



A Note from Terri

Dear Christian Neighbors Family,

As the season of love and gratitude approaches, we find ourselves reflecting on the incredible journey we've shared together. This Valentine's Day, we want to express our deepest appreciation to each and every one of you who has stood by our side, supporting Christian Neighbors mission to provide Food, Emergency Rent & Utility help and Stabilizing Education to some of our most vulnerable neighbors.

Your dedication and generosity have been the driving force behind every success story, every life changed, and every community uplifted. Like Cupid's arrow, your compassion has struck the hearts of those in need, filling bellies, preventing homelessness and providing life-changing education. One reality that sets us apart from other nonprofits is that over 85% of our resources comes from private donations. Your faithfulness and support not only provide hope to those we serve but inspire us to seek continuous improvements in all of our programs of service.

As we express our gratitude, we also want to use this newsletter to share some of the amazing stories and milestones made possible by your support. We invite you to join us in spreading the word about the mission of Christian Neighbors. **Share your own stories, experiences, and the reasons why you support our mission on social media, using the hashtag #helpinghearts.** It is your love that fuels our passion and determination to continue making a difference. Together, let's create a wave of love and awareness that reaches every corner of our community.

Once again, thank you for being the heart of Christian Neighbors. May this Valentine's Day be filled with the warmth and joy that your support has brought to so many lives.



Terri Shaler
Executive Director

Meet Amelia

See what the help from Christian Neighbors means to Amelia, a single grandmother raising her 4 grandchildren all by herself.

Christian Neighbors

Dec. 18th 23

Once again thank you for helping our family through another Christmas, and finding the special people to adopt our family.

Thank-you for all you do to help our family all year long Helping with utility bills as well as the food pantry.









Thank-you for making it possible for these kids to have a very nice Christmas Day.



Merry Christmas

Sharing a Snapshot of Impact from 2023

Every February we like to share the impact of our services from the previous year. Each piece of our ministry, from case management, financial assistance, and providing monthly food visits, could not have been done without the prayers and support of our volunteers, donors, collaborative partners, and staff. Thank you.

Utility Assistance	\$41,348.00	
Housing Assistance	\$44,833.00	
Medical Expenses	\$366.61	
Total Emergency Financial Assistance	\$86,547.61	
Veterans/Seniors Served	23*/351*	
Unhoused Populations	92*	
Value of Donated Food to Christian Neighbors	\$122,577.00	
Total # of Individuals served among 749 households	2069*	
Total Food Pantry Visits	2282*	

* Unduplicated, means each individual and household is counted once regardless of how many times service were received in the time period.



**Harding's
in
Plainwell**

**Friday, March 22, 10:00am - 6:00pm
Saturday, March 23, 10:00am - 6:00pm**

We appreciate your help in stocking the food pantry shelves.

Canned Fruit & Vegetables

Canned Tomato Products

Hamburger Helper

Pancake Mix & Syrup

Box Pasta/Spaghetti

100% Fruit Juice - 64oz.

Boxed Instant Potatoes

Ramen Noodles Oatmeal

Canned Pasta Canned Beans

Cereal Crackers

Muffin Mix Spaghetti Sauce

If you would like to volunteer at this event, please contact Amy at avanputten@christianneighbors.org.

Mobile Food Drive-Thru

WHEN: Monday, February 12, 2024*
11:00AM-12:00PM (or until we run out)

WHERE: Hope Lutheran Church
290 12th Street, Plainwell MI 49080
(ENTER from 103rd Avenue, and EXIT onto 12th Street)

ALL ARE WELCOME, NO COST
NO ID OR ADDITIONAL PAPERWORK REQUIRED

CHOOSE FROM A LIST OF PERISHABLE AND
NON-PERISHABLE ITEMS TO TAKE HOME.

*2nd Monday of the Month (February-December).

This event is in partnership with Christian Neighbors, Hope Lutheran Church, and Feeding America - Grand Rapids.

Special Thanks to the Volunteers from **Home Depot** for helping in January, and braving the cold.



