

community.

A publication of Shepherd Community Center



WINTER2024

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Feeding More Than Physical Hunger

Hunger is about so much more than food. The food we eat fuels our mind, body, and soul. Hunger is not simply a physical need; it impacts how we work, learn, and grow. It affects children, seniors, and families across our country, state, and neighborhoods every day. At Shepherd, we see first-hand how feeding hungry neighbors of all ages is essential to meeting their foundational needs and challenges. Before a child can learn, they need to be fed. Sharing a meal with a neighbor means building relationships and trust and meeting their physical needs. In an economic climate plagued by rising food costs, our mid to low-income neighbors are hit hardest, often choosing to keep the lights on, pay the rent, or feed their families. Food is one of the many ways Shepherd can authentically

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Feeding More Than Physical Hunger

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connect with our neighbors, meeting their most immediate need to build a relationship and help them find hope.

Shepherd has many initiatives to feed our hungry neighbors - home deliveries, hot meals for our students, weekend packs, extended break totes, a Teaching Kitchen, and one of our most vital programs, the Shepherd Pantry.

laid off, we didn't know how we would feed our family," Anna recalled. "My next-door neighbor told me about the Pantry, but I didn't want to go. She said, 'Just put your pride aside and get the help you need. Do it for your kids.' At first, it was a weird experience; I had never been there before. I grew up getting peanut butter and cheese bundles they handed out at the local government building, but

Shepherd was different from that. From the moment I first went there, I felt like I have always been a part of Shepherd." Anna said she started volunteering to give back to the people who gave her so much, and she now enjoys it as part of who she is. "I don't even know how to express the kind of impact Shepherd has had on me. But I guess I would describe it as meaningful. Every volunteer makes a difference. I get

to connect with Shepherd and my neighbors. I get to help make sure my neighbors are fed. And, for me, the most important part is making sure no child goes hungry."

**Name changed for privacy*

Our Shepherd Pantry serves over 100 neighbors weekly - including families, homeless, seniors, and teens - with canned goods, fresh fruit and veggies, meats, cereals, and staple household items. But the most incredible aspect of our Shepherd Pantry is that, more than any other program, our neighbors volunteer their time helping the Shepherd Pantry stay organized, help neighbors in need find food, and care for their neighbors. The Shepherd Pantry is a beautiful picture of how Shepherd's role in building authentic relationships leads to a deeper, transformative community among our neighbors. It is truly a picture of how neighbors help neighbors. **Because, at Shepherd, we're feeding more than physical hunger.**

One of our neighbors, Anna* has been helping with the Shepherd Pantry for over 25 years. "When my husband got



meet

Jose Juarez
board member

When Jose Juarez called Shepherd Community early in the 2022-23 school year, he had no idea that his role as Family and Community Engagement Director for Indianapolis Public Schools would spark a deeper partnership and commitment to serve. Jose joined the Shepherd Board in April 2023.

"I saw how Shepherd served a diverse demographic and adapted to best fit the needs of its community, offering educational options that meet families where they are and will help them short term and in the future. I wanted to be a part of that.

"My parents are immigrants from El Salvador, and many Shepherd families are new to our country. Their perseverance reminds me of my own family struggles as a child, and I love that Shepherd helps them better themselves. I am passionate about helping families navigate the American educational system and do what is best for their children. I love to serve and feel my cultural and professional background can help give a new perspective on what we do."

Jose and his wife, Radelkys, have three children - Jayleen, 14, Juliette, 8, and William, 1.

We all recognize the chore and burden of going to the grocery store these days. While we cannot control costs or shrinkflation, we are focusing on multiple channels to help our neighbors who are hungry. Here are just a few of the ways we are addressing food insecurity at Shepherd:

1. Partnering with Gleaners to provide more than 150 home deliveries every week to our elderly, sick, or lacking transportation neighbors.
2. Walk-In Shepherd Food Pantry, serving over 100 families every Saturday morning.
3. Bi-Weekly drive-thru Food Pantry serving over 225 families.
4. Providing students with weekend food packs and boxes of food for the lengthy school breaks.

Feeding the Hungry All Year Long

Food is just one way we attempt to address an immediate need for our neighbors, while we help our families grow their capacity to reduce dependency through authentic relationships.

There are several ways you can help feed the hungry in our neighborhood:

1. Donate needed food items.
2. Volunteer to deliver food to our neighbors.
3. Volunteer to pick up deliveries of food from our partners.
4. Connect your church or business with Shepherd to sponsor a special holiday food tote or weekend food packs for our students.

No person should go hungry. Shepherd is working to eliminate hunger from our neighborhood, and with your support, we are making a difference!

We are better together!



Jay Height
Executive Director

Development

Lunch & Learns - Spring 2024

Want to learn more about specific Shepherd initiatives and how you are making a difference? Join us for one (or more) of our spring 2024 Lunch & Learns hosted at Shepherd Community Center. Each event includes lunch and takes place from noon - 1pm.

February 16 - Housing (RSVP Feb 12)

March 15 - Hunger (RSVP Mar 11)

May 10 - Employment (RSVP May 6)

Please RSVP to Kolton Williford at (317)375-0203 ext 286 or email koltonw@shepherdcommunity.org. More Lunch & Learns will happen in Fall 2024.

How can you leave a legacy of hope?

An inheritance may consist of a well-planned lifetime of investments. But a legacy results from an intentional investment of a lifetime. Let our planned giving experts help you review your options and answer your questions. **Contact Shepherd today to discuss how to invest your legacy for generational transformation at koltonw@shepherdcommunity.org or visit ShepherdCommunity.org/Legacy.**



Shepherd distributed more than **400 food totes** to students over the 2023 Christmas break.

Did you know?

Volunteers

Volunteer to Make a Difference

Shepherd Academy Substitute

Teachers: Volunteer as a substitute teacher for our K-5 Elementary school, as needed.

Drivers for delivering food to

homebound neighbors: In partnership with Gleaners Food Bank, each volunteer delivers boxes of food from Shepherd to 4-5 neighbors. Volunteers needed Monday - Thursday mornings, preferred delivery 9 - 11am.

Questions? Contact Director of Volunteer Engagement, Donna Alexander at DonnaA@shepherdcommunity.org or (317)375-0203 ext. 288.

Homework Helpers & After-School

Clubs: Volunteers assist students at Shepherd and School #58 with homework and fun clubs Monday - Thursday from 3:30 - 5pm.

Shepherd Academy Lunch & Recess

Helpers: Volunteers assist students (and teachers) with lunch and recess. Volunteers needed Monday - Friday from 11am - 1pm.



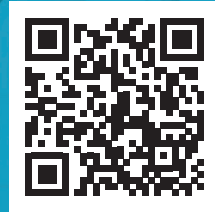
Did you know?

While inflation has been dropping, the average food price over the last few years **has increased almost**

20%

and yet the amount of food in each can or box **has dramatically decreased.**

Give In-Kind to Shepherd



#6 paper bags
Plastic forks (clear or white preferred)
Cotton dishcloths
Diapers (Size 4 & 5)

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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www.shepherdcommunity.org

breaking the cycle of poverty

shepherd
community center

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