



S.O.U.L. Center for  
Urban Chaplaincy  
2024 Urban Leadership  
Conference



# From Trust to Transformation: Bridging Community and Holistic Care for Human Flourishing

*How spiritual care and  
neighborhood health  
navigators can promote  
human flourishing  
through trust-building.*

## Welcome!

### OBJECTIVES

- **Begin a conversation** on the power of collaboration between neighbors, chaplains and community health leaders to address challenges and create lasting change.
- **Experience HOPE** that individuals in high-poverty neighborhoods can take responsibility and action in building community and internal resources.
- **Leave with an IDEA** that can help move the needle on social determinants and neighborhood health.

Comments: **Jenny Ismert**, CEO United Healthcare

The Story of a Neighborhood Leader: **Shannon Sadowski**

The Story of a Neighborhood: **Mary Flin**

Q&A



**Mary Flin, MAT, BECC,  
SEC Candidate  
SOUL Director**



**Shannon Sadowski, AABA  
Neighborhood Health Navigator**



**Dr. Robin LaBarbera, PhD  
Independent Program  
Evaluator**



**Lucia Herrera-Jones  
Associate Director of  
SDOH Strategies  
United Healthcare**



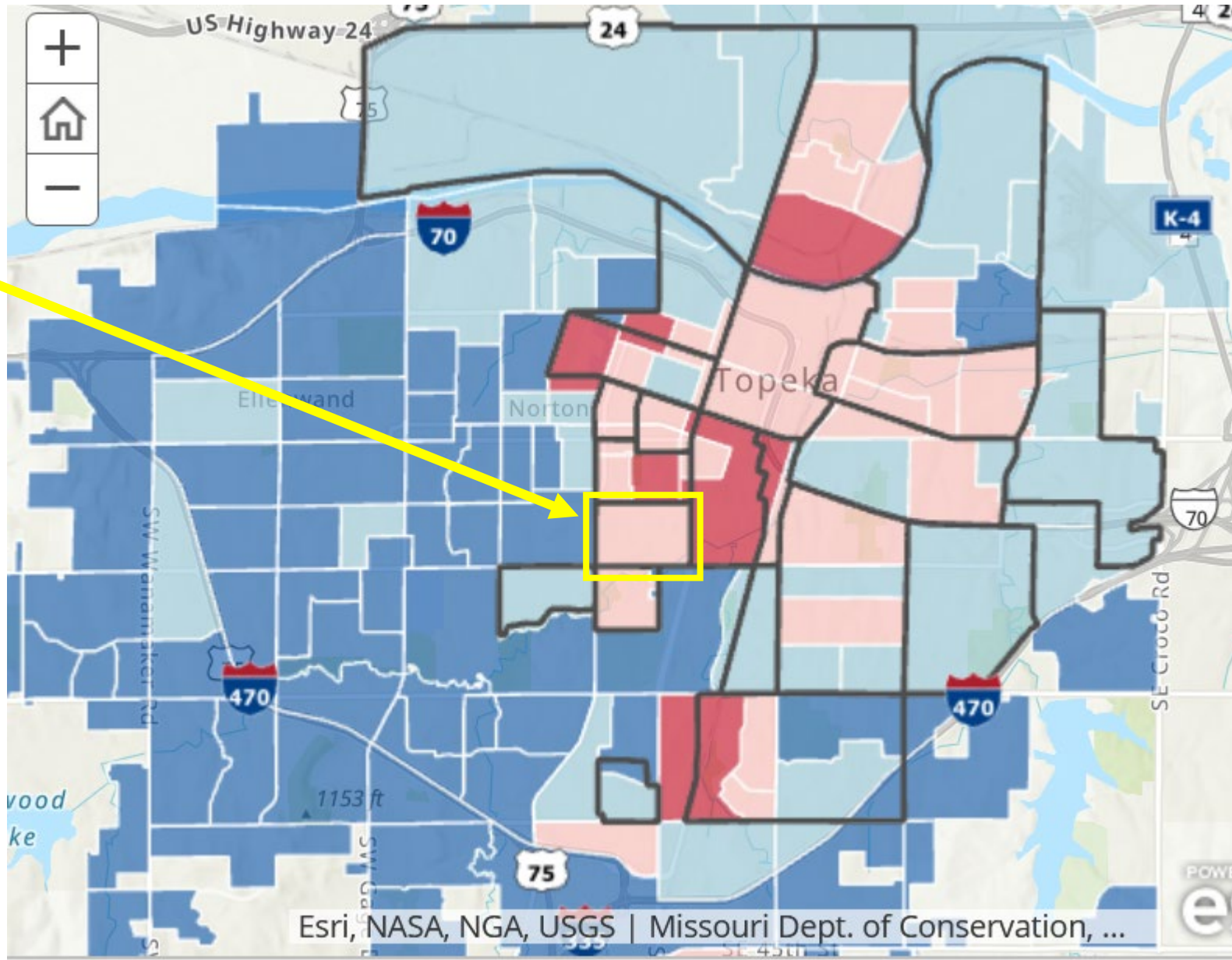


**Shannon Sadowski, AABA  
Neighborhood Health  
Navigator**

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<https://budget.topeka.org/apps/topeka-neighborhood-health-maps/explore>, accessed 10.3.2025











# Effect of Spirituality on Health – Importance of Meeting Spiritual Needs in Healthcare

Depression reduced 61%  
81% reported positive relationship  
with Optimism

Suicide: 75% experienced negative  
attitudes about suicide and less  
thoughts and ideation

Immunity: 56% improvement in  
Immunity and 74% in endocrine  
functions

Cardiovascular: 57% reduction in high  
blood pressure; 63 improvement in  
cardiovascular function and 63%  
reduction in coronary artery disease

Alcohol use and abuse: 86% reduction  
in alcohol use, abuse and dependence  
and 84% reduction in drug addiction  
