

Tributes

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

In Honor Of:

Fr. Bryon
Arthur and Joyce Clyne's
50th Anniversary
Catherine Sullivan
Scott and Mary Schmidt's
50th Anniversary
Dennis Meyer
Gary Behrens 80th birthday

In Memory Of:

Donna Laurietig Robbins
Jerry Klein
Joseph A. Kuda, Sr.
Kathleen Kovacs
John Morian
Buschman & Thomas families
Ginny Switzer
Joan Billing
Ben Hawickhorst

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: CaritasConnections@gmail.com



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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.

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

Our Donors:

Britt's Bakehouse, Bello's Bakery, The Daily Bread, Great Harvest Bread, Merb's Candies, Panera Bread (Des Peres), Pizza Hut (Des Peres), Raterman and Associates, Schnucks (Des Peres) and Small Cakes

Our Clients:

Barretts Backpack Program, Bavarian Senior Apartments, Bevo Senior Apartments, Blue Circle Rehab & Nursing, Boys Hope & Girls Hope, Criminal Justice Ministries, Devotional Missionary Baptist Church, Dutchtown Care & Rehab Center, East Side Heart and Home Family Center, Federal Probation Office Family Program, Ferguson Senior Resource Center, Father Dempsey's Charities, Grace Hill-The Patch Center, Guardian Angels Settlement, Kirkwood Nutrition on the Weekends, Minerva Place, Our Lady's Inn, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Robinson Elementary School Food Pantry, Room At the Inn, Ronald MacDonald House at St. Louis Children's Hospital, Rural Parish Workers, St. Augustine-Wellston Center, St. Francis Xavier SVDP, St. John Neumann Apartments, St. Louis County Probation Office, St. Louis Crisis Nursery, St. Mary Magdalen SDVP, St. Nicholas SVDP, St. Pius V Catholic Church, Sts. Teresa and Bridget SVDP, St. Vincent de Paul Parish and Santa Ana Apartments

STAYING connected

The newsletter of Caritas Connections, Inc.

Rain Fails to Dampen Spirits of Caritas Golfers

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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Showers came and went late in the round of the Caritas Connections Golf Tournament that took place on Friday, May 19th at Aberdeen Golf Club. But the rain did little to dampen the spirits of everyone who participated in the event which continues to be the largest fundraiser for the organization.

A full roster of golfers took to the links after opening remarks by Aberdeen's golf pro, Greg Jansen, followed by a blessing from Father Bryon. The Frank Leta foursome came out on top with a winning

score of 16 under par. But in the end, it is the clients served by Caritas that are the true winners as the more than \$41,000 raised goes directly toward helping us meet their needs.

This year, each foursome was named after one of our Caritas clients in the hopes of better educating participants about who we serve and the many services we provide. Special thanks to everyone on the Caritas golf committee, our many sponsors and all of our participants. Your support helps us in our mission of helping others.

SAVE THE DATE! Volunteer Mass and Appreciation Dinner

Please mark your calendars for Saturday, October 7th at 4 pm for the annual Volunteer Mass and Appreciation Dinner to be held at the home of Tom and Chris Blood. This is a great time to celebrate the many volunteers who help Caritas help others! Stay tuned for more details via email later in the summer.

Donations down. Expenses up. What can you do to help?



Microwaves were distributed to 16 clients of St. Augustine Wellston Center food pantry.

Donated Microwaves Have Far-Reaching Impact

In our last newsletter, we mentioned how the owner of a redistribution company donated more than 30 refurbished microwaves that Caritas in turn, redistributed to five different clients we serve.

Our clients continued the redistribution process by giving them away to some of the individuals they serve. The recipients were thrilled and grateful to get them. One person mentioned that he had no working oven or hot plate in his home. The microwave allowed him to have his own, heated meal for the first time in many months. Just another reminder how some things that most of us take for granted, aren't always available to those we serve.

Over the past year, Caritas has had to turn down four new clients due to a lack of funding—something we've never had to do before. But just like we managed to make it through the pandemic, we know we'll meet our current challenges and rise above to continue our mission of connecting those who have with those in need.

So, what can you do to help?

If everyone who reads this newsletter made a small donation to Caritas, that in itself might allow us to help those clients we had to turn down. But there are other ways that could serve as new sources of funding:

1. See if your place of work has a **matching corporate donation** program. Many businesses and corporations in the metro St. Louis area have that option - essentially allowing your gift to be doubled. To see if your place of work has such a program, check your company website or ask someone in HR.

2. Many businesses also have **grant programs** and want to do their part

to help St. Louis become better as a community. We have been fortunate to receive grants from a few companies, but we know there are more who could help - and having a connection from someone within the organization is often the key to success. Check to see if your company offers grants and let us know.

