



# ***GAITHERSBURG HELP***

**NEIGHBOR HELPING NEIGHBOR SINCE 1968**



## **2015 ANNUAL REPORT**

**301 Muddy Branch Road**

**Gaithersburg, MD 20878**

**301.216.2510**

**[www.gaitersburghelp.org](http://www.gaitersburghelp.org)**

## MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LINDA HANSON



*I am excited to share Gaithersburg HELP's Annual Report for 2015 in its brand new format. Gaithersburg HELP started in 1968 as a modest collaboration of several congregations endeavoring to pool resources in supporting their neighbors in need. It has grown naturally to become an expanded provider to the community with a much broader base of support. While still grounded within the faith community and supported by a loyal and generous group of member congregations, HELP now counts*

*government and foundations in its list of contributors.*

*Individuals from a variety of backgrounds within the Montgomery Village/greater Gaithersburg service area as well as surrounding communities have joined in our volunteer effort to provide basic needs for others. Anyone concerned or laboring under the perception that humankind suffers from a lack of empathy for others, need only check out our organization. We are "full and overflowing" with people who daily, weekly, and monthly demonstrate their care and concern for their neighbors through their donations of time and financial support to Gaithersburg HELP. And for this, we are truly grateful.*

*I also need to give thanks to a small band of dedicated program leaders who provide full and part time work to manage the several activities that encompass HELP.*

*We have finished a year-long effort to create a new strategic plan that builds on our current strengths and looks to the future potential for Gaithersburg HELP. Please visit us at [www.gaithersburghelp.org](http://www.gaithersburghelp.org).*

Enjoy,

**Linda Hanson**

*Linda Hanson*

**Executive Director**

## VISION STATEMENT

The first step in our strategic planning process was to create a new vision statement for Gaithersburg HELP. We wanted to capture how we saw ourselves working into the future while capturing the essence of our daily mission. The following expresses our understanding of the criticality of working closely with other nonprofits, organizations, and government agencies to achieve more for our clients than would be possible without such collaboration.



### Vision Statement

**As a vital neighbor-helping-neighbor link in a countywide network of providers, Gaithersburg HELP strives to assist clients with food and other basic needs.**

### Strategic Plan

The leadership of Gaithersburg HELP crafted a Strategic Plan for 2015–2018 that captures key goals that focus on our people and their development, our processes and programs, technology and technology implementation, and our business environment and our external relationships. With respect to our volunteers, we are seeking positive behavioral change in the volunteer corps by redefining and tailoring processes and programs so that collaboration is enhanced, communication is improved, and innovative thinking is encouraged. The strategic goal relating to members of our Board of Directors (BOD) focuses on engaging them more effectively so that all understand the critical role they play in the governance and oversight of HELP. We also seek to attract members from the business community who would serve in a new capacity as delegates at large. We have already improved the quantity and quality of our communications with our delegates and engage with them more frequently outside of regularly scheduled meetings.

Our strategic focus on technology arises from a need to undertake an in-depth review of our technology base to diagnose weaknesses and to tap into technological advancement and improvements in software, focusing first on the client database. We also aim to improve our capacity for scheduling and collaboration as well as communication within and outside of the organization.

With respect to the environment and external relationships, we are engaging in outreach efforts that will benefit Gaithersburg HELP in such areas as identifying new funding sources, collaborating in food recovery initiatives—especially the Community Food Rescue program—and improving delivery of services to our clients. Through partnering with VillageRides™, we have already greatly enhanced our transportation services for our clients. Our pantry continually seeks to enhance the

nutritional value of the food packaged for our clients through such steps as providing fresh fruit or fruit in its own juice rather than fruit juice with its high content of sugar. As we move to greatly expand our participation in food recovery, we will be able to bring yet more nutritional value and choice to our pantry clients.

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The following paragraphs provide a summary of activities, achievements, and challenges in each of Gaithersburg HELP's major programs during 2015:

- ❖ Pantry and Infant Needs
- ❖ Transportation
- ❖ Rx and Upper Montgomery County Assistance Network (UMAN)
- ❖ Spanish Language
- ❖ Volunteer
- ❖ Fundraising

### Pantry and Infant Needs

The Pantry and Infant Needs Program continues to be the single largest program at Gaithersburg HELP and is the heart of our mission. This program accounts for 70 percent of our annual expenses (\$288,150 in 2015) and involves the lion's share of our volunteer workers. Income sources include, but are not limited to, funding from the City of Gaithersburg, Montgomery County, some support from the State of Maryland, the Bank of America



Foundation, the United Way of the National Capital area, other foundation grants, and contributions from generous individuals and supporting congregations.

