

## Did You Know...

Caritas Connections is eligible for **matching gifts**. We are also now set up to receive **automatic monthly gifts via PayPal** or to take **stock donations**. Gifts of stock can be directly made from 401(k) plans or IRA accounts without needing to pay taxes on distribution—a big help if you no longer itemized because of recent tax changes. To learn more or to volunteer to help, call 314-225-2605 or e-mail: Friends@CaritasConnections.com



PO Box 31072  
St. Louis, MO 63131

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### Stay in the Know

To get news and important updates regarding Caritas' operations and needs, please add this address to your email contacts: friends@caritasconnections.com. Doing so will ensure that our emails end up in your inbox and not your spam folder!



#### Who We Are

Caritas Connections, Inc. is a faith-based organization dedicated to "connecting those who have with those who need". Many members of our community are eager to share their blessings. Many of our less fortunate neighbors desperately require their help. The challenge is linking the gifts with the needs. We provide that vital connection—transforming compassion into charity. Members of St. Gerard Majella Catholic Church in Kirkwood, MO serve as the primary coordinators and volunteers.

**Donations may be sent to:**  
Caritas Connections, Inc.,  
PO Box 31072  
St. Louis, MO 63131

## Boxes & Disinfecting Wipes Needed

We are always in need of boxes. Please save all Amazon boxes and drop them off at the garage. Smaller boxes are better because we use them to package canned goods. Also, if you run across any sanitizing wipes, our volunteers and clients are in desperate need of them. If you have any questions about items we accept, contact [Mary Kempa at marykempa2@gmail.com](mailto:marykempa2@gmail.com).

## Every Week at Caritas Connections

*Caritas Connections volunteers make over 40 pickups and deliveries every week in order to reliably connect surplus food and personal care items from our donors to those in need.*

#### Our Donors:

Amighetti's Bakery and Cafe, Bello's Bakery, The Daily Bread, The Donut Palace, Elite Cuisine, Great Harvest Bread, Jimmy John's (Des Peres), Merb's Candies, Panera Bread (Des Peres), Pizza Hut (Des Peres), Raterman and Associates, Sara Lee Outlet Store, Schnucks (Des Peres), Small Cakes, and Starbucks

#### Our Clients:

Biddle House, Catholic Worker Karen House, Criminal Justice Ministries, Dutchtown Care Center, East St. Louis Heart and Home, Federal Probation Office Family Program, Ferguson Senior Resource Center, Father Dempsey's Charities, Grace Hill-The Patch Center, Guardian Angel Settlement, John Paul II Apartments, Our Lady's Inn, Our Little Haven, Room At the Inn, Rural Parish Workers, St. Agnes Nursing Home, St. Augustine-Wellston Center, St. Francis Xavier SVDP, St. John Neumann Apartments, St. Louis Crisis Nursery, St. Mary Magdalen SDVP, St. Nicholas SVDP, Sts. Teresa and Bridget and more....

# STAYING connected

The newsletter of Caritas Connections, Inc.

## Caritas and COVID-19— How We Are Moving Forward

### Our Mission

*Inspired by the compassion of Jesus, Caritas Connections, Inc. continues His mission to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and help the sick, suffering and homeless.*

Like many of the clients we serve, Caritas Connections shut down our weekly operations in late March. We reached the decision that it simply wasn't prudent for all our volunteers to continue making regular deliveries.

However, during our shutdown, a few volunteers continued to pick up food and other household items and delivered those goods to some of our clients for which they were truly grateful. Many of those deliveries were being made in our newly acquired, 2009 cargo van, which was donated to Caritas by long-time client, Caritas Normandy, run by the Ladies of Charity, who unfortunately, closed their doors in February.

The shutdown also gave us the opportunity to completely update our freezer room, thanks to the generosity of several volunteers led by Jim Gamel and his crew from Gamel Company Inc along with Rich Olsen, owner of Just Around the Corner Flooring, who donated the slip-resistant flooring and provided labor to install it.

On May 26, we officially re-opened, though on a limited basis. Like so many businesses and organizations, we have had to re-think the way that we operate for the



*The freezer room after the update.*

protection of both our volunteers as well as the clients we serve.

