

Tributes

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

In Honor Of:

Paul & Dodie Raczekiewicz
50th Wedding Anniversary
Fr. Bryon
Mary Frein
All God's blessings
Ed & Marci Wanner
SGM Parishioners
Mike Haywood
Mary Kempa
Mary Sippel
Brian Billhartz

In Memory Of:

Jack & Connie Sullivan
Ann Proscino
Joann Williams
Keith Scott
Norm & Bea Fitzler
David "Pudge" Switzer
Charles Etling
John Hefele
Frank Ganninger
Bill Boyle
Jack Baudendistel
Jorge Ruis Tumialan
John Meyer
M Douglas Flavin
Magac, Walsh, McBride, Britton,
Terry & Wagoner Families
Harry Saunders
Cathy Wedler
Emily Smith



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STAYING connected

The newsletter of Caritas Connections, Inc.

2022 Financial Report—Inflation Takes its Toll

Thanks to the generosity of both our donors and volunteer network, Caritas Connections continues to fulfill its core mission of helping the poor and underserved in the St. Louis metro area.

For the year, we spent \$297,000 on food, clothing, personal care items, computer equipment, diapers, pullups and wipes and other supplies that go directly to our clients—more than any year in our history. But that increase in spending was primarily due to a more than 20% increase in costs due to rising inflation.

Our total income, consisting of individual and corporate contributions, Gifts in Kind and of our Golf Tournament, was more than \$264,000. As a result, we had to dip into our reserve funds to offset the difference. This was also a first for the organization—but a reason why we maintain a reserve in the first place.

Towards the end of 2022, we put a hold on taking on any additional clients. We are also actively pursuing more grants through a variety of resources in the hopes of helping to offset continued rising prices.

As an organization, we have always kept

our expenses as low as possible. Because Caritas has no salaried employees and because of donations of many required services, such as auto repair and warehouse space, we operate with extremely low overhead.

Once again, our overhead was less than 5% of our total expenditures for the year. **That means that for every dollar donated, more than \$.95 goes directly to helping the poor. That is a formula that we have no intention of deviating from—now or in the future.**

Although there is still an adequate amount of money set aside for unexpected needs, we hope to avoid reducing those reserves this year—which is why we ask that if you have given before, to please give again—and possibly increase your amount to help offset the cost of inflation. Consider being a sponsor in our annual golf tournament. And if your employer does matching donations, please reach out to them before you donate. Finally, if you know of anyone who has done grant writing in the past and they're willing to help, please have them email caritaconnections@gmail.com or call us at 314-973-9197.

Do you have grant writing skills?

Caritas Connections is looking for available grant funding. If you or someone you know has experience in grant writing and would be willing to help Caritas Connections, please call 314-973-9197 or e-mail: CaritasConnections@gmail.com

Planned Gift Giving

Caritas Connections is eligible for **matching gifts**. We are also 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 law changes. To learn more or to volunteer to help, call 314-973-9197 or e-mail: CaritasConnections@gmail.com

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

Thank you for your ongoing support!

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.

Inside

- 2 Enterprise Holdings Foundation
- 2 Socks 4 Soles
- 2 Donated Laptops
- 3 Client Profile: Our Lady of Guadalupe
- 3 Microwave Donation
- 3 Student Can Collectors
- 3 Volunteer Spotlight:
4 Anonymous Workers
- 4 Tributes

Golf Tournament Set to Tee Off on May 19th

Food, family, friends—what could be better than a day on the links supporting Caritas?

Last year, the Caritas Connections Golf Tournament moved back to springtime and the weather was extremely cooperative. This year, we're excited for its May return at Aberdeen Golf Course. Please mark your calendars now for Friday, May 19th and plan on joining us for our biggest fundraiser of the year. You can play, be a sponsor or simply join us afterward for dinner. To register or for more info, [visit caritasconnections.com](http://visit.caritasconnections.com) and click Golf Tournament.



SPRING 2023 ISSUE



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.

Enterprise Holdings Foundation Grant Makes Holidays Brighter



Paul Scherer and sons, David (seated) and Paulie, work on organizing donated socks, gloves and underwear for those in need.

When Ed Johnson, who works for Enterprise Holdings, submitted a grant proposal on behalf of Caritas Connections, he had no idea what a difference that donation would ultimately make.

This story began last June when Ed contacted Caritas and said he wanted to apply for a grant from the Enterprise Holdings Foundation. Ed has known Father Bryon for more than 50 years and mentioned how Father spent many hours mentoring and teaching so many of the values he still lives by to this day. His familiarity with Caritas made him believe the organization would be a great fit for a grant from the Enterprise Holdings Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Enterprise Holdings that is committed to strengthening the communities where the company operates.

In November, we were informed that the Enterprise Holdings Foundation had approved a \$5,000 grant on behalf of Caritas. It couldn't have come at a better time! Traditionally, Caritas has helped many of our clients provide Christmas gifts that help make the holidays a little brighter for those they

serve. A decision was made to use the money expressly for that purpose.

Here's a look at how that \$5,000 grant money was put to use.

