

Topeka JUMP works to help people with mental health issues

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TOPEKA (KSNT) – Topeka JUMP is holding a community event meant to raise awareness about people suffering from mental illness.

The non-profit's name stands for justice, unity and ministry project. It met with 31 other faith groups at Washburn University's Lee Arena on Monday, along with Topeka Mayor Mike Padilla and a representative of Valeo Mental Health to talk about housing solutions for people in the community suffering from mental illnesses.

"We are all here in one building, in one room, for the same causes, that is just amazing," Michelle Montgomery, Asbury Mount St. Olive UMC, said.

Montgomery attended the event along with other members of her church. Topeka JUMP and its community partners are pushing for beds to be made available at Valeo.

"For more beds for seriously mentally ill patients in Topeka who may not want treatment," Anton Ahrens, Co-Chair of Topeka JUMP, said. "And we are hoping that Valeo responds positively to that request."

"After those officials tell us 'yes' they will continue to work on this issues and be proponents for the suggestions we have for them tonight, then we will continue to meet with them, as we have, for years," Anton said.

Seeing the mayor at Monday night's event was reassuring and, for Montgomery, the effort is personal as she's just wanting what's best for her neighbors, she said.

"We are supposed to help those and do things in social justice, it's important for me to see that happen," Montgomery said. "I want to see things go well for people in Topeka."

Topeka JUMP targets a different issue in the community every year, hoping to gradually bring meaningful changes to the capital city.

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