



Graduates Find Support and Employment

Thanks to the generosity of our donors and skyrocketing demand for Soup of Success soups, we have been able to continue, and even expand, employment of Soup of Success graduates. Rachel, Ebony, and Belinda are three of the graduates we currently employ as production assistants.

Rachel, a single mother of three, graduated in 2017 and focuses most of her time on soup production. After graduation, she continued to stay connected with staff and classmates who provide her with support as she navigates through the challenges life throws her way. She found employment and was working a night job cleaning offices, but was looking for more work. Rachel said, “When I heard that Soup of Success was hiring, I was ready! I love being here; it’s uplifting! I really enjoy working with the class during production and watching them grow.”

Belinda graduated in 2019 and began as a production assistant soon after, producing our shower melts, mittens, and candles. Belinda had previously worked as a fiber cutter for 18 years, but the industrial work took a toll on her body, and that, coupled with depression, made it hard to find work to make ends meet. Belinda says, “Being here makes me feel better about myself.” Before Soup of Success Belinda would avoid going out as much as possible, and if she needed to get groceries she would pull her hoodie up over her head and grab what she needed, hardly looking so she could get out as fast as possible. These days she feels more confident. She enjoys going out with friends, talking with others, and her grown children see her smile and hear her laugh more than ever before.

Ebony, a single mother of two, graduated in 2020. Since graduation, she has been working through some legal issues with an abusive former partner. She has been coming in a couple of days a week to help with soup production and has found that work has been a bright spot for her while she works through some issues with anxiety and depression. Ebony says, “It’s been great to work with participants in the program. I see myself in them. I tell them it’s hard but they can get through it. I can encourage them to do the work they need to do to heal and grow.”

The women’s direct supervisor is Soup of Success Production Manager, Cheryl Ross. Cheryl says, “I’m very proud of all of our Production Assistants. They interact with class participants and offer inspiration because they have gone through the same process of healing and growth and have come out on the other side. They step up to the plate and are willing to pay it forward by supporting current participants. I am hopeful that we can offer more graduates this employment opportunity in the future.”



Rachel and Belinda



Ebony



Newest Soup of Success Graduates

We celebrated five incredibly amazing women at the Soup of Success graduation January 27. What a blessing it was to hear from them and their friends and families. We are so proud of Mary, Gayle, Caritas, Candace and Jessica!

Outreach to the Hispanic Community



One of our big goals in 2021 was to increase our outreach and better serve the Hispanic community in Elkhart County. Thanks to a grant through the Community Foundation of Elkhart County, we were able to do just that. Prior to receiving the funding, and hiring three new part-time bilingual staff, less than 7% of those we served were Hispanic, but approximately 22% of the population of Elkhart identifies as Hispanic. Through the outreach and support efforts of our new dedicated staff, by August nearly 17% of those we served through our food pantry and financial services were Hispanic. We are proud of our new staff who have made this outreach happen and have had a positive impact on the Hispanic community. From left: Rosy Hinojo (Financial Services Counselor), Linda Garcia (Bilingual Food Services Assistant), and Yolo Lopez DeMarco (Community Impact Director).

Community Gardening Classes



The Seed to Feed program is offering a series of free, 1-hour community classes about different gardening topics in 2022. A different topic will be discussed each month by staff or local experts. Our first session focused on microgreens. Attendees learned what microgreens are, how to grow them, and were able to sample a microgreen smoothie. The next class will focus on how to start seeds (3/14/2022). "These short classes are intended to empower community members to be able to grow their own food at home and we will offer resources to those interested in doing such," said Abby Utterback, Garden Education Coordinator. The classes are appropriate for beginners and take place in the Seed to Feed Greenhouse. To learn more, visit: www.churchcommunityservices.org/stfclasses.

Volunteer of the Year



From left: Tom McArthur, CCS Executive Director, Naomi Leary, Volunteer Coordinator, Lani Fischer, Volunteer of the Year, Gabby Parrish, Seed to Feed Director, Michael Downing, Food Services Director

We couldn't do the work we do for the community without our amazing volunteers! This year we are honoring Lani Fischer as our Volunteer of the Year.

Nearly two years ago, Lani reached out to see if she could volunteer at Church Community Services for a few hours every couple weeks. She was already familiar with the purpose of our Seed to Feed program, as she was, and is, an active participant in the Seed to Feed garden at River Oaks Community Church. Little did she know she would soon find herself spending several days each week at Church Community Services, and become an integral support to our Seed to Feed and Food Pantry programs! As a member of River Oaks, she also acts as the CCS advocate for their Local Compassion Committee, sharing information about the needs Church Community Services has to see if there are ways the church can help.

