

year in review 2023

It's all about community
helping community.

breaking the cycle of poverty

shepherd
community center

In 2023 alone, across all programming, services, events, and engagements, Shepherd Community Center served and built intentional relationships with 10,819 unique individuals, including children, students, seniors, and adults in our neighborhoods.

Shepherd's mission to break the cycle of poverty on the near Eastside of Indianapolis goes beyond programs and services. **We want to help our neighbors find hope.** We believe building deeper relationships within our Shepherd neighborhoods will create a more stable, healthy community for all ages to better meet our neighbors' physical, emotional, spiritual, and academic needs.

Through 2030, Shepherd Community is focusing on these six specific neighborhood areas to build capacity to reduce dependency and ultimately break the cycle of poverty:

1. Engaging Deeper in Our Neighborhood
2. Supporting Physical & Mental Health
3. Providing Quality Education
4. Feeding the Hungry
5. Ensuring Stable Housing
6. Empowering Neighbors to Acquire Sustainable Jobs

Want to see how the mission of Shepherd works? **Scan here!**



Providing Quality Education: Minnie Hartmann & Shepherd Community Academy & Library

At Shepherd Community Center, it is our vision to see every child in our neighborhood learn to read and write so they can break the cycle of poverty. In addition, Shepherd wants to see students excel at or beyond grade level and achieve vital academic outcomes to break the cycle of poverty.

Shepherd Neighborhood Childcare at Minnie Hartmann averaged 66 children ages 0-3 every month with an average 90% attendance rate.

- Muffins with Mom on May 12 hosted 28 moms/grandparents/caregivers.
- Donuts with Dad on June 16 hosted 22 dads/grandfathers/caregivers.

Shepherd Community Academy enrolled 135 students for the 2023-24 school year, including Pre-School and K-5th grade levels.

IPL Shared System Library at Shepherd Community had **350 Academy classroom and After-School visits, checking out 3,000+ books in 2023.**



*Two Kindergarten students accepted
Jesus into their hearts!*

In December, our Academy and Family Engagement teams collaborated to help a distressed neighborhood family meet housing, clothing, food, medical, and academic needs. As the team worked together, they were able to be Jesus to our neighbors. Collaboration, communication, and Christ-likeness made a lasting difference in the lives of these neighbors!

Tour Shepherd Neighborhood Childcare at Minnie Hartmann by scanning the QR code or visit ShepherdChildcare.org to learn more!




Providing Quality Education: After-School & Summer

Shepherd Elementary After-School Programs

- **63 students at our East Washington location**, with a 76% attendance rate.
- **54 students at the IPS School #58 location**, with a 73% attendance rate.

Summer EXCEL enrolled 124 students in grades 1st through 6th to engage in a summer of learning, fun, mentoring, healthy meals, and a safe place to build friendships – and be kids.





We have a family involved in IPS School #58 After-School that has a myriad of behavioral and learning issues during the school day and After-School. Shepherd came alongside the mom to help figure out what we could do for their family and this child. Through this relationship, Shepherd's team worked with both the mom and teacher to be a safe space for the student who felt unseen and, therefore, was acting out. In less than a month, the student had little to no behavioral issues and completed ALL homework on time.

Throughout the summer, we connected with many new families and students! One family could not attend our Back-to-School Blast due to a prior family commitment, but we were able to deliver backpacks and shoes to their home. Both boys and their mom were in tears over how excited they were for new shoes and backpacks! It was a sweet reminder of how important the simple things are to our neighborhood families!

Providing Quality Education: E2E, College & Career

- Education to Employment (E2E) served **40 students** in grades 7 - 12 with a 75% attendance rate.
- Summer YLIFe (Middle and High School students) served **44 students** with budgeting, career opportunities, college visits, mentoring, future-oriented thinking, and educating for a future of hope.
- Shepherd has **29 college students currently enrolled** for the 2023-24 school year.
- **Five Shepherd students graduated college in May 2023**, one from Indiana University and four from Taylor University.



“They [Shepherd] kept pushing me forward and if it wasn’t for them, I definitely would have given up. They saw something in me that I probably didn’t even know I had. They saw potential for growth where I didn’t believe I had any. I thank Shepherd for the person that I am today.”

– Jorge Martinez

“Shepherd’s E2E program walked alongside one of our students for over two months who became homeless due to a house fire. This process has been hard and draining at times, but our presence in his and his mom’s life has been invaluable. We’re glad he is a part of our After-School program so that we can be an extended family for him.”

– Kevin

Scan to hear Jorge’s story



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 neighbor's physical and mental health, offering services that meet the current health needs of our neighbors, and providing preventative education and care.