Future Volunteer Groups helping:
February - Meijer Employees
March - Otsego United Methodist Church
April - First Baptist Church - Otsego
May - The Living Well Church - Kalamazoo
June - Home Depot Employees

* December is still available for a group to sign up and volunteer. Contact Eric at 269.685.4166, ext 100.

Saturday, May 11, 2024



**LETTER CARRIERS'
FOOD DRIVE**

SECOND SATURDAY IN MAY

PUT YOUR NON-PERISHABLE DONATION IN A BAG BY YOUR MAILBOX.
WE'LL DELIVER IT TO A LOCAL FOOD BANK.



Please participate in the 32nd Annual Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive by placing your non-perishable donation in a bag by your mailbox. All items collected in Plainwell & Otsego will be delivered to Christian Neighbors.

Volunteer Opportunities at Christian Neighbors

Basic Computer Skills Instructor

We are in need of volunteers to help teach basic computer skills classes in the computer lab at our new Education Resource Center. Some of the topics/skills we offer are setting up and using email, safely navigating the internet, basic social media and saving documents.

We are looking for volunteers to help share these and other skills or ideas you may have. You would be asked to teach 2-3 classes per year.

Dinner Auction Volunteers

Our annual fundraiser auction event is always held on the 2nd Thursday in May. We need volunteers to help gather donations from local businesses and then assemble them into packages and baskets. We also need volunteers to help at the event itself.

Senior Program Volunteers

Our senior citizen program is designed to help seniors live active lifestyles, stay safe and independent in their homes, and have access to resources. One of the classes we need help teaching is Matter of Balance, which teaches about avoiding falls, recognizing scams, and learning other independent living skills. Would you like to help senior citizens in your local community?

Casual Volunteers

We have various events and tasks throughout the year that require many hands. Some of these would be stuff the bus and other food drives, folding newsletters, poverty simulations, kitchen volunteers and much more. You will be put on an email list and notified when events are taking place.



Contact Us

If interested in volunteering, please call 269.685.4166, ext. 100, or email us at: volunteer@christianneighbors.org.

Save the Dates

Cook Now - Serve Later

Tuesday, February 20 at 11:00am

Work with Dyer, owner/caterer of River Road Foods in Plainwell, to create a family meal to take home and safely serve later. River Road Foods offers lunch, dinner, and tasty desserts to go.



Register by **February 12** by contacting Sharon Carper at 269.685.4166 ext 107 or email at scarper@christianneighbors.org.

15th Annual Reflection of Hope Dinner & Auctions
Thursday, May 9th, 2024
The Silo, Allegan

For more event details, to sponsor or donate to, contact Eric at 269.685.4166 Ext. 100 or email at ehoffman@christianneighbors.org.

Need a Notary?



Need a notary? Christian Neighbors will have a notary available at the Education Resource Center on Mondays from 10-12. If you need to make an appointment at another time, please contact Shannon at 269-685-4166, ext 106 or email her at szabaldo@christianneighbors.org.



Christian Neighbors SE
 282 12th Street
 Correspond to:
 PO Box 53
 Plainwell, Michigan
 49080

P 269-685-4166

www.christianneighbors.org
 info@christianneighbors.org

Our Mission

The mission of Christian Neighbors is to provide local families in need with Food, Emergency Financial Assistance and skill building Education to create self-sufficiency.

*"Together we are Neighbors
 Caring for Neighbors"*

Experiencing the NEW ERC!



Cooking with Chef Tom Rose, from Four Roses Café, December 13, 2023, participants pictured above left. Picture above right, participants in an introductory computer class.

Special Thanks



Special thanks to our AWESOME volunteers from Parker-Hannifin, who came to stuff, fold, and sort our November and February newsletters.

2024 Soup Suppers

Wednesday, March 6, 2024

First Congregational Church - Otsego
 120 West Morrell Street, Otsego
 5pm-7pm

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Otsego United Methodist Church
 223 East Allegan Street, Otsego
 5pm-7pm

Wednesday, April 10, 2024

Hope Lutheran Church
 290 12th Street, Plainwell
 5pm-7pm

TACO Tuesday, April 16, 2024

Friendship Wesleyan
 1285 102nd Ave, Plainwell
 5pm-7pm

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Martin/Shelbyville United Methodist Churches
 969 East Allegan Street, Martin
 4:30pm-7pm

For more information, visit:
 www.christianneighbors.org.