Gabby Parrish, Seed to Feed Director, says, "I can't say enough good things about Lani. Lani demonstrates humility, service, and kindness in all that she does. Whether it is handing out boxes at the food pantry, running for deliveries, organizing seeds, washing and bagging produce, planting in the greenhouse, giving direction to pantry guests and volunteers, or just being a listening ear on a stressful day, she does it all with the grace and love of Jesus Christ. CCS is a better place because of her and I am so thankful for her hard work and friendship."

Donor Highlight

The generosity of our donors allows Church Community Services to help our neighbors who are most in need and we are so grateful to them for making our work possible. Joan Rhoades is one of those people we are grateful for. Joan began sharing her time and treasure with Church Community Services in 2018 when an outgoing board member invited her to join the board of directors. Joan said, "I had never seen an organization with such passionate former board members and staff so committed to helping their community. As I learned more about the agency, I came to appreciate that Church Community Services not only meets basic needs but is committed to lifting people out of poverty. I feel confident giving financially because I have seen excellent financial stewardship firsthand and I know that the people we serve are in real need and have the best staff providing that help."



Have you considered Qualified Charitable Distributions from your IRA?

Are you looking to save on your taxes while you make a powerful impact on the lives of those most in need in your community? If you are 70 1/2 or older and have a traditional Individual Retirement Account (IRA), you are eligible to make a tax-free gift from your IRA to a qualified organization of your choice, like Church Community Services. These gifts, called Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) can be made whether or not you itemize your deductions on your tax return.

To Qualify

- You must be 70 1/2 or older at the time you make your gift.
- Transfers must be made directly from a traditional or Roth IRA account to Church Community Services.
- Gift must be outright with no material benefits received and cannot be used to fund gift annuities.

Benefits

Qualified charitable distributions:

- can total up to \$100,000 per year
- can be used to satisfy your required withdrawal
- may be excluded from gross income for federal income tax purposes.



THOR
Go Everywhere. Stay Anywhere.™

We are delighted to be a community partner of THOR Industries! Pictured are Rick Schutt, Director of Community Engagement at THOR and Tom McArthur, Executive Director of CCS.

Join us for an
"I had no idea" tour!

We often hear "I had no idea Church Community Services did this!" after giving a presentation or taking someone on a tour. We want to make this eye-opening opportunity available to all. Every month on the 1st Thursday at 10:30 am (English) and, beginning again in April, the 3rd Thursday at 5:30 pm (Spanish), we will be giving tours to everyone interested in learning about the amazing work being done on our campus, and you will receive a bag of one of our famous Soup of Success soups to sample at home! To register, visit: www.churchcommunityservices.org/i-had-no-idea



When you shop at Kroger with your Rewards card linked to support Church Community Services, a percentage of every qualifying purchase is donated to CCS by Kroger. It's an easy, free way to give back on everyday purchases!

- To participate visit kroger.com/account/communityrewards
- Login with your account info. (New users will need to create an account which requires some basic information, a valid email address and a rewards card.)
- Search for Church Community Services or PE563 and then click Enroll.
- Shop at Kroger with your loyalty card and know that we appreciate your support!

Thank You!



Thank you Interra Credit Union! Their Hometown Giving Program donated to our Soup of Success program financially and through a large variety of classroom items that we will use for art therapy and multiple classes in our curriculum.



Thank you Gaska Tape! From left: Tom McArthur, Executive Director of Church Community Services, Mike Perez, Development Director with Faith Mission, Jack B. Smith, Jr., owner of Gaska Tape and Lt. Wayne Benedict of the Salvation Army.



Thank you to Andrew Gingrich who hosted a drum-a-thon to raise funds for the Church Community Services Food Pantry! Great fun was had!



Thank you Olive Mennonite Church for your support of our Seed to Feed program! They had a Soup Cook-off, with proceeds coming to Seed to Feed for the purchase of some much-needed items. We appreciate your support!



Thank you INOVA Federal Credit Union. Pictured from left: Dillon Hygema, Kayce Miramontes, Amber Porter, Michael Downing (CCS), Dan Weaver and Judy Gaskill



Thank you to Culver's for holding "Concretes for a Cause" and continuing to gather donations for Church Community Services! Shown are Michael Downing, Food Services Director at CCS and Andrew Habich, owner of the Culver's in Elkhart.



Thank you River Oaks! We are grateful for their "FBI" Fixers, Builders and Inspectors group who helped us install a railing and better ramp for our food pantry door. We also appreciate their financial support so we can purchase a tractor for our Seed to Feed program.



Thank you EFP Corporation for hosting a food drive for our food pantry! Pictured is Steve Stewart of EFP Corporation and his two sons.



Thank you Waypoint Community Church and Granger Community Church for your annual donation of food boxes we deliver to those who are homebound. Pictured are members of Granger Community Church.



Thank you Chris Edwards and the Kill Switch band for organizing another annual food drive for our food pantry and to VFW Post #88 for hosting!



