

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



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Don't Throw It Away—Let us Reuse It

For a volunteer program to continue to remain that way, it is crucial to continue pursuing donations, potential volunteers and yes, even boxes. Right now, we're in need of empty boxes. Size: no larger than baby diaper or paper ream size. Please include lids or flaps that fold. If you would like to volunteer to help in the garage, be a Directed Shopper or support us in any other way, email [Joann Donelon at joanndonelon@gmail.com](mailto:Joann.Donelon@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:

Britt's Bakehouse, Bello's Bakery, Costco, 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, 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 SVDP and more....

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

STAYING connected

The newsletter of Caritas Connections, Inc.

Back to Full-Service Operations

Though the pandemic still isn't over, Caritas Connections has returned to full-service operations—which is good news for the many clients we serve.

During the pandemic, we changed daily operations on a variety of fronts. Some of our partners had to curtail their weekly donations. Many volunteers had to step back from providing service. The number of people allowed in the garage was reduced as was the number of items that were stored and regular deliveries to our clients had to be adjusted downward.

Perhaps the low point was an eight-week period from March 31-May 31, 2020 when we had to cease operations altogether. Once we discovered a few partners wanted to keep donating and a few clients were still open, a group of 7 volunteers made sure we continued our mission of "connecting those who have with those in need." Special thanks to Gina Bauman, Libby Billhartz, Joann Donelon, Jack Belford, Glen Dougherty, Pat McBride and Mike Haywood who both picked up donations and delivered them directly to the clients who were still open.

Our personal shoppers are to be commended as some of them began ordering

supplies, having them directly delivered to clients during our 8-week shutdown.

Our number of partners who provide food and personal care has actually increased with Britts Bakehouse and St. Anthony's food pantry joining our roster with a special thank you to Bruce Court for setting things up at St. Anthony's and continuing to coordinate donations.

Though storing food items became quite complicated this past year, the efforts of Libby Billhartz, Chris Martin and Mary Kempa kept things going—while making needed adjustments along the way.

We have resumed regular weekly deliveries every Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday along with monthly deliveries to our client list. Our personal shoppers are back to providing the clients they serve the individual items they need that make a huge difference to the many recipients who benefit from the generosity of our volunteers, donors and partners.

We thank our partners, volunteers and financial donors, including all those who donated their entry fees to a golf tournament that never took place! Together, Caritas Connections will continue its mission.

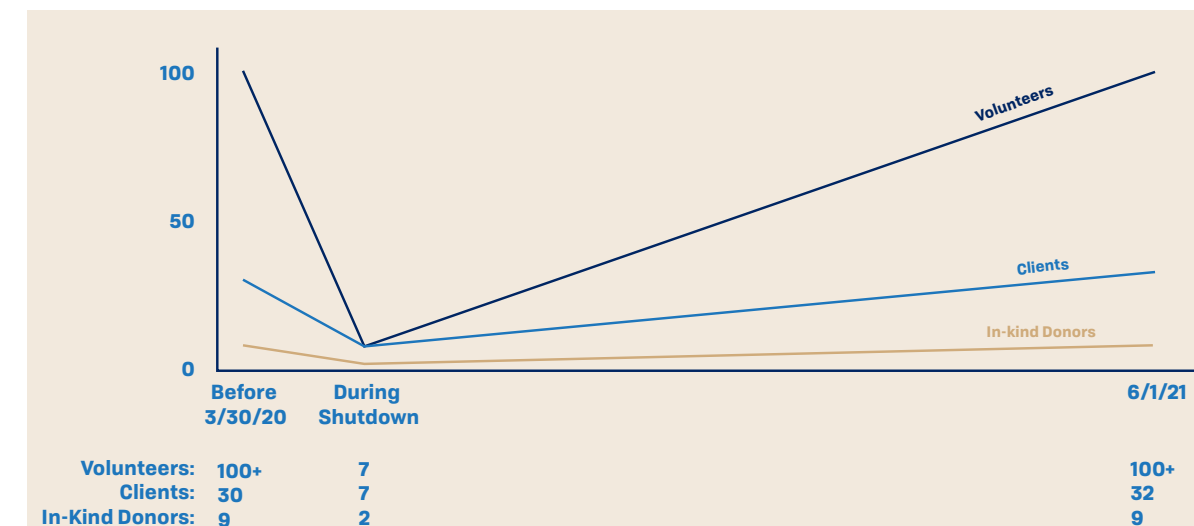
Our Mission

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.