In 2015, we served 17,329 individuals, which included 7,578 children. Each time a family comes to the pantry, they receive enough food for 3 to 5 days. The selection includes not only canned goods, beans, and pasta, etc., but also milk, bread, cheese, eggs, and meat. Any person or family can be helped 12 times a year, and we refer clients to additional resources such as Manna Food Center to maximize their opportunities for obtaining food. In 2015, we enlisted the services of a local nutritionist who reviewed our stock and recommended that we remove fruit juices from the shelves and replace juice with fresh fruit or cut-up fruit packed in its own juice. We also stock gluten-free foods, low salt and low sugar foods, and foods for other special dietary needs, such as meal replacement drinks for the elderly.



That focus on client welfare has prompted our continuing participation in Montgomery County's evolving CFR online system [[www.communityfoodrescue.org](http://www.communityfoodrescue.org)]. We were able to add another refrigerator to the pantry through award of a grant through the CFR program. That additional storage capability better positions us to expand our involvement in surplus food recovery. In turn, our clients are benefiting from a wider variety of food choices and produce during harvest season.

Fresh produce always brings smiles to the faces of our families that come to the

pantry. We are grateful to ALL of our food donors whether they are local gardeners with extra squash, cucumbers, or beans or the local nonprofit Nourish Now, which provided more than 10,000 pounds of food to HELP during 2015.

Future plans include exploring better ways to provide food to the community through expanding food choice opportunities and more convenient hours of operation.

Through our Infant Needs Program in 2015, we supplied diapers to 1,378 babies up to 3 years of age, formula to 556 babies, and pull-ups for older children with special needs. We also provided adult diapers for those individuals who require them. Regular donations of formula from Manna Food Center have assisted us in managing costs. We also reached out to clients to educate them concerning the safety of formulas other than Similac, which was requested most often by clients because hospitals got mothers and babies started on that formula from birth.



Food drive events sponsored by Manna Food Center; the US Postal Service; the Boy Scouts of America; and local congregations such as Seneca Creek Community Church, Shaare Torah, and Emory Grove United Methodist Church as well as schools and businesses greatly augment our regular food donations from individuals and from the more than 20 member congregations. A new partnership with the employees of Medimmune (a division of AstraZeneca) yielded over 50 pounds of fresh vegetables direct from their gardens to our pantry.

## Transportation

Transportation services for clients to assist them in getting to medical appointments and social services appointments have been a mainstay of Gaithersburg HELP's mission since our founding in 1968. In 2015, we provided rides for 1,051 clients (6 percent greater than in 2014 and the most rides we have ever provided). Our bottom line benefited greatly from a significant rise in the percentage of rides completed by volunteer drivers versus taxis. Our drivers handled 52 percent of the total, which was 9 percent greater than in 2014. The average volunteer driver completed 30 rides in 2015.



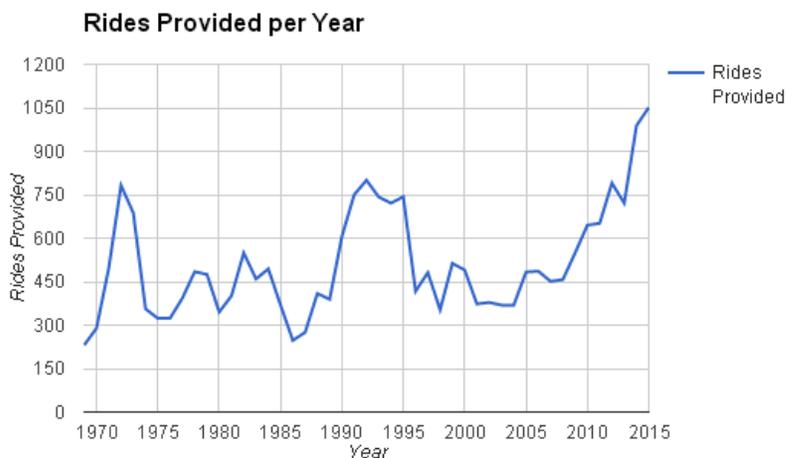


The addition of Michael May to our Transportation Program as the new Director, Transportation was another plus for HELP. This program was also significantly enhanced through its new partnership with the VillageRides™ program (sponsored by the Jewish Council on Aging), which has