- Every month, Shepherd's **Celebrate Recovery** helped **30 individuals** overcome addiction and maintain sobriety through a faith-based accountability model.
- **Project Jordan** averaged **24 neighborhood moms** monthly and made **49 referrals** to other Shepherd programs and resources.
- Shepherd's **counseling program** averaged **25 individuals every month, including children, adults, families, and senior neighbors.**

- IEMS & Versiti hosted **two blood drives** at Shepherd, with **18 individuals donating.**
- Shepherd hosted **eight Flu Vaccine Clinics** in October 2023, providing **129 flu vaccines** to our neighbors.
- In June, Shepherd hosted an **Entrepreneur Class for our Project Jordan** mothers to help them learn how to generate more income from their homes for their families.



Supporting Physical & Mental Health:

Moms always reach out to other moms to join our Project Jordan community. One such mom was a 17-year-old teen pregnant with her first child when she arrived in the Spring. We provided her with diapers, wipes, and other necessities for the baby to be born in July. We were also able to connect her to other Shepherd resources. Surrounding teen moms with loving support and resources is the key to a healthy mom and baby.

Project Jordan moms participated in a 6-week Nutrition Course thanks to Purdue Extension. When the 11 moms who faithfully attended completed the course, they were presented with a Certificate of Completion. They were very proud of the accomplishment, especially for those who have never had that kind of encouragement and feedback in their lives.

I cannot imagine losing my vision. Even more so, I cannot imagine losing my vision and then moving to a country I have never seen and where I could not understand the language. This is what has happened to our neighbor Randall. Randall moved to the US from Costa Rica about five years ago and has since completely lost all vision due to a medical diagnosis. But Randall couldn't locate the needed documents for assistance, so we had to dig to find resources for him. We connected him with Bosma Services, and they will help train Randall on how to get around effectively in his immediate surroundings and his community. Although Randall does not have a background of involvement in the church, our volunteer and translator, Jorge, has spoken into Randall's life and shown him who Christ is through their interactions.

Shepherd is there when life is in the balance. **Listen to this unbelievable story** of Shalom Project IEMS Paramedic Shane Hardwick, who encounters a life-or-death situation for a 13-year-old neighbor.



Ensuring Stable Housing:

Stable housing is an essential part of breaking the cycle of poverty. 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.

In 2023, Shepherd

- Launched a partnership with Habitat for Humanity to offer monthly classes to neighbors and help qualify them for home ownership. **We helped three families build their first home through Habitat!**
- **Served 90 families** through \$50429.46 in Compassionate Assistance to assist families with rent, utilities, and other needs.
- **Served 72 families** through the Barrier Buster program, helping distribute \$38,770.31 in rent, utilities, transportation, taxes, family, and education assistance.

- Utilized Citizens 7 funding to **help over 21 families receive rent, utilities, and childcare assistance, totaling \$8,400.63.**
- **Assisted 434 people** looking for stable housing.*
- **Developed a Successful Renter Class** for neighbors to create more stable housing.

*individuals may be duplicated



"I didn't think I would ever be a homeowner in general. I thought I would be living in apartments for the rest of my life. So, it's a BIG thing!"

- Erica, Neighbor

We have been working with a neighbor for the past couple of years. This neighbor is in a "rent-to-own" situation with her home, and her income is limited. Her furnace went from difficulty to non-working as winter approached in 2023. Shalom and Family Services teamed up with the weatherization program to help our neighbor finally have a new and functioning furnace nearly two years later!

Hear Erica's story about how Shepherd walked alongside her to help her become a first-time homeowner. **Scan the code** to hear her story!



Feeding the Hungry: Food Pantry & Deliveries

Feeding the hungry is about more than simply handing out food. Food is the opportunity to build relationships. When Shepherd provides a meal, teaches a neighbor to cook, or offers new plant starts for a garden, it is an opportunity to meet our neighbors' most basic physical needs and build a deeper relationship to meet other needs.

- Shepherd delivered **16,232 boxes on 4,598 home food deliveries**.
- **Shepherd Pantry served 2,762** (unduplicated) individuals and an additional **4,919 neighbors at our Mobile Pantry**, thanks to an average of **65 volunteers every month**.
- **The Shepherd Kitchen served 65,139 meals**, including breakfast, lunch, and snacks, to the Shepherd Community Academy, Neighborhood Childcare at Minnie Hartmann, After-School, and Education to Employment (E2E).
- Thanks to key partners, Shepherd **distributed 6,689 weekend packs**, including one local church that provided three weeks' worth of packs.

- Thanks to Gleaners, Shepherd **provided 515 food boxes** to neighborhood families during summer programming.
- Thanks to generous donations from churches, individuals, and businesses, we offered a more comprehensive selection of essential items like **fresh produce, proteins, pantry staples, and hygiene products**.



shepherd
COMMUNITY SERVICES

Our food programs are still in high demand. We've seen an uptick in participation with all three programs and a lot of new faces coming through the Pantry. A church partner gave our Pantry quite a few blankets to pass out. They were a big hit! We passed out all of them. Another individual donated 20+ carts, so our "walkers" coming to the Pantry didn't have to carry their groceries back to their homes by hand. We have some incredible partners and couldn't serve our neighbors in the capacity that we do without them.

