

community.

A publication of Shepherd Community Center



SPRING2023

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Being a Good Neighbor Through Hunger, Housing, & Health

Through 2030, Shepherd has developed a strategic plan called *Re-Neighboring Our Hood*, helping be a good neighbor in six areas where our neighbors need assistance and are critical to breaking the cycle of poverty. In this newsletter, we'll look deeper into hunger, housing, and health challenges and how Shepherd is coming alongside our neighbors to bridge the gap and help them grow their capacity for long-term success.

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Being a Good Neighbor Through Hunger, Housing, & Health

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How do hunger, housing, and health all fit together? Hungry neighbors' physical and mental health suffers. Hungry neighbors must choose to pay their rent/mortgage or put food on the table. Neighbors without stable housing also struggle with depression, anxiety, and isolation. Neighbors without stable housing struggle to afford healthy food options to feed themselves and their families. These three areas are intertwined; struggling with one area means you are likely struggling with the others.

Feeding the Hungry: Feeding our hungry neighbors is about more than simply handing out food. Feeding the hungry is also an opportunity to build relationships. Thanks to Gleaners and Midwest Food Banks, Tyson Food, Safeway, and multiple church partners, Shepherd is helping our neighbors receive access to healthy food options through a food pantry, mobile food pantry, home deliveries, Shepherd Kitchen, holiday and school break boxes, weekend food boxes, and more.



Ensuring Stable Housing: Stable housing creates a sense of safety for children and adults, both physically and mentally. It also allows our neighbors to build relationships and community with other neighbors who can help them in their time of need.

The cost of housing, along with everything else, is going up. Neighbors cannot afford deposits, down payments, or ongoing rent alongside their current expenses. These increases have also caused reduced availability of housing for our neighbors. Shepherd's Center for Working Families (CWF) utilizes a housing coordinator and financial coach to walk alongside our neighbors with support. We also partner with UIndy, Habitat for Humanity, INHP, United Way, Thrivent, and the Excel Center and utilize compassionate assistance to help neighbors apply for and receive assistance to pay rent and utility costs that families cannot meet.

Supporting Physical & Mental Health: Neighbors living in poverty face an epidemic of loneliness. Building relationships with our neighbors is the first step to helping them live long, healthy lives of hope. The second step is supporting our neighbors' physical and mental health, offering services, and providing preventative education and care.

Shepherd helps get neighbors to doctor appointments, pick up prescriptions, navigate the healthcare system, and provide mental health counseling on-site or virtually. Shepherd also offers our students in all programs physical and health education lessons as well as access to healthy foods through our Shepherd Teaching Kitchen. As an added resource, the **Shalom Project** sends first responders – an IEMS paramedic and IMPD officer – to our neighbors, helping mitigate repeat 9-1-1 calls and build relationships to connect these neighbors to needed Shepherd programming.

When Shepherd comes alongside our neighbors, we help meet immediate needs and help them learn and grow to transform their circumstances and mindsets to overcome the barriers themselves. Helping neighbors with hunger, housing, and health challenges are three key ways Shepherd is a good neighbor.



meet

Steven Emch board member

Steven brings passion, skills, and an aligned vision as a new member of the Shepherd Board. "I'm a firm believer that you need to invest in your own backyard before attempting to change the world," says Steven. "Shepherd starts at the most important place, with the people from our community that need a helping hand."

Steven's vision for Shepherd is an organization that is adapting dynamically to the needs of our neighbors through a "boots on the ground" approach, genuinely seeing the needs of our neighbors and meeting them where they are. "I don't know of a single other organization that is as ingrained in the community as Shepherd is. They've been incredibly intentional about growing with and in the community as it evolves," says Steven.

A transplant from Arizona, Steven attended Grand Canyon University and moved to Indy five years ago after graduating and getting married. In addition to a background in childcare, Steven has spent some time in software sales, worked at the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, and currently serves as the President of Orr Fellowship.

As we reflect on 2022, there was no way we could have seen all the twists and turns the year brought: COVID, inflation, and so many other unexpected challenges. Yet, we can move forward with hope because we know God has been, is, and will remain faithful.

Your help and investment into the lives of our neighbors continue to bring a lifetime of return.

Our focus in 2023 is to guide our neighbors to grow their capacity and reduce their dependency. We're accomplishing this through six core areas:

- Housing
- Health
- Hunger
- Neighborhood Engagement
- Quality Education
- Workforce Development

These six building blocks will allow us to build that capacity alongside our neighbors. So, despite any headwinds or challenges that may come in the next year, we will move forward with perseverance and hope.

Join us as we move forward for all of 2023!



Jay Height
Executive Director

Development

Legacy Giving Workshop

Where have you invested your life? How can you leverage your social, financial, experiential, and spiritual legacy? Your legacy can start now, and a well-planned inheritance can fund it for generations.

Join us for a Legacy Giving Workshop with Mark Weaver, Senior Planned Giving Associate with JD Levy & Associates, on **Friday, March 31 from noon to 2pm** to learn the impact you can have through Shepherd Community Center. Lunch will be provided. **RSVP by March 27 at GiveButter.com/LegacyGivingWorkshop**

Second Annual Day of Engagement

On Saturday, May 13 from 9:30am – 1:30pm, Shepherd is bringing neighbors, supporters, small groups, families, and friends of Shepherd together for service projects in the community followed by a family event. Engage in service projects, join family activities, receive tours of Shepherd Community Center, and experience Shepherd's programs and community firsthand. Learn more at **GiveButter.com/DayOfEngagement2023**



Uplift: Information & Inspiration from Shepherd

Shepherd launched a digital magazine called Uplift to share inspiring and informative stories about how Shepherd is making an impact in our neighbors' lives and community.

Visit Today: UpliftIndy.org

Volunteers

Volunteer to Make a Difference

Drivers for delivering food to shut in neighbors: In partnership with Gleaners Food Bank, each volunteer receives a distribution list of five to six neighbors and boxes of food from Shepherd. Food distribution takes place from 9 – 11am, Monday – Friday.

Shepherd Academy Classroom Help: Volunteers assist students with reading and other difficult subjects. Volunteers needed Monday – Friday for an hour to hour and a half, can be flexible.

Questions? Contact Director of Volunteer Engagement, Donna Alexander at DonnaA@shepherdcommunity.org or (317)375-0203.

Serving Minnie Hartmann Childcare Center: Volunteers assist with children ages six months to age 4, from 9 – 11am. Days needed based on availability.

Project Jordan Childcare: Project Jordan is a program for young mothers to learn together about caring for their families. Volunteers help care for the children of the ladies that attend. Project Jordan meets twice a month on Thursdays from 1 – 2:30pm, and childcare is in the same building as the group meeting.



Shepherd Podcast: *Breaking the Cycle of Poverty*

Curious how Shepherd navigates the complex challenges of poverty in a period of rapid social and economic change? Subscribe to our new podcast *Breaking the Cycle of Poverty* on your favorite podcast platform.

Give In-Kind to Shepherd

Clorox Wipes
Toilet Paper
13-gallon trash bags with a drawstring

For a full list of our in-kind needs, visit shepherdcommunity.org/give/critical-needs/

Shepherd is a faith-based, non-profit organization established in 1985 with a simple but staggering goal: **to break the cycle of poverty** on the near Eastside of Indianapolis. Located centrally within the community it serves, Shepherd offers programs for children, teens, adults, and families. Our primary tools?

Education and love.



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breaking the cycle of poverty

shepherd
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Thank you to our partners for making Shepherd's newsletter possible.