So in this issue of our Caritas newsletter, we're not following our traditional format.

As we all know, it's no longer business as usual and probably won't be for the foreseeable future. We ask that you read on to learn more about what we're doing and why the need for Caritas Connections is more important than ever.

### Inside

- 2 Tributes
- 2 Golf Tournament
- 2 Donations Needed
- 2 New Ways to Serve
- 3 Volunteer Updates
- 3 Board Member Changes
- 3 Special Thanks
- 4 Every Week at Caritas



*Phyllis Makowski from Caritas Normandy turns over the van keys to Dave Kempa, who maintains all the Caritas Connections vehicles.*

## Tributes

*Donations to Caritas Connections have been made in recognition of the following family and friends:*

**In Honor Of:**  
Michael and Carolyn Gunn Anniv.  
Jan Glunt's birthday  
Dave and Ginny Switzer  
Burkhardt Anniversary  
Father Bryon  
Father Skillman  
Father Huber  
Deacon Tim Dolan  
Hefe Family  
Joe and Penny Helmsing Anniv.  
Jeanne Morrell's birthday  
Gene and Sally Wagner  
Pete and Kathy Palumbo  
Father Richard Creason

**In Memory Of:**  
William Jones  
Rev. Bob Boisabin  
Irene Drace  
Carol Keating  
Milton Hoss  
John Winter  
Robert and Mary Ann Lehmkuhl  
Ray Mandle  
Blake Stabler  
Mary Ann Walker  
Fred Baker and Jane Shubert  
Pat Dolan  
James Pudlowski  
Karen Cotrell  
Jeanette Seymour  
Ken Mitulski  
Beverly Carroll  
Kristina Glassl  
Dennis Montgomery  
Larry Arendes  
Ronald Heier  
Dave Butler  
Judy Mooneyham  
Mary Ann Holden  
Terry Andres  
Kathryn Kilker  
Anthony Sansone, Sr.  
Mary Ann and Pat Howley  
Diane Ritter  
Tom and Delores Howe  
Mark Elliott

## Supporting Caritas

### PLAY IN OUR RESCHEDULED GOLF TOURNAMENT ON AUGUST 28!

Golfers and sponsors will be asked to pay a bit more to this year's Caritas Connections 8th Annual Golf Tournament that has been re-scheduled for Friday, August 28, at Aberdeen Golf Course.

Since 2016, the amount that Caritas has donated to organizations has increased by more than 75%. In 2016, we distributed \$137,600 worth of goods. In 2019, it was over \$248,000. Overall, though, donations to Caritas Connections have only increased by 16% since 2016.

This year, we're asking for your help to close the gap between donations and distributions - which is why you'll notice an overall increase in fees. There will be no charge for on-course games like Drive Like A Pro and Deal or No Deal and instead of the raffle drawing at dinner, there will be some awesome attendance prizes that are sure to surprise and delight.

Interested players or sponsors can register for the event at [www.caritasconnections.com](http://www.caritasconnections.com) and pay via PAYPAL and then scan and email your registration form to [joanndonelon@gmail.com](mailto:joanndonelon@gmail.com)

### DONATIONS TAKE ON INCREASED IMPORTANCE

This ongoing pandemic has swollen the ranks of the unemployed, the underserved and those who are truly struggling to get by. Shutdowns and fewer available customers for our retail donors have led many of them to cut back on what they can provide. So now we have more people in need with less donated goods to offer. Add in the fact that it's probably more difficult for many to provide financial support right now and prospects may seem dim.

But we believe that people will continue to find a way to support Caritas Connections. Our confidence comes from the simple fact that people know

there are many out there who are hurting and want to help. We ask that you consider making a financial donation to Caritas Connections via the link on the Caritas Connections website.

### LOOKING FOR NEW IDEAS TO HELP SERVE

With limitations on what we can buy in bulk, we are looking to meet our clients' needs in a couple of ways.

Some of our personal shoppers are helping us supplement our inventory by hosting neighborhood "porch food drives" of canned protein, fruits and vegetables. We're open to other ideas as well. Maybe if you're part of an organization, group or club, you could sponsor a canned food drive. Or maybe volunteer to 'adopt' a client to help defray the cost of items we send to them.