afforded us free access to RideScheduler— a web-based system exclusively designed for nonprofit transportation providers—for scheduling, mapping, reporting and managing of rides, clients, and drivers; access to additional drivers within the program who are willing to take rides outside of their service area; marketing and outreach programs that include templates, and a marketing outreach specialist that will help us advertise for more transportation drivers and schedulers.

Similar to our involvement in food recovery, our partnership with VillageRides™ is an example of HELP’s focus on countywide collaboration.

All programs have challenges, and the Transportation Program’s main challenge is attracting new volunteers. Only about 15 percent of Gaithersburg HELP volunteer applicants select a client transportation position and many of those who do, decline the position after finding out more details about the qualifications and responsibilities.



### Rx Program and UMAN



Over the past 2 years, the Rx Program has experienced a steady reduction in the number of clients assisted (down 20 percent in 2015) and number of prescriptions funded (down 22 percent in 2015) as implementation of the Affordable Care Act has expanded. We were able to fund all appropriate client requests in 2015, and the Rx Team continues to diligently provide resource information for clients to follow up with to obtain ongoing Rx assistance, as well as other financial guidance and assistance. Despite the constant increases in drug costs, we were able to come in well under budget (~ 20 percent on the cash basis financial statements). Although the Rx Team lost a long-term volunteer in 2015 due to relocation, we were able to fill the void quickly and maintained a team of six throughout the year.

Gaithersburg HELP has collaborated with UMAN for many years to assist families facing eviction or utility disconnection. HELP provides UMAN with a monthly block of funding to assist families with these two issues because that is UMAN's mission. If HELP coordinators receive calls asking for needed services that are beyond the scope of our mission, they are given referral information, including to UMAN, for follow up.

## Spanish Language Services



Gaithersburg HELP meets the needs of our local Spanish-speaking population by drawing on the dedicated service of a small team of translator volunteers. Currently there are seven translator volunteers who return calls from the Spanish line (Box 5 in our voicemail system). Calls are returned Monday through Friday by our volunteers, who schedule clients for various types of assistance and also give them referrals to other social service agencies and organizations in our area. During the past year,

the Translator Team handled about 45 percent of all of HELP's food requests, approximately 70 percent of infant needs requests, and a small number of prescription and transportation client requests.

## Volunteer

HELP's focused recruiting activities brought us 42 new volunteers during 2015. Through our website, [www.gaithersburghelp.org](http://www.gaithersburghelp.org), our participation in Montgomery County's Volunteer site, presentations to local organizations and congregations, as well as other recruitment-focused activities, we have attracted a steady stream of applicants. A challenge for the year ahead is to find more ways to integrate potential volunteers who work full time into our programs because the majority of the HELP workload occurs during the day Monday through Friday.



One area where students and full-time workers have been able to contribute greatly is in staffing our food drives. Food drives were held last year on three weekends under the auspices of Manna Food Center. Additional food drives were sponsored by the US Postal Service, the Boy Scouts, Shaare Torah Synagogue, and Seneca Creek Community Church. Each Manna-led food drive required 18 volunteers for the 2-day event. An additional 40 volunteers participated in one or more. Three-quarters of the food drive volunteers are Montgomery County Public School students earning Student Service Learning hours that are required by the State of Maryland for

graduation. Students benefit by gaining an understanding of the need in their local community, and HELP benefits by harnessing their energy and commitment. Our challenge for 2016 is to identify areas where potential volunteers with full-time employment can contribute on a regular basis to Gaithersburg HELP. We also need to develop current volunteers for leadership positions.



## Fundraising

The Fundraising Committee considers 2015 to be a very successful year during which we initiated new programs and planned and executed several successful fundraising events. We also submitted numerous grants to local and state government agencies, foundations, and corporations.

