

Tributes

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

In Honor Of:

Penny Helmsing
John and Jan Glunt's anniversary
Father Bryon
Paul Delanty
Father Skillman
Michael and Carolyn Gunn

In Memory Of:

John Winter
Patrick, Joyce & Mary Ann Howley
Jack Baudendistel
Buschmann & Thomas Families
Jorge Luis Tumialan
Marilyn Dunn Garland
Dorothy Vlasak
Randall Essma
Ann Proscino
Doug Flavin
Connie Kisner
Jennie Talbot
Mary Ann Hess
Dave Redington
David Pilla
John Fitzgerald

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



CONNECTIONS, INC.

PO Box 31072
St. Louis, MO 63131

NON-PROFIT MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PRESORT INC.



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

Bring Us Your Shipping Boxes

Please don't put your cardboard boxes in the curbside recycling bin. Let us recycle them! Right now, we're in need of empty boxes. But size matters! **They should be about the size of a baby diaper or paper ream box.** 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.

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....

STAYING connected

The newsletter of Caritas Connections, Inc.

Annual Appeal Letter Stresses Commitment to Delivering Hope Throughout the Metro Area

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.

As an all-volunteer organization, Caritas Connections relies on the generosity of its donors to help us fulfill our mission of serving the poor and underserved throughout the metro St. Louis area. Every year is a new challenge to raise the funds that allow us to continue to serve more than 30 different clients in a variety of ways that other social service agencies simply cannot do.

This past year, the ongoing effects of the pandemic have been a challenge—to both the customers we serve and the volunteers who serve them. In our annual appeal letter, we delved into a few of the new ways we found to help those in need. Partnering with area restaurants, neighborhood canned food drives and an expanded roster of personal shoppers all helped us deliver hope to the poor and underserved.

The need continues to grow. As our letter stated, “Our ability to continue to help the poor and underserved simply cannot happen without your support—which is why we are asking for your help. Consider the fact that your donation will go even further as we have an anonymous donor who has once again issued a challenge grant where every donation of \$125 or more will be matched up to \$20,000.”

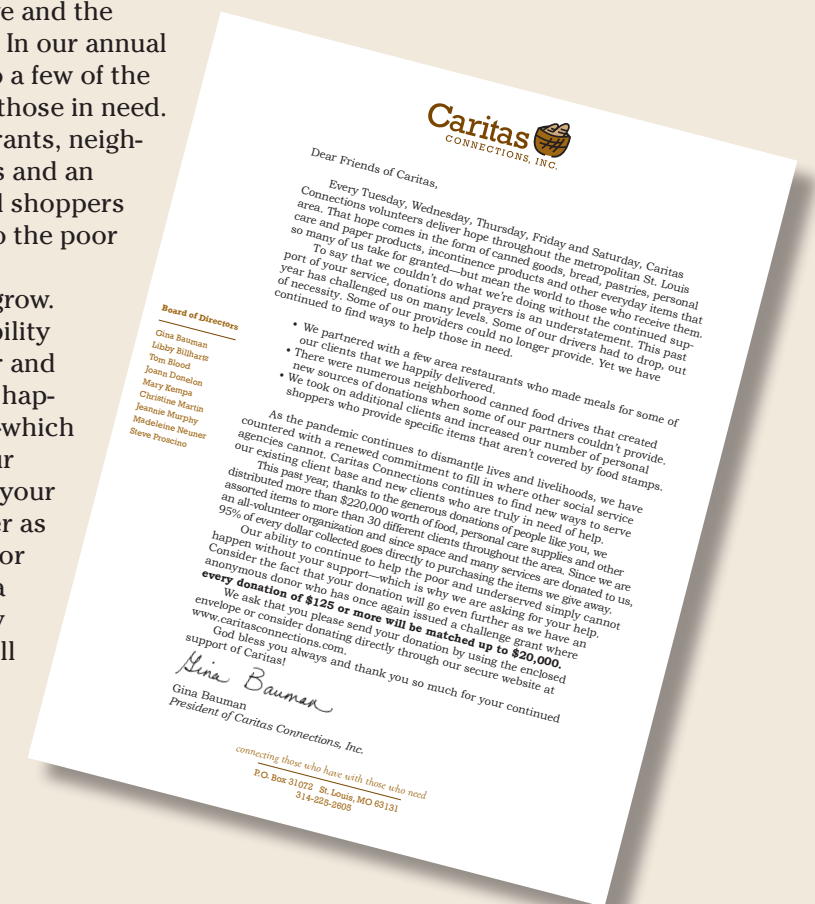
Please help us continue to do what we do best. We

are a grass-roots organization that depends on the generosity of our donors. Over the years, Caritas has helped turn lives around and we can't begin to tell you how many people have thanked us for our on-going support.