If you would like to host a food drive or have other ideas on how you could help, please call **Mary Kempa** at 314-504-8717 or email [marykempa2@gmail.com](mailto:marykempa2@gmail.com).



*Nicholas Chapo and his family held a neighborhood food drive in May to support Caritas Connections and our clients.*

## Volunteer Updates

### WAREHOUSE TEAM

Due to the shortages of and restrictions on paper goods, personal care products and canned food, we are limited in what we can purchase from our suppliers. Consequently, our warehouse pickups are suspended until we can purchase product again.

For questions on the warehouse operations call **Libby Billhartz** at 636-236-5212 or email [billhartz4@att.net](mailto:billhartz4@att.net).

### PICKUP TEAMS

Almost all of our donating organizations have remained open for donations. Breads, sweets and other donations will be stored in the garage freezer room as before. For more information on scheduling and special instructions, please call **Gina Bauman** at 314-488-4100 or email [ginabauman@yahoo.com](mailto:ginabauman@yahoo.com).

### DELIVERY TEAMS

Deliveries are being made on a reduced scale as we now have fewer items to deliver. Since we can't have 2 people from different families in the delivery van, we will be working thru a new plan to get what we can to our clients.

To ensure safety, we're asking that

teams stagger the times volunteers arrive to pick-up items and clients may have new delivery instructions. All volunteers will be asked to wear masks and observe social distancing guidelines. Donated cloth masks will be available in the garage along with sanitizing spray and wipes.

If you are a current delivery driver, please call **Joann Donelon** at 314-791-3311 or email [joanndonelon@gmail.com](mailto:joanndonelon@gmail.com) for information on the current schedule, special instructions and feedback.

### GARAGE TEAM

Until further notice, the garage will remain closed for community drop-offs of clothing and household items. For now, those types of donations should be taken to a St. Vincent De Paul Thrift Store. As a result, we will only need a small number of volunteers to help organize canned goods from the porch food drives. If you normally work in the garage, please check to see if help is needed week to week. Questions? Monday volunteers can email **Mary Kempa** —[marykempa2@gmail.com](mailto:marykempa2@gmail.com) and Thursday volunteers can email **Chris Martin** —[Christine4martin@gmail.com](mailto:Christine4martin@gmail.com).

## extending our thanks to these volunteers

During the last few months, so many people have volunteered their time and effort to help Caritas in a variety of ways. Here is just a small sampling of people we'd like to thank...

**Dave Kempa**—for his work on getting the van, updating it and getting it ready for deliveries.

**Betsy Bruns, Chris Martin, Joann Donelon, Mary Dugan,** and **Libby Billhartz**—for their hard work in transforming our freezer room.

**Cay Sullivan** and **Glen Dougherty**—special thanks to Cay who has made and donated more than 200 masks for Caritas volunteers to use as well as Glen who continues to supply us as well.

**Karen Stoekel, Joyce Markowski, Ann Eilermann, Elizabeth Tuffli, Mary Kempa, the Chapo family** and **Chris Martin**—for organizing porch food drives. These food drives have provided much needed canned goods to distribute, because we have not been able to purchase from our normal sources since March.

**Jack Belford, Glen Doherty** and **Pat McBride**—who have picked up and delivered bread and personal care items to many of our clients.

**Steve Radomski** and **Tom Thorton**—who became personal shoppers during this time.

**Frank Leta** auto dealership family—we are grateful for their continued support of our Annual Golf Tournament and their efforts to provide toilet paper for clients whenever needed.

## Caritas Board Member Changes



*From left, Gayle Stratmann, Kathy Court and Terri Harrell at the annual Caritas volunteer appreciation party.*

Caritas Connections would like to thank **Gayle Stratmann** and **Terri Harrell** for their dedication to our organization. Both board members have recently stepped down after years of service.

We would also like to welcome new board members, **Jeannie Murphy, Chris Martin** and **Joann Donelon**. Our organization is blessed with individuals willing to step up and offer their time and talents!