3. Know any **grant writers**? We've been pursuing grants through a variety of sources but would love to have additional help.

4. Have a **fund-raising idea**? A dinner auction? Trivia night? Neighborhood car wash? We're open to any and all ideas - and not just to raise money - during the pandemic, there were a variety of fundraisers that featured area restaurants, neighborhood as well as school-related canned food drives all aimed at getting more of the items that our clients need.

If you'd like to help or have an idea you'd like to share, please email us at caritasconnections@gmail.com.

A Special Salute to Sr. Carol Ann Callahan

As one of the founding members of the St. Augustine Wellston Center, Sister Carol Ann Callahan has always been passionate about serving the needs of others. Her commitment was evident on a daily basis. "She always had a smile on her face," said Janet Wittenauer who often made Caritas deliveries direct to Sister Carol.

About two years ago, Sister Carol stepped aside as director of the Center. But her impact on the community remains. She founded a Senior Support Group at the Wellston Center that is now run by Haley Calabro. And she was instrumental in getting the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to back down from their intent to demolish not only the Wellston Center, but also 200 public housing units in Wellston.

"Sister Carol spearheaded the effort to save all those units," said Haley. "Now they're completely redoing those units - and much of that is thanks to her efforts and dedication."

Sister Carol currently resides at Catherine's Residence within the Mercy Center. Haley mentioned at the close of her interview, "If I could thank her on behalf of the community, I most certainly would." So, on behalf of Haley, and everyone connected with the Wellston Center as well as those of us at Caritas, "Thank you, Sister Carol and job well done!"



Sister Carol at the Caritas Golf tournament in 2013 speaking about the mission of Wellston Center.

Client Profile: St. Augustine Wellston Center

The St. Augustine Wellston Center was founded in 1993 by Sr. Mary Beckmann and Sr. Kathy Stark, Sisters of Notre Dame along with Sr. Carol Ann Callahan, Sister of Mercy. To this day, the mission remains the same: to support low-income people in the Wellston area by providing nutritious food, affordable staples, social service support and health needs in a supportive environment.

Even before Caritas was officially founded in 2002, Father Bryon was making regular food deliveries to the Center. Over the years, that connection has grown beyond food items to include personal care products, clothing, and a variety of other items.

Haley Calabro, Executive Director of the Wellston Center, is appreciative of all that Caritas does. "Caritas allows us to offer our clients consistency," said Haley. "Thanks to their regular weekly donations, we have the products our clients need that food stamps won't always buy."

Calabro, who's been at the Wellston Center since 2020, has seen firsthand the good that comes about through their connection to Caritas. "Just recently, Caritas provided us with 16 refurbished microwaves that we made available to some of our clients. They were truly overjoyed to receive what for them was a luxury to help elevate their cooking experience."

Beyond the weekly deliveries, Caritas also helps to support the Wellston Center's annual Christmas Club where customers can purchase brand new items at greatly reduced prices. "Caritas has brought us toys, small appliances and some clothing items that help to transform their space—and their holidays," said Haley.

"Every time I see that Caritas van roll into our lot on Tuesdays, I'm grateful for all that Caritas does—and know our clients are, too," said Haley.



Volunteers unload another delivery at the St. Augustine Wellstone Center.

Volunteer Spotlight: Janet & Bill Wittenauer

For about the past five years, Janet Wittenauer, with frequent assists from her husband, Bill, has been purchasing and delivering a variety of personal care items for the St. Augustine Wellston Center.

Janet and Bill make it a point to consult with Haley Calabro, Executive Director of the Wellston Center, to create a weekly shopping list. With dollars not going quite as far these days, the Wittenauers try to get the most of their allocated amount, purchasing shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, and other personal care items. It's a routine that goes back to when she would pick up and drop off items to Sister Carol Ann Callahan at the Center.

Janet and Bill are especially fond of their annual Christmas purchases for the Wellston Center's Christmas Club. "We'll purchase toys, small appliances like blenders or toasters and drop them off at the Center," said Janet. Those items are then offered for sale at their Christmas Store at greatly reduced prices. "It

gives the people who struggle a little self-respect, knowing they were able to purchase a brand-new item that can be given (or received) as a Christmas gift."

"Caritas does so much for so many," said Janet. And they're both amazed at how many different clients Caritas serves and what it takes to serve them all each and every week.

Bill picks up treats from Smallcakes on Mondays and Thursdays and often helps with deliveries. He has also served yearly on the Golf Tournament's Committee, being tasked with the purchase of the popular "gift" every year.

"I'm a very organized person," said Janet. "And Caritas is such a well-run organization - Bill and I are proud to be volunteers and contribute however we can.



Janet and Bill Wittenauer picking up some Smallcakes donations.