Please help us keep the good going by donating directly through our secure website at www.caritasconnections.com or by sending a check to Caritas Connections, P.O. Box 31072, St. Louis, MO 63131

Inside

- 2 Golf Tournament Returns
- 2 A Sweet Salute to Merb's
- 2 Special Delivery for Refugees
- 3 Something Extra
- 3 New Clients
- 4 Tributes
- 4 Every Week at Caritas



WINTER 2021 ISSUE

How Sweet She Was



Caritas Connections mourns the loss of Teri Bearden, owner of Merb's Candies (pictured above) who was a long-time contributor to the organization. Teri passed away in September of this year.

Teri always said that everything at Merb's Candies was "made with love" and her love of helping others was always a big part of the overall operation of the store. Since 2014, Merb's Candies has donated more than \$30,000 worth of candies, apples and strawberries to Caritas Connections, which were distributed to clients throughout the metro area.

Teri's generosity in donating items goes back many years as she first began donating in the mid-1980s. According to her daughter, Taylor Bearden, "From the time I was growing up, Teri was always a very caring, giving person who would always do whatever she could to help those in need."

Caritas salutes Teri and Merb's Candies and is grateful to her daughter for continuing with that caring attitude.

Golf Tournament Back in Full Swing

The biggest fundraiser of the year for Caritas Connections returned to Aberdeen Golf Course on August 27, raising more than \$60,000 for the organization.

The event was close to a complete sell-out. As the carts and golfers were all lined up for the shotgun start, there seemed to be great happiness amongst all the participants. Not only were people getting the chance to play and in turn, help raise money for Caritas, but there was also a feeling that things were close to returning to normal again after the previous year's event had been cancelled due to the pandemic.

Corporate sponsorships increased. New sponsors brought guests to the outing who in turn were kind enough to make donations to the organization. The new video showcasing Caritas Connections was on display afterward as participants enjoyed their meal—especially dessert provided by one of our donors—SmallCakes.

Nothing went to waste, either, as leftover food items made it to our storage garage where they were later



Frank Leta Team—No one won the car this year!

loaded into the Caritas vans and delivered to clients.

The Golf Tournament committee thanks everyone who volunteered for the event as well as everyone who signed up to play and attend the dinner afterward. Next year, the plan is to return to Aberdeen once again—though this time in the spring, not in the August heat. We can't wait!

Caritas Delivers for Afghan Refugees

The request was a simple one. Could Caritas Connections loan its van and perhaps arrange for a driver to help deliver a variety of food items and clothing to the International Institute of St. Louis to help some of the recently arrived Afghan refugees as they get accustomed to their new living arrangements?



The answer was an obvious yes as Bruce Vogelgesang and Mike Rathmann volunteered to pick up donated items from parishioners of Saint Gerard Majella that were gathered in the garage of Greg and Diane Bengard. After delivering the items to the International Institute, Bruce commented, "The response from SGM and the St. Louis region was nothing short of overwhelming. We were fortunate to help and witness the response."

Caritas was happy to make the deliveries and salutes the Bengards for coordinating the donation effort. Connecting those who have with those who need is what we're all about!

The Caritas Connections van is loaded up and ready for delivery!

Something Extra in Their Stockings

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, this holiday season Caritas has been able to provide additional items from our clients' wish lists. In addition to our regular weekly and monthly deliveries of food, personal care, incontinence and cleaning products, Caritas has purchased new items like blankets, jackets, hats, gloves, small appliances, hams and turkeys for our clients who have residential programs. Maria Mullis, our contact at the Saint Louis Crisis Nursery summed up the feelings of many of our clients with this note of appreciation stating, "Every year, my clients wait for this holiday because they know there are people like you who make their life a little happier." In this season of giving, Caritas is happy to be able to give a little more.



An Important Note about Donating Perishable Items

Caritas Connections relies on the generosity of our volunteers and donors who support us in so many ways. With op-

erations once again at 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.

We try to make the best use of every item that is given to us and would never want something to go to waste or spoil. So we request that if you're dropping off any perishable food items, **please call or text Libby Billhartz at 636-236-5212** to let her know what and when you dropped something off. Also please make a note of your food donation on the white board located in the garage. 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 that is attached to the SGM Parish Office, please contact Mary Kempa at 314-504-8717 or email marykempa2@gmail.com.



new clients

ST. AGNES CHURCH

Caritas Connections is pleased to add St. Agnes Church as our newest client. We have been delivering some paper products to them for the last several months, helping out the two remaining Sisters who assist about 85 families within the parish. So far, we've been donating and delivering personal care items to help supplement the Sisters with their efforts.

We have arranged for two personal shoppers to help better serve the specific needs of those receiving assistance. We look forward to helping them help others.

ST. LOUIS COUNTY PROBATION PROGRAM

Our organization has supported the U.S. Federal Probation Office for many years. When one of our key contacts at the Federal Probation office took a new job at the St. Louis County Probation office he knew he could count on Caritas to support his new endeavor.

Scott Anders asked us for a supply of drawstring backpacks filled with personal care items that could be distributed to recently paroled individuals. Formerly incarcerated individuals who are integrating back into society literally have nothing. The backpacks help get them started.

Research has shown that when parolees have access to social services, job and education opportunities and positive support, then recidivism rates decrease. We are proud to make a difference in the lives of these people.