In the area of corporate outreach, we revised the relevant letter and began sending it out to a targeted list of businesses in the area. We started with 15 to 20 businesses, which will allow for manageable follow-ups via phone/in-person



meetings. We also created two self-contained Food Drive Starter Kits that can be dropped off at area businesses. Each tub includes signage to be posted, as each location sees fit, along with basic instructions, such as who/when/how to contact the relevant HELP volunteer to pick up donations or get any questions answered. The goal is to have the bins rotating through different locations every couple of weeks.

Our social media efforts related to Facebook and Twitter benefited through the support of a four-person team of students from Richard Montgomery High School in Rockville who assessed our current social media presence. The students gave us specific recommendations regarding our website, as well as goals for posting and engaging with the public via our Facebook and Twitter accounts. We are seeking a social media volunteer to join the team soon.

We updated our donor thank-you letter with fresh language. Donors had been receiving the same version for years. The new version provides more information about what HELP does to benefit the community. We organized and participated in several events this year, including fundraising opportunities and a potluck to honor our outstanding crew of volunteers. That event had approximately 50 attendees and more than enough food and cake (which was later donated to the Wells Robertson House in Gaithersburg.) We had a dine-out on Thursday, January 29, at Potomac Pizza in the Kentlands area of Gaithersburg. Unfortunately, due to bad weather that made it difficult for supporters to get there, we raised only \$85.50.

We achieved much more success with our “Do More 24 Online Campaign,” Thursday, June 4. We had seven unique donors for a total of \$944 (compared with 18 donors for \$2,072 in 2014.) Feedback indicated that others did donate but simply sent money directly to HELP so as to avoid any fees levied by the United Way.



Our second quarter dine out on Tuesday, June 16, at Dogfish Head Alehouse in Gaithersburg drew a terrific turnout for the food and participation in the onsite raffles. The wait staff wore T-shirts showcasing Gaithersburg HELP, and the restaurant management added table tents advertising the event and were very supportive. Although the silent auction was not as successful as we had hoped, we got some ideas for how to improve on our next try. All told, we raised \$3,120 at this event! And we already have a second date on the calendar for November 15, 2016.

We also had a fourth quarter dine-out at California Pizza Kitchen, but the total from 2 days was just over \$300, which was disappointing.

The Fundraising Committee project during the Hunger Action Month “Match 100 Challenge” in September brought us \$5,825. With the \$6,000 match from our anonymous source, we raised a grand total of \$11,825.

The Fundraising Committee’s focus on preparing effective grant applications paid off in numerous ways during 2015. From The Bank of America, we received an award of \$10,000 for operating support. From the City of Gaithersburg, we were awarded several grants:

- ❖ Food and Nutrition Award: \$21,560
- ❖ Mobile Med & Rx Award: \$10,500
- ❖ Emergency Assistance and Self Sufficiency Award (for transportation): \$4,799

From Montgomery County, our award totaled \$30,000 (\$5,000 from staff recommended funding and \$25,000 on recommendation of County Executive Isiah Leggett).

Through the Emergency Assistance Coalition (EAC) County Grant, we received an increase in funding for the Rx Program – up to \$4,150 for FY16 from the \$2,822 that was allocated for FY15. We can only apply for the total amount spent in the prior year. Our numbers went up due to a last minute reallocation last year.

We also received a \$5,000 Community Impact Grant through the National Lutheran Communities and Services (NLCS) organization to support our Transportation Program.

The Fundraising Committee transitioned the grants tracking information from the calendar and overview spreadsheets to GrantHub™, an online tool. This software is proving to be an excellent resource for tracking current grant progress and future



grant opportunities, and it functions as a reference for past grant materials. Of particular use is the ability to pull out excerpts from grant applications that can be saved and categorized for insert, as needed, on new grant applications. Another helpful feature is the ability to assign tasks, with regular reminders, for involved parties.

**RESOURCES AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

Again in 2015, HELP’s income grew more than expenses, resulting in a \$20,000 surplus in 2015. In 2014, income was \$435,000 with \$434,000 in expense. HELP continues to receive significant funding from both the Montgomery County Government and the City of Gaithersburg. Increased financial support from individuals and supporting congregations enabled the organization to maintain a healthy financial situation. We are grateful for the continuing support provided by all of our donors.



HELP had decreased expenses in 2015 over 2014 in all program areas with the exception of the Infant Needs Program. Our increased use of volunteer drivers within our Transportation Program enabled us to increase the number of rides provided while reducing our taxi bills by more than 20 percent. Expenses in our Rx Program were down but not as significantly as the number of prescriptions, indicating an increased cost per prescription. Expenses for all our program areas were within budget for 2015. As an all-volunteer organization, HELP remains a low-cost provider of services to the Gaithersburg community.