behavior

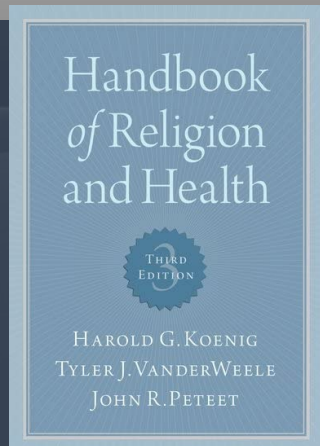
Anxiety and PTSD sx's: 49% decrease in  
anxiety  
93% positive relationship with  
Meaning and Purpose

Koenig HG. Religion, spirituality, and  
health: the research and clinical  
implications. ISRN Psychiatry. 2012  
Dec 16;2012:278730. doi:  
10.5402/2012/278730. PMID:  
23762764; PMCID: PMC3671693.  
Accessed 10.2.2025

Well-being and  
happiness:  
79% increase;  
73% experienced  
Hope

Impact on social network: 82%  
increase in connections with people in  
an effective, social network (We are  
seeing this in neighborhood  
community building and chaplaincy)

Dr.  
Harold  
Koenig



# What if...

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...every neighborhood had a chaplain who served alongside their urban church by practicing the Presence of God in the challenging spaces outside the doors?

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NEIGHBOR NIGHT









### **Chaplain House Ethics**

We take care of this property  
and each other.

We practice the ancient Salt  
Covenant of Peace.

We acknowledge human dignity  
and do good to one another.

We do not do harm to one  
another.

Together, we work toward justice  
and peace in our neighborhood.

We work to restore relationships.

We eat together in peace.

We consider that true peace is  
only found in Christ.

Chaplain Mary Flin  
maryflin@tumbletopeka.org ~ 785-431-6000



### **SOUL/Central Park**

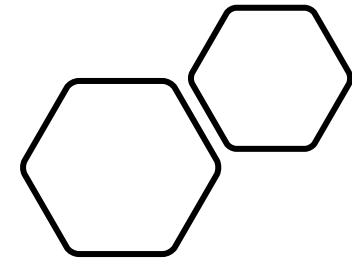
Shannon Sadowski, Community Health Navigator  
Shannonsadowski@tumbletopeka.org  
785-800-0169

The Topeka Seminary of Urban Leadership's (SOUL) Center for Urban Chaplaincy is partnering with Topeka's Central Park neighborhood to assist neighbors in addressing healthcare needs through a holistic model of physical, mental and spiritual care. This initiative was funded by a community grant from UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Kansas, as part of ongoing work to address community health needs through whole-person care.