See how we help feed our neighborhood students every day through the help of staff, partners, and volunteers. **Scan to take a seat** at Shepherd's table.




Empowering Neighbors to Acquire Sustainable Jobs:

The way to the future is by working. That's why empowering our neighbors to acquire sustainable jobs is essential to a poverty-free future. Shepherd follows a simple ABC model to help our neighbors get and keep a quality job: get A Job, find a Better Job, and enter a Career. There is no one-size-fits-all plan for empowering job stability and building a personal relationship with each neighbor takes time to help them find the job that fits.

- In 2023, Shepherd offered **18 Financial Literacy Classes with 88 neighbors** attending.*
- Shepherd also **offered financial classes for our neighbors**, including credit report reviews, financial wellness classes, one-on-one credit pull reviews, understanding your credit report, money canvas, and identity theft and fraud prevention classes.
- In July, Shepherd hosted an employment & resource fair with **30 vendors in attendance and 110 adults (plus children)**, offering job and employment opportunities, vaccinations, dental check-ups, food distribution, fans to cool off in the heat, and more resources.

*individuals may be duplicated





Jerry and Suzi came to Shepherd Community looking for help with their rent, which was already one month overdue. Jerry had paused his current employment for six weeks so he could go to rehab and get the help he needed with his alcohol addiction. Although he had already started back at his old job, his paycheck would be delayed a few weeks, and they wouldn't be able to pay the rent in time. Suzi was looking for employment but was struggling to get hired. Our team walked alongside them with such care and compassion. We discussed their finances, helped them create a budget, introduced Suzi to our Employment Coach, and connected Jerry with*

Celebrate Recovery. The couple qualified for a small Citizen 7 loan to apply toward the overdue rent payment, and we used Barrier Buster funds to help with the remaining balance. Our neighbors were so appreciative and wanted to take full advantage of any resources Shepherd had to offer. They both attended our financial class, participated in a credit report review session, and are working with our Family Engagement team to help them towards future home ownership. They asked our staff to pray with them and asked when Shepherd Community Church met so they could attend!

**Names changed for privacy*

Engaging Deeper in our Neighborhood through Relationships: Paracletes & Shalom/Neighborhood Engagement

- Shepherd's Shalom Project team of IEMS Paramedic and IMPD Officer responded to **over 277 9-1-1 calls, followed up with over 154 of those calls, and referred 75 neighbors to additional Shepherd resources this past year.**

"It's about them finding hope that things can be different."

– Shalom Project IMPD Officer



When our neighbor KW called Shepherd, she was out of options. She was displaced from her apartment due to black mold, lost most of her belongings, and was now behind on everything. KW was desperate. Unfortunately, KW now lived outside our area, and although she had a list of people to call in her area to help, we wanted to do more. We suggested a partner church we knew had helped other neighbors outside our area with housing challenges. It wasn't much, but KW was abundantly grateful, almost to the point of tears. She thanked me for understanding and referring her to people who would also understand her. Furthermore, she extended it to all Shepherd staff, "Thank you for being in the business of serving people," said KW. We are not just helping those in our neighborhood and programs. We connect our neighbors to additional resources because we love and care about them.

Scan here to see how our Shalom Project partners with our neighbors to build relationships, provide safety and health, and ultimately help them find hope.



2023 Year in Review / It's all about community helping community.

Engaging Deeper in our Neighborhood through Relationships: Volunteers

In December 2023 alone, Shepherd had 806 volunteers, giving over 2,176 hours!

"I love Shepherd. I love Jesus. And I love helping."

- Shepherd Volunteer



In late 2022, Shepherd began a volunteer partnership with Grit into Grace Organization, a ministry for women who have experienced sexual trauma. Many of the ladies are a part of our neighborhood. Our goal was for the women to connect with Shepherd as a resource to help them as they continued to create a life of stability. One group member had a new baby and needed childcare so she could get a job and work. Unfortunately, Minnie Hartmann was packed for her child's age, and the other daycares we recommended were either full or too expensive. Yet, because of her new faith, she trusted that God was still in control and would open the right doors at the right time for her to work. She then asked if she could volunteer individually at Shepherd. "If I can't work for myself, I can work for the Kingdom."

- Shepherd Staff Member Michael Perry

"After volunteering at Shepherd, I am now cognizant that volunteer work is a self-edifying task in many ways. I went to serve others but found myself being the one who was served the most."

- IUPUI Student Volunteer

Experience the Magic of Christmas at Shepherd thanks to generous volunteers, donors, and staff. **Scan to see!**



Shepherd Community Center 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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