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Tributes

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

In Honor Of:

Father Bryon
Ann and Bob Beckring
Margot Hirlinger
Mary Schmidt
Cay Sullivan

In Memory Of:

Joyce Howley
Sister Cynthia Brinkmann, SSND
Jeanette and Charles Seymour
Laura Majac
Jean Behr
Robert Cradock
Terry Etling
Doug Flavin
Tom Hunter
Eileen, Andrew and Peter Padberg
Elizabeth Schmidt
Jorge Luis Tumialan
Anita Mulligan
Robert Murphy
Gerald Corley
Ann Klein-Weiss
Jim Huch
Ann Sullivan
Jack Baudendistel

Annual Golf Tournament Tees Off August 27th



The links of Aberdeen will once again be host to our annual Caritas Connections Golf Tournament on Friday, August 27th with a 12:30 shotgun start. There will be prizes for three different flights, longest drive and closest to the pin winners for both men and women as well as some great attendance prizes following dinner.

After last year's event was moved from May to August and then ultimately cancelled due to the pandemic, we are excited to see everyone again and enjoy a day of celebration and camaraderie. The tournament represents our biggest fundraiser of the year, and we encourage you to play, sponsor, volunteer, or join us for dinner after the round. You can register and pay online at www.caritasconnections.com

Save the Date for Volunteer Mass/Party

Mark your calendars now for **Saturday, October 9th** as we're once again able to celebrate and thank our Caritas Connections volunteers with a special Mass which will be said by Fr. Bryon beginning at 4 pm followed by a gathering afterward. The event will be held at the home of Gina and Dan Bauman. Look for more details in the Caritas website as the date draws near.



Donations We'll Gladly Accept

Caritas Connections relies on the generosity of our volunteers and donors who support us in so many ways. With operations returning to full-scale, we thought we'd remind everyone that we accept clothing, small household items and food. What we don't accept though, are furniture or electronics. If you ever have

any questions about what you're donating or want to know when you can drop things off at the Caritas Connections garage at 1969 Dougherty Ferry Road (attached to SGM Parish Office), please contact Mary Kempa at (314) 504-8717 or by email marykempa2@gmail.com

Room at the Inn—Getting People Back on Their Feet Again

Room at the Inn is a place where women, children and families work to become as self-sufficient as they can with the help of some specialized guidance that focuses on mental health, budget and financing, employment opportunities, parenting and nutrition.

Located in Bridgeton, Room at the Inn can accommodate up to 20 people at a time, children included. Their stays may be anywhere from two weeks to six months. With an ever-changing list of guests, each with their own particular needs, keeping supplies of personal hygiene products along with clothes and everyday items like bath towels and sheets is no easy task.



Volunteer Mary Jo McLaughlin (left) and Room at the Inn Program Director Melanie Matthew work together to make sure Caritas fulfills specific needs for their clients.

That's where Caritas Connections has been able to make a difference. Caritas began working with Room at the Inn more than 8 years ago by donating pajamas to individuals who spent the night at St. Gerard Majella. In 2019, Caritas expanded its ministry with Room at the Inn when Lynn Grigone became their personal shopper. Mary Jo McLaughlin took over as personal shopper in 2021.

According to Melanie Matthew, Program Director at Room at the Inn, "Caritas came in at a time when we needed them the most. Due to the pandemic, we had to restructure our program and needed extra resources to support that change. Caritas stepped in and helped fill that void. Today, they help provide us with what our guests need, when they need it."

"We are blessed to work with Caritas Connections," said Matthew. "Their ability to provide personal hygiene products, as well as brand new clothes, bath towels, pillows, blankets, comforters and even storage bins and car seats for infants continues to make a huge difference in helping our guests get back on their feet again. Since our clients are sheltering in place, all these items are a huge help to us."

Room at the Inn is just one of many organizations, groups and places that benefit from the many works of Caritas Connections. The more people who volunteer their time as well as donate to the organization, the more people Caritas Connections can help. The need is great. The good you can do is immense.

client profile: Circle of Concern

The relationship that Caritas Connections has developed with Circle of Concern takes our mission of connecting those who have with those who need to a whole new level.

Circle of Concern is a food pantry in west St. Louis County that has been helping to feed the hungry and provide assistance to low-income families in the surrounding area since 1967. With a paid staff of 5 employees and more than 300+ volunteers, they work as one to help reduce hunger and poverty.

A few years ago, they began donating some of their excess items like sample size shampoo or conditioner bottles to Caritas thanks to Chris Gibbons. During the pandemic, their donations to Caritas increased and a lot of the items they were able to donate like incontinence products and other personal care items that aren't covered by food stamps proved to be a great help to the clients that Caritas serves.

According to Michelle Lepak, who is the Pantry Director at Circle of Concern, "we're happy to work with Caritas because we never want to see donated items go to waste. With Caritas, it's great to see two non-profit organizations working together towards a common goal."

We couldn't agree more and encourage our readers to learn more about Circle of Concern and if you're looking for additional volunteer opportunities beyond Caritas, you can call Stephanie Moreland at 636-861-2623 or email stephanie@circleofconcern.org

Steve Proscino has another full trunk thanks to yet another donation of items from Circle of Concern.