Thank you Formula Trailers. From left: Brad Bell, Greg Hes, Dwight Barnes, from Formula Trailers, and Tom McArthur, Executive Director of Church Community Services.

ATTENTION ELKHART COUNTY TEENS!

Are you interested in a paid internship where you learn about gardening and help your community?

To learn more and apply go to:
<http://bit.ly/teengrowers>



Seed to Feed
 A program of CHURCH COMMUNITY SERVICES

SUMMER SESSION BEGINS IN JUNE

Wool Sweaters Needed!

Help women in your community by donating your used sweaters with 30% or greater wool content.

The Soup of Success program uses sweaters to create and sell upcycled wool mittens. Sales from mittens go directly to empowering local women through job and life skills training.



¡DIA DEL NIÑO!
 CHILDREN'S DAY 2022

Food Trucks!
 Juggling!
 Games!
 Face Painting!
 Bounce House!

Saturday, April 30 1-5 pm
 Church Community Services
 907 Oakland Avenue, Elkhart



Ruth and Friends
Yard Sale!
 Benefitting Soup of Success



May 19 & 20 (8am-4pm)
 May 21 (8am-3pm)
 Church Community Services
 907 Oakland Ave., Elkhart

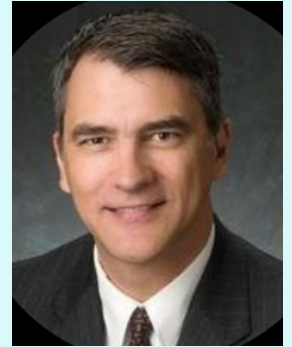



New Faces at Church Community Services

In the past few months, we have been fortunate to have several new community members join our board of directors. Please help us welcome: Maria Hernandez Aguirre (Lippert Components), Dave Cripe (1st Source Bank), Becky Miller (Lake City Bank), Marty Irving* (Retired), and Larry Medina* (Cleer Vision Windows). (*Pictures not available at time of publication.)



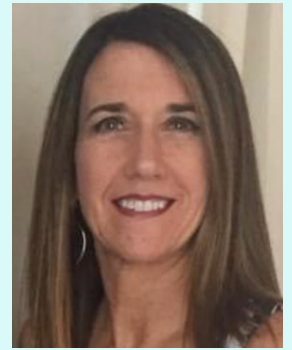
Maria Hernandez



Dave Cripe



Linda Garcia



Becky Miller

We are excited to introduce Linda Garcia as our new Bilingual Food Services Assistant. Linda was born and raised in California and has also lived in Oregon and Utah. She moved to Elkhart a year ago with her husband and two youngest children. Linda has eight kids, ranging in age from 9-30. She most recently worked as a pre-K to 2nd-grade teacher. Linda says she didn't have a lot growing up, so she understands what that is like and is happy to work in a place where she can serve the community. Her interests include cars, crafts, sewing and construction!

meijer

SIMPLY give

Church Community Services is happy to once again be part of Meijer's Simply Give program. Shoppers can purchase \$10 gift cards now through April 2 that will be given to our food pantry so we can fill our shelves. Saturdays, March 5 and 26 Meijer will double match all cards purchased.

Follow Church Community Services
and our Soup of Success program!



Food Pantry Needs

Canned soups, meat and vegetables

Cereals (hot and cold)

Crackers

Rice

Hamburger Helper-like meal helpers

Peanut butter

Jelly

Condiments

Boxed potatoes

Cash donations allow the pantry to purchase items at an unbeatable price of 18 cents a pound.

Diapers

Personal care and hygiene items

Volunteers Needed!

We need volunteers for the following:

- Seed to Feed needs volunteers to help harvest, wash and pack greens from our greenhouse on Monday mornings for food pantry visitors.
- Seed to Feed is looking for someone to come in weekly to help organize and input seed donations.
- Seed to Feed needs individuals or groups to help wash and organize donated garden pots in the greenhouse.
- Sorting and repackaging food and cleaning/organizing for our food pantry.
- Delivering food to homebound individuals. Volunteers are needed the third Wednesday of each month to deliver food in their own car to approximately 6 people.
- Assisting the Food Services Director as we serve our guests Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.
- Spanish speaking bi-lingual interpreter for the food pantry.
- Drivers for our box trucks (26 and 16-foot trucks) and vans for food pick-up. CDL required for 26-foot truck, but not necessary for other vehicles.
- Groups to make Soup of Success Soups. Adopt one Thursday evening a month, 6-7:30 pm. Bring a group of 4-8 people to assemble bags of soup.

If you are interested, visit www.churchcommunityservices.org/vol or email volunteer@churchcommunityservices.org

Financial Services Hours

Monday and Thursday: 9am-11:45am & 1pm-3:45pm

Wednesday: 9am-11:45am



Food Pantry Hours

Monday 11am-3pm

Wednesday 11am-3pm

Thursday 11am-3pm & 4-7pm



Food Pantry