As a first initiative of the partnership, the new SOUL Community Health Navigator is working with neighbors to achieve physical and mental health stability embedded in a model of neighborhood chaplaincy based on listening, equipping and serving. SOUL's Center for Urban Chaplaincy and Central Park neighbors will explore the impact of spiritual care and targeted health initiatives on social determinants and community wellbeing.

This two-year pilot program is designed to provide a model that neighborhood organizations can use to empower self-care and internal resource-building in the community and is part of ongoing investments from UnitedHealthcare to advance health equity in Kansas.









50 – 100 at the table each week

Shannon's work expanding – more than 50 persons served

21 Collaborators

8 Chaplain Interns throughout the city

2026 – Capacity building



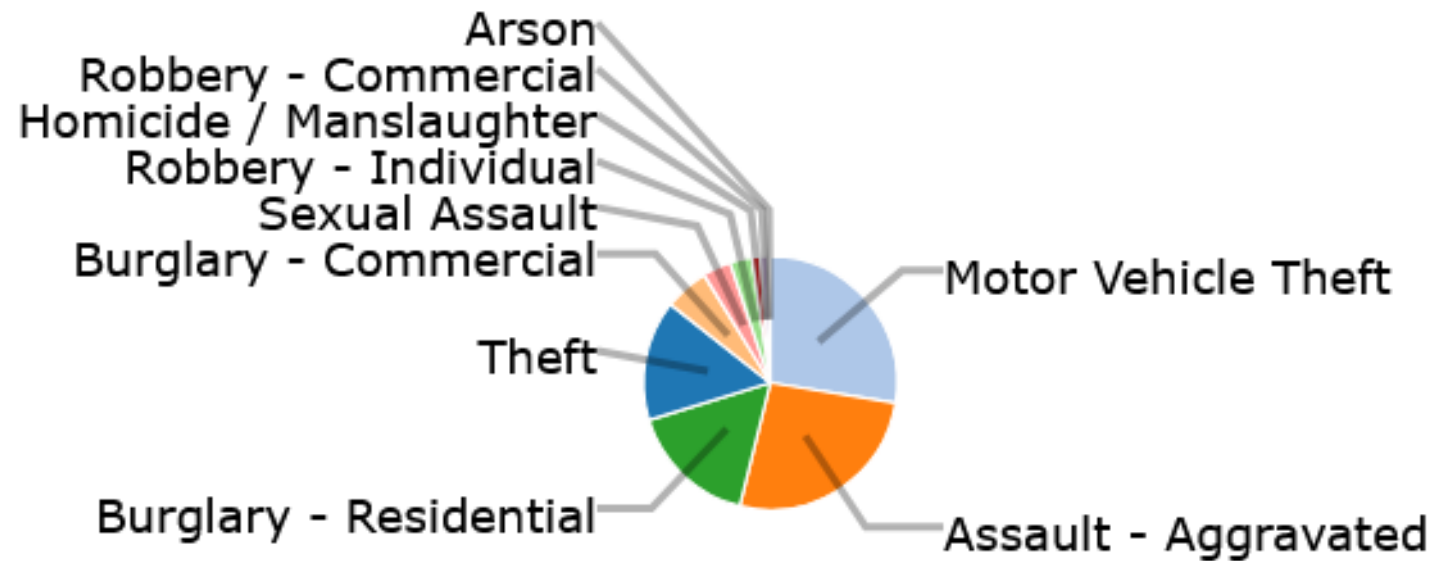
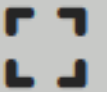
*“Flourishing goes far beyond meeting basic needs; it’s rooted in belonging, trust, and the healing power of caring community. I am honored to document this important work, which shows how social bonds and compassionate support are the foundation for hope, resilience, and real human flourishing, even in the hardest places.”*

**Dr. Robin LaBarbera, PhD**  
**Independent Program Evaluator**  
**LaBarbera Solutions**



CRIME CLASS: 01/01/2023 - 12/31/2023

 [Chart Properties](#)



