

Gaithersburg HELP
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United Way #8432
CFC #30374

Summary:

Gaithersburg HELP is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization that provides emergency assistance to Gaithersburg area residents in need of food, medical prescriptions, transportation for medical services, or diapers/formula. In 2009, Gaithersburg HELP provided assistance for over 6,300 requests.

Overview:

Gaithersburg HELP was founded in 1968 by 14 members of the Gaithersburg Clergy Association to provide emergency help to area residents using volunteers from their congregations. Gaithersburg HELP has continued to work through an ecumenical network of volunteers with no paid staff. Its mission is to provide emergency assistance to Gaithersburg area residents in need of food, medical prescriptions, transportation for medical services, diapers/formula; and to offer referrals to providers of services not available through HELP.

HELP maintains a food pantry from which groceries are dispensed to clients who have transportation and delivers groceries to homebound clients. Diapers and formula are distributed at the pantry or provided through a local store. Transportation is provided for medical appointments or for obtaining services from the Department of Health and Human Services. Monetary assistance for medical prescriptions is provided through arrangements with local area pharmacies, and clients are counseled regarding ongoing medical support.

Gaithersburg HELP provides these services on an emergency basis, often for clients who are applying for various types of ongoing assistance through county programs. Food and medical prescription assistance can usually be provided on the same day requested.

Nearly 200 volunteers currently serve Gaithersburg HELP. They include pantry workers, food drivers, transportation drivers, telephone volunteers, and committee members. Volunteers spend anywhere from one hour to several days per month providing services.

In 2009, HELP distributed over 3,900 food packages containing a minimum of a three-day supply of food. Monetary assistance was given to provide over 930 medical prescriptions, and 549 rides were provided. The Infant Needs program provided 1,260 diaper/formula packages.