We are so blessed to have the Meijer Simply Give Campaign once again supporting Christian Neighbors. We are able to use these cards to help purchase larger volumes of food items to help stock our shelves. We appreciate your help so much through purchasing these cards near the registers at our local Plainwell Meijer.

The Winter Simply Give Campaign runs from: Sunday, December 31, 2023 - Saturday, March 30, 2024.

During the campaign, the Double Match Day opportunities will be held on Saturdays, March 2 and March 23, 2024.

For every \$10 Simply Give card purchased on these Double Match Days, Meijer will provide an additional contribution of \$20, bringing the total to \$30 for a single customer purchase.

If you cannot make it to Meijer for either of the special Double Match Days, you can mail or drop off your donation to Christian Neighbors, and we will be happy to take it to the store for you.

Please note on the memo line or piece of paper that it is for Meijer Simply Give.

Memorial Tributes for 2023

<i>In Memory of</i>			
	Dick Dunn	Kathy Misner	Ruth Ann Myers
Albert Dale Sparks	Don Aukerman	Ken Doctor	Ryan Meert
Alva Burleigh	Don Burd	Kenneth Laverack	Sally Krohn
Andrew Porritt	Don Cook	Kira Hensley	Sandy Mac Vean
Andy Kawakami	Don Snyder	Lana Mason	Sharon Doelker's Brothers & Sisters
Andy Porritt	Donald Moore	Larry Elgersma	Stanley McNees
Ann & Jay Wolbert	Donna Lampros	Larry Nitz	Steve Kantz
Arlene Newton	Dorothy Dockweiler	Laura Deerwester	Taylor Glessner
Aunt Mona Erickson	Dorothy Gregory	Lenae Jean Clinton	Terri Austin
Barb Fox	Dot & Gene Watson	Lillian & Eugene Haranda	Terri Lynne Moses
Barbara Koster	Dr. Jim Sell	Lori Benedict-Kirshman	Terry Brenner
Betty Reenders	Dr. Kenley Burkhardt	Lottie & Deborah Koster	Terry Steele
Betty Tishhouse	Edward A Rohr	Lydia Fish	Thomas Hill
Beulah Pallett	Eileen Graham	Mable Storms	Tim Daniels
Bill & Angie Thompson	Elizabeth McPherson	Marion Lyon	Tom Laws
Bill & Flora Moore	Elmer & Dorothy Dockweiler	Marjorie Kauffman (Klaiber)	Tom Somers
Bill Bibart	Gary Melvin	Marshall Howrigan	Tom Whittington
Bill Crane	Gerald Gernaat	Martha Jean Phelps	Tracy Boynton
Bill Vance	Glenn Gregory	Mary Howrigan	Tyler Johnson
Bob & Carol Meles	Gloria Deal	Mary Quick	Valory (Fox, Jackson) Havens
Bob Bailey	Gordon Rantz	Maurine Williams	Walt Boettcher
Bob Dalton	Guyton Ray	Max & Rowena Loebel	Willa Dendle
Bob Daniels	Harold & Mary Beth Garman	Mike Herbert	Willie Doezema
Bob LaDuke	Herb Howell	Mike McFanin's Birthday	
Bob Miles	Howard Curtiss	Milton & Glenna Burkett	
Bob White	Howard Norton	Mona Erickson	
Bonnie Mattison	Hugh Myers (OHS Class of 1961)	Nancy Jackson	
Brenda Powers	Jack Hawley	Nancy Lyons	
Bruce Binns	Jana Tibbitts	Paul & Karen Thayer	
Carol Seiter	Janessa Thomas	Paul Hazekamp	
Charlotte Boylan	Jay Franklin Smith	Ray Koch	
Cheryl Moerdyk	Jeff Farnsworth	Ray Winkel	
Chris Cooper	Jenny Pillars	Rebecca Galloway	
Chuck Moore	Jeri Beiner	Richard B. Post	
Connie Adams	Jerry Howrigan (OHS Class of 1961)	Richard Doorlag	
Curtis Holden	Jill Farnsworth	Richard Wheatley	
Cyndi Trobeck	Jock Pirrone	Robert (Bob) DePauw	
Dale Bush	Joe Flegal	Robert H. Brown	
Dale Lynn Smith	John & Mildred Doelker	Robert J. Holland	
Dale Rounds	John Flatt	Robert Kennicott	
Daniel Agy Sr.	Joy Bassett	Robert Scherzer	
David Hartig	Judy Meyer (OHS Class of 1961)	Roger Krahn	
Deborah Dockweiler	June Boekeloo	Ron "Nick" Cary	
Delores Cook	June Thompson	Ron McFanin's Birthday	
Dick & Eleanor Wood	Kathie Johnson	Ruby Hyde	

