

community.

A publication of Shepherd Community Center



WINTER2025

p2 Meet a Board Member

p3 Message from Jay

p4 YOU Can Help



Hope Through Housing

As Shepherd embarks on our 40th year, we recognize quite a bit has changed since 1985. Trends, hairstyles (thank goodness for that), technology, access to news, education, economics, and our ability to connect with people. And we don't have to tell you that the cost of things has changed, too. Our paychecks are larger, but so are our bills.

One of those changes in the last 40 years has been to housing. For our neighborhood families, a small house that needs repairs costs more than they can afford, and rent exceeds \$1,300 monthly for a small apartment or house, not including utilities or household essentials. However, ensuring stable housing for our neighbors goes beyond the financials.

(continued next page)

Hope Through Housing

(continued)

Housing is essential to the holistic care of our neighbors. Stable housing is necessary for adult employment and quality education for students. It creates safety and a sense of community for our



neighbors. **So, what is Shepherd doing to ensure our neighbors have hope through housing – both now and for the next 40 years?**

Advocating: Relationships are a key to helping our neighbors with housing challenges. Many neighbors need someone to help them navigate issues, know their rights, support them, and walk alongside them with encouragement and support. Shepherd advocates and navigates with our neighbors to find hope through housing.

Providing short-term assistance with utilities and rent can help a neighbor stay in their home. Thanks to programs like Barrier Busters, Citizens 7, and Compassionate Assistance, Shepherd connects neighbors with local programs to keep them in their homes, avoid eviction, and cover when they are short on finances due to employment gaps, high utility months, or unexpected financial emergencies.

Financial Literacy and Budget Basics classes: Housing is the most significant expense in a person's monthly budget. So, teaching our neighbors about

budgeting, managing their money, creating a bank account, and saving is how we can help our neighbors be stable in their housing.

Homeownership: We want to work alongside our neighbors to help them financially prepare to become homeowners. In the coming years, we want to provide homeownership classes to neighbors. In partnership with Habitat for Humanity and Fuller Center for Housing, we have helped over eight families become first-time homeowners in the last 4 years.

Building New Homes: In partnership with Arbor Homes, we are building eleven homes in the next 24 months on various properties

close to Shepherd. These new homes will be both rentals and lease-to-own homes, giving our neighbors a pathway to homeownership they can afford and establish equity.



Warrick Place: This multi-family project will construct 11 apartments for our neighbors to rent affordably, as well as 3,000 sq. ft. of community space.

We know that the challenges with housing are multifaceted, but we know helping our neighbors find hope through housing will also create stability in other areas of their lives – both now and in the next 40 years.



meet

Mike Smith
board member

Growing up as a first-generation high school graduate, Board Member Mike Smith brings a unique gift to the Shepherd Board, proving intentional relationships can transform lives and break the cycle of poverty.

"I had a sixth-grade teacher who saw the potential in me and my brothers and decided to help my hard-working family," said Mike. "We learned and worked together. That inspired me; education is the ticket out of poverty and is critical to self-reliance. That one person's role in my life made all the difference, and I'm blessed to be a part of Shepherd to help our neighbors and students who were just like me to see and live their full potential."

Mike describes himself as a "kitchen cabinet" in his role, serving as a volunteer, donor, friend, and advocate of Shepherd for over 20 years before joining the Board in 2020. "What I love most about Shepherd is its utilization of the Continuum of Care. I don't know anyone who approaches their mission as thoughtfully as Jay and his team, even as things have grown," says Mike.

Mike attended DePauw University on a full scholarship, receiving a finance degree and meeting his fantastic wife of 54 years, Sue. After college, Mike worked in public accounting, served as CEO of Mayflower Group, and officially retired as CFO of Anthem. Mike now finds joy in retirement, serving his community on several boards and being a husband, dad, and granddad to nine grandchildren ages 11 – 24.

Shepherd Community is turning 40!

The 40th Anniversary symbol is the ruby, a deep gemstone that symbolizes passion, love, commitment, protection, loyalty, success, devotion, and divine sacrifice. Even after 40 years, love can burn as bright as ever – like an eternal flame that never goes out. Shepherd Community wants to be that flame to our neighbors, a place of refuge, care, and hope. That's why this year is being called a Ruby Celebration!



So, as we embark on this special year, we are remembering so many amazing stories and memories. Yet our focus isn't on the past; it is all about the next 40 years. How many more stories can be written? What will be the new memories made? How can we better walk alongside our neighbors to help them find lasting hope to break the cycle of poverty?

As we begin 2025, we are also launching The Ruby Project, a campaign to build a new gymnasium for our Academy, After-School, Summer, and our whole community to enjoy; build new homes for our neighbors; continue deepening our relationships with the students; and more. We will need the entire community's support to accomplish these projects as well as sustain us as we work to bring hope and see lives transformed in the next 40 years.

2025 is the beginning of the next chapter. It's a time of excitement and new opportunities. You are a vital part of this next journey.

Join us in writing the new stories!



Jay Height
Executive Director

Development

Lunch & Learns 2025: Poverty 101

Our 2025 Lunch & Learns will be a FREE 8-session journey into Shepherd's custom curriculum we call Poverty 101. Through



research, authors, perspectives, and 40 years of experience at Shepherd, Poverty 101 is an opportunity to understand poverty, why it matters, and the assets needed to break the cycle. **Every Lunch & Learn session includes a complimentary lunch and will last from noon to 1:30 pm.**



Please RSVP by March 1 at ShepherdCommunity.org/Poverty101 or contact Kolton Williford at koltonw@shepherdcommunity.org.

A Special Invitation: Legacy Breakfast

How can you make a lasting difference in the lives of our neighbors? Learn how at our Legacy Breakfast on March 4, 2025, at 9 am. Breakfast included. **RSVP to Kolton Williford at KoltonW@shepherdcommunity.org or call 317-375-0203 ext. 286 by February 20.**

Mark Your Calendars: 2025 Shepherd Events

Day of Engagement 2025 – Saturday, May 3

Ruby Celebration Open House – Tuesday, July 15

Kids Day 2025 – Saturday, September 27

Fall Festival – Friday, October 31

Ruby Celebration Banquet – Friday, November 7

Christmas Toy Drive: November 3 – December 15

Want to know more? Check out our monthly impact emails or contact Gabe Short at GabeS@ShepherdCommunity.org.

Volunteers

Volunteer to Make a Difference

Project Jordan Childcare: Care for the children (ages three and under) of participants on the third Thursday of each month from 12:30 – 3:30 pm.

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

Homework Helpers & After-School Clubs: Assist elementary students at Shepherd, School #58, & School #82 with homework and fun clubs Monday – Thursday from 3 – 5 pm.

Academy Lunch & Recess Helpers: Assist students (and teachers) with lunch and recess. Volunteers needed Monday – Friday from 11 am – 1 pm.



Did you know?

Shepherd has been here for

40 years,

and with the dedicated support of our generous partners, we will be here for another **40 years** to make an even greater impact on our community!



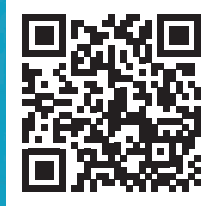
Ruby
CELEBRATION



Sign up for these and more volunteer opportunities at ShepherdCommunity.org/Volunteer



Give In-Kind to Shepherd



School supplies
Plastic silverware
Paper Plates & Cups
Peanut Butter

Find more needed items at 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.



4107 E Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46201

317.375.0203

www.shepherdcommunity.org

breaking the cycle of poverty

shepherd
community center

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