go directly to agencies which provide services for those in need.

Chattanooga is fortunate to have several agencies with an exclusive mission of offering help to the most vulnerable of our citizens. Of course, food is a fundamental need and in a typical year over 120,000 meals are served. But, additionally, these agencies can be counted on for job and life skills training, shelter and healthcare.

You can be sure that, when you give through the Art of Change meters, it will be used for programs that provide help in productive and positive ways.



THE Art OF Change

Put your change where it can make one.

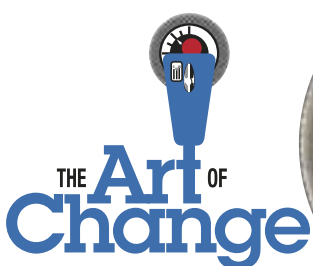
PANHANDLING has become a chronic problem in our community, particularly in the popular downtown, riverfront and north shore districts. The call for a solution has demanded a creative and positive response.

The Art of Change is a program of the City of Chattanooga specifically designed to address the panhandling issue. Throughout the most affected areas, special "parking meters" will be available to deposit the change you might ordinarily give directly to a panhandler. In most cases, our well-intentioned donation further enables and encourages a dangerous lifestyle.

Depositing your spare change into the special "Art of Change" meters provides a better way to help. All of the proceeds will be given to agencies that provide comprehensive services for those who are truly in need.



- 1 HOMELESS HEALTH CARE**
717 E. 11TH ST. 37403
265-5708
 - 2 INTERFAITH HOMELESS NETWORK** (homeless families only)
711 E. 11TH ST. 37403
756-3891
 - 3 CHATTANOOGA COMMUNITY KITCHEN**
727 E. 11TH ST. 37403
756-4222
 - 4 SALVATION ARMY**
800 McCallie Ave. 37403
756-1023
- UNITED WAY
dial 211



a program of the
CITY OF CHATTANOOGA
City Hall
101 East 11th Street
Chattanooga, TN 37402
423.425.6415





DID YOU KNOW?

- *Panhandling is prohibited in certain areas by the Chattanooga City Code. Panhandling is defined as: “any solicitation made in person requesting immediate donation of money...”*
- *By contributing to panhandlers, we perpetuate an activity that has become profitable for, in some cases, “professional” panhandlers. At best, giving to panhandlers enables individuals to continue in a dangerous and difficult lifestyle.*
- *Downtown and North Shore businesses report that aggressive panhandling has become a significant problem and is detrimental to the enjoyment and sense of safety for their customers while shopping, dining or conducting business.*
- *Not all panhandlers are homeless, and certainly not all homeless persons are panhandlers.*

For more information about The Art of Change, visit www.chattanooga.gov.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CITIZENS OF CHATTANOOGA REGARDING PANHANDLING

Serving a community which is envied and regularly visited by other community leaders is a privilege and provides many opportunities to discuss common issues and problems. Panhandling is one of the issues with which most successful urban communities must deal. Those discussions have led me to know that there are common threads regarding panhandling that all communities share while the solutions must address the uniqueness of our individual cities. The Art of Change is an initiative to address Chattanooga’s experience with panhandling. I encourage you to take some time to understand the underlying facts as we all work to deal with this problem.

Who are the panhandlers? It is very important to note that not all panhandlers are homeless, and certainly not all homeless individuals are panhandlers. Local law enforcement tells us that there are “professional” panhandlers who will move around to the most lucrative areas, sometimes with stories of “bad luck” which they use repeatedly to much financial success. We also know that many panhandlers are not, in fact, using the money for food - but instead for drugs and alcohol. In fact, there are plenty of services available in Chattanooga to aid those who are truly in need.

Why don’t the police just arrest them? Panhandling is prohibited by City Code only in certain areas of the downtown and riverfront areas. However, in order for Police to cite a person to court, they must either see the offense or the citizen must wait for police to arrive and be willing to issue a complaint. That requires going to court – time and inconvenience that most of us are not willing to commit.

What is the solution? Putting a stop to panhandling will require a total community effort: citizens, law enforcement and government. The first and most important deterrent is for all citizens to pledge not to give money to panhandlers. Of course, we all feel compelled to help those in need but there is a better way. The City of Chattanooga is launching a program, “The Art of Change” which will provide special “parking meters” throughout the downtown, riverfront and north shore areas for each of us to place our spare change. If each citizen would give through The Art of Change, instead of directly to panhandlers, our collective efforts will have a greater impact. Please join me in supporting this program as we continue our efforts to make Chattanooga the best that it can be.

Sincerely,

Mayor Ron Littlefield