- The Federal Probation Office received 26 frozen turkeys for Christmas dinners.
- Our Lady of Guadalupe received fruit, veggies, eggs, ground beef and chicken for their residents.
- Our Lady's Inn received 3 sets of new pots and pans and 3 car seats for residents' new households and for their children.
- St. Nicholas SVdP received several months of laundry detergent.
- The Wellston Center received new toaster ovens for making meals.
- The Crisis Nursery Outreach on Grand received kids' coats and toys for Christmas presents
- The Latino Crisis Nursery was able to give out small appliances (like can openers, coffee makers, toasters, etc.) as Christmas gifts for the families
- The Crisis Nursery Outreach in Festus gave out Christmas gifts for children and mothers as well as jackets, warm socks and picture frames.

Donated Laptops Help Detainees Pursue College Degree

Some detainees in the St. Louis County jail can now pursue a college degree to help them assimilate back into the community after they are released. And thanks to a dozen donated laptops provided by Caritas to the St. Louis County Department of Justice Services, they now have the online link needed to help them earn their degree.

The request for laptops came from St. Louis County Jail Director, Scott Anders. Anders had previously worked for the U.S. Probation Office where he was involved in a similar program for ex-offenders.

"The goal is not for them just to complete the classes here, it's for them to continue on with their education when they're released," Anders said. "The laptops provided by Caritas help to make that possible."

Delivery of the laptops happened the day before classes began. The request for help came from Anders as there weren't any funds set aside for purchase of the laptops. Caritas continues to deliver refurbished laptops to Criminal Justice Ministries. But there was no plan in place to support this new program.

When classes began, the detainees were presented with their laptops and the pursuit of a college degree was underway.



Client Profile: Our Lady of Guadalupe

Ever since she retired in 2008, Betty Newberry has been known as the "worker bee" at the Our Lady of Guadalupe food pantry in Ferguson where food and other essential items are distributed to those in need. Caritas has been helping by delivering bread and sweets on a monthly basis for almost a decade.

This past month, a Caritas dedicated shopper began supplementing the monthly deliveries to help provide more specific items like diapers and other personal care products. "We try to do our own weekly shopping for everyday items but it's hard to get enough sometimes. That's where Caritas really helps to make a difference."

According to Betty, "During the worst of the pandemic, there were pop up food pantries all over the Ferguson area so the number of people we served actually went

down. But most of those have disappeared—yet the need for food and other items remains. These days, we serve until we run out."

"Our group down here is pretty small," said Betty. "So, we're always grateful when Wednesday rolls around and we know there's a delivery from Caritas on the way."

As long as the need is there, Caritas will be ready to help.

Our Lady of Guadalupe 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.

Students Collect Hundreds of Canned Goods



SGM students work on packing up donated canned food items.

For the fourth year in a row as part of Catholic Schools Week, the students at St. Gerard Majella set about trying to fill the office of Principal Chris Guthrie with donated canned food items. The result? More than 1800 food items made it into her office!

But they didn't stay there long. At the end of the week, students gathered to sort and box all the cans and brought them to the SGM storage garage where they were soon after loaded into our vans and delivered to clients.

Special thanks go out to all who participated and SGM principal Chris Guthrie for their can do attitude in coordinating the drives and helping Caritas Connections.

Friend of Caritas Donates More Than 50 Microwaves

A long-time supporter of Caritas recently reached out to see if we'd have any interest in refurbished microwaves. The answer was a resounding yes. Several of them were delivered to the SGM garage and the remainder were picked up—and all distributed to a variety of thankful clients that included the Latino Crisis Nursey, The Federal Probation Office, Our Lady's Inn, the St. Augustine-Wellston Center and Fr. Dempsey's.

If all goes as planned, another round of microwaves will soon be on their way as well!

Volunteer Spotlight

FOUR ANONYMOUS WORKERS

Usually in this column, we like to highlight the volunteers who serve the client that we're featuring. Our Lady of Guadalupe receives monthly deliveries from a duo in the Caritas van and recently, has been the recipient of a dedicated shopper to help purchase tuna, chili, meats and other assorted food items on an every other week basis.

However, both the delivery duo and our new dedicated shoppers have graciously declined to have their names mentioned. So, we'll abide by that—but still want to highlight the generous work they do. Our dynamic delivery duo has been making deliveries on behalf of Caritas for years. They love to help and always mention that Father Bryon is their inspiration.

Turns out, Father Bryon is the common link with our new dedicated shopping team that just so happens to be a husband and wife. They met Father Bryon by chance two years ago when Father gave last rites to the brother of the husband. Several months later, our new dedicated shopper went on a delivery run with Father to East St. Louis—and soon after volunteered to pick up food items from Schnucks on behalf of Caritas.

Now, both he and his wife are working with Betty at Our Lady of Guadalupe, helping her by taking care of some of her shopping needs. To date, they've made two deliveries. "We love volunteering for Caritas," said our shopper. "In fact, we're going to start shopping for Mary Magdalene as well—but we'd prefer to remain anonymous."

For all four of these volunteers, we're happy to oblige and are humbled ourselves at their desire to stay out of the spotlight! If you know of anyone who'd like to volunteer—to be a driver, a shopper, a grant writer - or any other activit—we'll do our best to put you to work—even if you want to remain anonymous!