



# *Celebrating*



# *Years of Hope*

Church Community Services is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> year of providing hope to our Elkhart neighbors in need. We've come a long way from our little house on Benham Avenue where we focused on tutoring in the public schools, children's camps, emergency financial services and providing a few loans to those who would otherwise not be able to obtain them. Today Church Community Services has grown into a campus that still provides emergency financial assistance, but also houses our client choice food pantry and Soup of Success, our job and life-skills training program for women who want to take life changing steps to move their families out of poverty.

Moving forward, our focus remains on breaking the grip of poverty that restricts so many families. We are actively pursuing initiatives to expand the availability of food and to tackle the larger barriers to self-sufficiency such as reliable transportation, affordable childcare, and adequate housing.

As a way of celebrating 50 Years of Hope, we are hosting a special event, Sounds of Celebration. This free community concert will be held April 26 at Trinity Church on Jackson. See inside for more details! In addition, we will be unveiling a new look for Church Community Services! We hope to see you there!

Blessings,

Tom McArthur



## Spring Is Here!

Can you believe it's already time to start growing plants for the summer season? Neither can we, though we couldn't be more excited! This is the first year the greenhouse grew plants throughout the winter, and the second year it is being used to grow vegetable starts from seed. Volunteers have been hard at work harvesting winter greens, watering, and planting seeds. We are starting basil, cabbage, eggplant, peppers, tomatillos, tomatoes, and a small selection of flowers. Thanks to a grant provided by the Goshen Health Foundation, we have purchased electric heat mats that keep our seeds warm and encourage healthy seedling growth. The seedlings will eventually be planted throughout our Seed to Feed gardens. These gardens truly symbolize the fruit of our community's hard work and compassion.

## Stories of Success Celebrated!

The second "Silent No More" was held on Tuesday, March 13 inside the beautiful Chapel of the Sermon on the Mount on the AMBS campus. The event showcased stories of courage and triumph from the Soup Of Success graduates and were performed by 8 incredible actresses who shared them monologue style to a crowd of 129 people. "The response of the crowd to the stories was wonderful," stated Betsy Ayrea Delfine, SOS Director. "It was amazing to be inspired and encouraged by the stories of our graduates and to have a better understanding of just how strong you have to be in order to keep moving forward in the face of difficult, sometimes overwhelming circumstances. It truly was an evening of relating to each other over the common ground of strength and overcoming fears." Silent No More raised over \$10,000 for CCS' Soup Of Success program and will help support scholarships for future Elkhart County women.



Thank you to our actresses! Left to right: Karen Wills, Dorothy Carter, Pauline Holloway, Annette Kaczanowski, Christa Jones, Holly Hickman, Cheryl Ross and Nekeisha Alanya Alexis

## What It Really Takes to Be Self-Sufficient

The current unemployment rate in Elkhart County is 2.5%. So why are people still struggling financially? "Unfortunately, just having a job isn't always enough to meet one's basic needs, and certainly not the needs of a family," says Vonda Horst, Director of Financial Services at CCS. According to the Indiana Institute for Working Families, research shows that to be self-sufficient, a family of 1 adult, 1 preschooler and 1 school-aged child would require the adult to make \$21.29 per hour! Therefore, an adult making minimum wage of \$7.25, can't possibly be self-sufficient working one job, even if it is full-time. And while some people work two or three jobs to try to make ends meet, that makes for a stressful life and those with children or other responsibilities outside work may not be able to work second or third shifts when childcare is scarce. Vonda interacts daily with people in need. "Most people who come in to our office want to make it on their own, but find it difficult to do so. Many people we see are just hanging on financially, but then an unexpected car or home repair sends them scrambling to make ends meet," explains Vonda. For 50 years Church Community Services has been serving the Elkhart County community through our emergency services of a food pantry and financial assistance program and we are grateful for the support individuals, businesses and churches who make it possible for us to help our neighbors in need.

# *Celebrating 50 Years of Hope!*

## **Church Community Services History Timeline**

### **1968**

Church Community Services was incorporated by local church leaders to pool resources and more effectively address issues faced by Elkhart County people in need. The first services were children's clubs and camping, emergency loans and gifts, help finding jobs, and home repairs.

### **1969**

CCS was located at 1703 Benham.

### **1971**

CCS food pantry was first set up at Faith Mission. Supporting churches provided board members, food and other resources. CCS coordinated the publicity and showing of the Martin L. King film at AMBS, an event being held in various locations across town.

### **1975**

Food pantry moved to the office on Benham.

### **1989**

CCS created an "Odd Jobs" program for 23 youth to work jobs for minimum wage during the summer.

### **1997**

Soup of Success, a job and life skills training program for women, was created.

### **1998**

CCS moved to 629 S Third Street.