*In Honor Tributes are
listed on the back side of the
Memorials.*



Honorary Tributes for 2023

All those who need food!	Janet Benson's Birthday	Lynea Hartig	Roger & Mary File Family
Antoon & Lieve Brusselmans	Jason Smith - PATH Walk	Maggie Binns	Susan Prillie
Brenda Parton's Birthday	Jim & Luann LaRoy	Marjorie Otto	Wedding of Brad & Rose Ann Deneau
Diana Gilmer's Birthday	Jolene Minor's Birthday	MaryIn Langeance	The Squires Family
Dorothy Irving	Kandie Wood	Pr. Paul & Beth Laborde	Wedding of Jim & Michelle Raich
Dyer at River Road Foods, Plainwell	Ken & Chris Anson	Pr. Steve & Peggy Bauman	Tom & Betsy Judge
Gwen Holden-Norton and her 92nd Birthday	Kerry & Barbara Smalla	Plainwell Middle School Staff	Tom Gilmer's Birthday
Jane Adams	Laurie Krahn	Rich Campbell	VanderBorgh Children & Grandchildren

Happenings at the Educational Resource Center (ERC)

Energy Savings Classes

In 2023, Christian Neighbors helped local families, senior citizens, and veterans with \$41,348 in utility assistance alone.

Our new Education Resource Center is here to help our clients to lessen the burden of energy costs on their household budget. We will be holding several Energy Savings classes throughout the year, that are designed to educate home owners (especially mobile home residents) on how they can save energy. At the end of the class, participants will be given an energy kit (\$60 value) to take home and start instituting changes in their home.

Some of the items in the kit include a programmable thermostat, window insulation kits, draft protectors, LED light bulbs, and power strips.



New Skills in Demo Kitchen

New skills are being learned and new relationships formed in the CN Demo Kitchen.

The first educational class of 2024 had participants working to make a healthy meal recipe for sampling, then assembled ingredients to make that recipe for themselves at home (participants pictured lower right).

Participants in a February 20 class, will cook a meal with **River Road Foods owner Dyer**, then safely package it to enjoy later.

On March 28, class members will work with **Plainwell Community School's Food Service Director, Michael Ritsema**, to efficiently – and safely – cut apart a whole chicken to use in multiple recipes. (Watch our Facebook page for program details.)

Each educational class helps participants develop basic cooking and meal preparation skills to stretch resources and encourage health. Plus, each participant leaves class with a prepared dish or ingredients to use at home. Thankfully, our community is providing the resources needed to offer the educational classes without any direct costs to participants. This is accomplished through direct donations and fundraisers like a February 13th Charcuterie board class.

Contact: scarper@christianneighbors or (269) 685-4166 ext. 107 if you're interested in attending a class, helping deliver a hands-on cooking program or providing financial support for the programs.

Weekly Resource Workshops

Every Monday from 10am-12pm, anyone in the community is invited to utilize our computer lab. They will have free access to a computer and internet.

Case Managers are on hand to help with finding and signing up for local and state resources, finding housing, job applications, checking email, and so much more. This is a drop-in opportunity, no registration is required.

For the month of February, we will be helping seniors and disabled individuals every Monday with filing their Home Heating Credit—free of charge!



"Cooking for One" class participants.