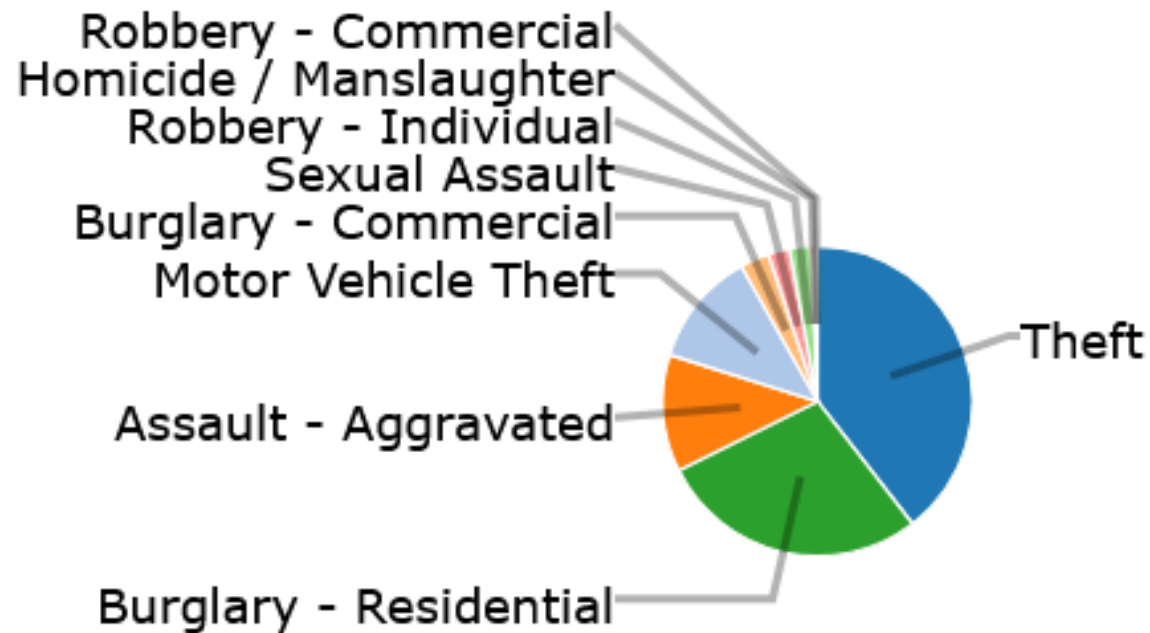
CRIME BY DAY OF WEEK AND HOUR: 01/01/2023 - 12/31/2023

 [Chart Properties](#)



CRIME CLASS: 09/30/2004 - 09/30/2025

 [Chart Properties](#)



CRIME BY DAY OF WEEK AND HOUR: 09/30/2004 - 09/30/2025

 [Chart Properties](#)



CRIME	2023	September 2024- September 2025
Theft	81	191
Aggravated Burglary	85	141
Aggravated Assault	127	61
Sexual Assault	19	11
Robbery, Individual	15	11
Homicide/Manslaughter	6	2
Motor Vehicle Theft	140	60

Central Park is becoming known for Trying.

Compiled From: <https://communitycrimemap.com/analytic>, Accessed 9.2025









**Deacon Brian**





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## So....

Did we meet our OBJECTIVES?

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- Understand that spiritual Distress is a root of social determinants.
- See spiritual care as a necessary resource.
- Make Human Flourishing is the basket we're shooting for.
- Identify people who are invested.
- Train competent spiritual care providers.
- Strategically choose and place subject matter experts.
- Build collaborations.
- Invest funds in human capital.
- Model our efforts in community, trust and spirituality.

To learn how you or your church can impact high poverty neighbors through neighborhood chaplains, contact Mary at:

Seminary of Urban Leadership ~ Center for Urban Chaplaincy

[maryflin@tumitopeka.org](mailto:maryflin@tumitopeka.org) ~ 785-431-6000

Facebook: Central Park Family Dinner Time

To learn more about what it's like to be a Neighborhood Health Navigator, contact Shannon at [shannonsadowski@tumitopeka.org](mailto:shannonsadowski@tumitopeka.org)

**To get started:**

**Invite Neighbors, especially  
hungry ones, to Dinner 😊**