### **2003**

The process of distributing food was changed when the food pantry became a Client Choice Food Pantry, meaning clients get to shop for the food items they want.

### **2009**

CCS moved to its current location on Oakland Ave. CCS began its Homebound Program of delivering groceries once a month to those who are homebound.

### **2012**

Seed to Feed was created with the purpose of providing homegrown solutions to local hunger.

### **2013**

CCS became a Partner Distributing Organization with the Food Bank of Northern Indiana, and opened the Food Bank of Elkhart County (FBEC), procuring food and distributing it to over 30 other food pantries and hot meal sites serving local food insecure families. FBEC ended operations after two years.

### **2014**

Men Alive was created as a holistic life skills and work readiness program for men who want to grow stronger and change the community.

### **Today**

CCS has 16 paid staff and utilizes over 300 volunteers. We are supported by over 50 churches and serve over 2,000 families every month.

## **50 Ways You Can Support Church Community Services!**

### **Volunteer!**

1. Volunteer in our food pantry once a month or once a week, as an individual or group
2. Help out in the greenhouse and garden at CCS as an individual or as a group
3. Organize a group of friends to plant a garden for Seed to Feed
4. Volunteer to cut and sew Soup of Success Mittens
5. Share information about Church Community Services with your friends through Facebook, email, etc.
6. Pray for Church Community Services staff and clients

### **Donate and Fundraise!**

7. Host a food drive competition between churches, between grades at school, between departments in your business
8. Be a part of "Pigs for the Pantry". A donation of \$125 will supply 665 USDA servings of ground pork, to those in need of protein in our community. To be involved, make checks payable to Church Community Services and note on the memo line "Pigs for the Pantry" OR go to [givetoccs.com](http://givetoccs.com) and designate your donation to "Pigs for the Pantry"
9. Purchase Soup of Success products to give as gifts or enjoy yourself! Products include: soups, dip and cookie mixes, upcycled mittens and more! You can even create gift baskets!
10. Set a fundraising goal for your church, business or group and mark off contributions on a "thermometer"
11. For your birthday, or other special occasion, ask for donations to be made to CCS in lieu of gifts
12. Ask your employer if they match donations made to charities
13. Host a hunger challenge-fast for a day or weekend to raise funds
14. Church choirs come together to do an afternoon of singing and offering.
15. Put together a cookbook to sell
16. Give it up campaign: Encourage people to sacrifice certain activities for a good cause. One idea is a "Brown Bag Lunch Campaign" where you encourage people to take a brown bag lunch to work or school for a week and donate their savings to CCS.
17. Host a game/trivia/bingo/euchre night
18. Host a mini-golf tournament

19. Ask friends (50 friends if you can!) to make a donation to CCS (For fun, suggested donations could be \$5.00, \$19.68 (1968 is when we were founded), \$50, or \$500
20. Host a family fun night with proceeds donated to CCS
21. Take donations for coffee and donuts after church or snacks at a school sporting event
22. At your church picnic or at a local community event host a booth with an activity and ask for donations (possible activities could include: dunk tank, face painting, hot cocoa, lemonade, photo booth)
23. Stuff a trunk with food and personal items for the food pantry
24. Create a Facebook fundraiser on behalf of CCS
25. Hold a spaghetti or soup supper
26. Host a Chili or BBQ cook-off
27. Organize a faculty and student basketball/dodgeball/volleyball game
28. Host a cake walk or bake sale
29. Hold a babysitting fundraiser in which proceeds for babysitting are donated to CCS
30. Collect money during a Loose Change Drive, you could call it a "Change" a Life Campaign.
31. Host a movie night and take donations. You could feature a movie from 1968. Some movies from 1968 include: Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, The Love Bug, Oliver, Funny Girl, The Odd Couple, Yours Mine and Ours
32. Organize a dance-a-thon or talent show fundraiser
33. Donate proceeds from an ice cream social
34. Hold a "penny war" at your school.
35. Go door-to-door collecting food or other items for CCS. Have a time limit, going out in small groups or 2-3 to cover more ground.
36. Hold a church or personal yard sale or book sale with proceeds going to CCS
37. Ask 50 people to plant a row and share crops
38. Host an anti-poverty camp meeting: 2-5 days, food, music, celebrate and challenge, each night a speaker
39. Hold a car wash fundraiser
40. Host a croquet, ping pong, volleyball or corn hole tournament
41. At special events (Eg. school sports) collect cans of food at the entry
42. Plan a bike, walk or run fundraiser
43. Host a Serve-a-thon Event. Ask for donations per item of trash that you pick up on a given day. Collect sponsorships and donations from people in your community, and then get out and clean up your town!
44. Organize a craft fair in which proceeds are donated to CCS
45. Host a seasonal fundraiser (Easter egg hunt, Halloween costume party, etc.)
46. Organize a cultural cuisine night
47. Hold a "Party like it's 1968!" themed fundraising party
48. Host a battle of the bands and people can vote for their favorite band with money
49. Organize a dorm or office decorating contest
50. Create a "Silly Selfie" contest and for each "like" you receive on Facebook donate a certain amount of money to CCS.

### **Delicious and Nutritious: We need peanut butter for our shelves!**

Peanut butter is a staple in many kitchen cupboards, and for good reason! Peanut butter is a great source of protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals. Many of the families we serve in our pantry appreciate this easy-to-serve, nutritious spread and we could use more on our shelves!



### **Stamp Out Hunger is May 12!**

To donate, just place a box or bag of non-perishable food items next to your mailbox before your letter carrier delivers mail on the second Saturday in May. The carrier will do the rest. The food is sorted, and delivered to an area food bank or pantry, including Church Community Services, where it is available for needy families.



**The 26th annual  
Letter Carriers  
Stamp Out Hunger®  
Food Drive is on  
Saturday, May 12**

## Volunteers are the Heart of CCS!



Michelle Campanello, left, with Teresa Clifford, Soup of Success Production Manager.

Barb Fridley has been a constant source of support for Church Community Services for several decades. "Barb is one-of-a-kind. She faithfully shares of her time, talents and treasure and is equally loved by staff and board members, alike. Barb is the face of CCS," noted Tom McArthur, Executive Director. We thank her for her dedication and care to those in this community.

Michelle Campanello came to Soup Of Success in May of 2017 and has been an enormous help to us ever since! Michelle has a gift for color and merchandising and has transformed the Soup Of Success store from season to season with beautiful displays. She has also tirelessly cut and kitted wool squares for trees and assisted with the design of mittens and has helped create training videos. Michelle has a beautiful disposition and works well with everyone, participants, staff and other volunteers alike. She always brings with her a smile, and words of encouragement whenever she comes through the doors. Michelle has been an enormous blessing to Soup Of Success since she arrived and we are so happy to honor her as our Souper Woman of the year!



Barb Fridley, on left holding award, surrounded by CCS staff.

**YOU'RE INVITED!**

CHURCH COMMUNITY SERVICES

*Sounds of Celebration*

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF HOPE

APRIL 26, 2018

6 PM "BIRTHDAY" CAKE – 7 PM CONCERT

TRINITY CHURCH ON JACKSON  
2715 E JACKSON BLVD, ELKHART

Join us as we celebrate our 50th year of providing hope to those in need in Elkhart County! No celebration is complete without cake, so we will kick off the night with cake at 6 pm followed by a free concert at 7 pm with performances by:

Agape Sanctuary Choir  
Daughters of Praise  
Ebenezer Praise Team  
Four Guys  
Golden Beats  
Notable Women  
St. Thomas School Choir  
Servant's Heart Praise Team  
Vertical Life Student Choir

This is a free concert, but a "love offering" will be collected if you want to support our work as we continue to help those in need in Elkhart County.

Church Community Services  
PO Box 2343  
907 Oakland Ave  
Elkhart, IN 46515

We can't serve without YOU.  
Thank YOU for building  
positive change!

## Calendar

**April 26:** Sounds of Celebration

**May 12:** Stamp Out Hunger

**Beginning June 5:** Community Gardening in the CCS garden. Time TBD.

## 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.

**amazon**smile  
You shop. Amazon gives.

Did you know that when you make purchases through Amazon, 0.5% of the price of your AmazonSmile eligible purchases can be donated to CCS? Support CCS by starting your shopping at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com).

## Volunteers Needed!

We are in need of volunteers who can work in the following areas:

- A weekly shift in the food pantry Mon, Wed or Thursday
- Individuals interested in cutting or sewing Soup of Success upcycled mittens
- Individuals who enjoy outdoor work and are interested in weeding, mowing, watering and harvesting food from our Seed to Feed garden and greenhouse at Church Community Services.

For more information, please contact Gwen at 574-295-3673 x112 or [volunteer@churchcommunityservices.org](mailto:volunteer@churchcommunityservices.org)

## Go Green and Save Us Green!

If you would prefer to receive your newsletter by email, contact Hayley to join our list! [htessier@churchcommunityservices.org](mailto:htessier@churchcommunityservices.org)

Martin's Supermarkets in Elkhart are collecting food for Church Community Services, now through June. While you're picking up your groceries, consider picking up some of the items our food pantry can always use and deposit them in the barrels at the front of the store!

**Martin's**  
**Count On Us!**

## Financial Services Hours

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

Wednesday: 9am-11:45am

Tuesday and Friday: Closed



## Food Pantry Hours

Monday 11am-3pm

Wednesday 11am-3pm

Thursday 11am-3pm & 4-7pm

Tuesday and Friday: Closed