<i>2015 Financial Summary</i>	
<b>Income</b>	<b>Expense</b>
<b>\$438,000</b>	<b>\$418,000</b>
33% Grants	70% Food
29% Individuals	12% Client Rent/Utilities
25% Donated Goods	7% Prescriptions
12% Congregations	6% Infant Needs
1% Events & Other	3% Transportation
	2% Mgmt/General and Fundraising



## Gaithersburg HELP

### GAITHERSBURG HELP LEADERSHIP TEAM

- ❖ Rev. Mary Beth Lawrence, President
- ❖ **Vacant**, Vice President
- ❖ Linda Hanson, Executive Director
- ❖ Steve Garvey, Assistant Executive Director
- ❖ Eddie Heppes, Treasurer
- ❖ Chuck Eater, Assistant Treasurer
- ❖ Margo Goldman, Recording Secretary – Executive Committee
- ❖ Margo Goldman, Recording Secretary – Board of Directors

### Executive Committee (EC)

The EC develops and executes policies, plans, and programs approved by the Board of Directors. The EC also ascertains that the financial affairs of HELP are conducted properly and that funds are allocated to highest priority needs. Further, the EC initiates the recruitment and training of all new volunteers. All Leadership Team members serve actively on the Executive Committee and are supported by the following key volunteers:

- ❖ Jacquie Bayer, Director, Fundraising Program, United Way/CFC Coordinator
- ❖ Theresa Bove, Director, Food Program
- ❖ Patty Bronson, Volunteer Coordinator
- ❖ Chuck Eater, Assistant Treasurer
- ❖ Joanne Eater, Newsletter Editor/Publicity Coordinator
- ❖ Steve Garvey, Consultant, Historian
- ❖ Margo Goldman, Delegate Coordinator
- ❖ Inge Harman, Spanish Translator Coordinator
- ❖ Michael May, Director, Client Transportation Program
- ❖ Janet Neumann, Director, Rx/Financial Programs, UMAN Representative
- ❖ Diane Schmid, Lead Food Coordinator
- ❖ Hope Walker, Consultant
- ❖ Peg Welborn, Infant Needs Coordinator
- ❖ **[Open]**, Director – Information Technology Programs
- ❖ **[Open]**, Grant Writer

### Board of Directors

The functions of the BOD include participating in organizational decision making, helping with fundraising, monitoring the financial and programmatic performance, reviewing and approving the annual budget or mid-year budget adjustments as

submitted by the EC, electing by majority vote each year the members of the Leadership Team, designating which persons may enter into contracts on behalf of the organization, and approving changes in membership.

### Delegates

All delegates serve as voting members of the BOD. Each member congregation or organization appoints a delegate. In 2015, HELP added a new designation of delegate at large specifically to encourage membership from local businesses that might aid in strengthening our efforts in the area of finance and fundraising as well as representing the organization to the public, private, and business sectors. Traditionally, delegates serve as liaisons between member congregations and HELP, are expected to organize food drives or collections on a regular basis within own congregation/organization to help stock the pantry, and recruit new volunteers within their own congregation/organization.

- ❖ Diane Baumann, St. Luke's Lutheran Church
- ❖ Steve Bell, St. Rose of Lima Parish
- ❖ Ruth Bonchick, Shaare Torah
- ❖ Linda Bowman, Fairhaven United Methodist Church
- ❖ Jim Boyce, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
- ❖ Patty Bronson, St. Francis of Assisi Parish
- ❖ Chuck Eater, Christ the Servant Lutheran Church
- ❖ Kathy Fitzgerald, Grace United Methodist Church
- ❖ Margo Goldman, First Baptist Church of Gaithersburg
- ❖ Linda Hanson, First Church of Christ, Scientist
- ❖ Helen Harvey, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Gaithersburg Ward 1
- ❖ Ray Hopkins & Brigitte Stevenson, Emory Grove United Methodist Church
- ❖ Anne May, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
- ❖ Sally Mills & Kevin Burroughs, Mill Creek Parish United Methodist Church
- ❖ Melanie Mitchell, Episcopal Church of the Ascension
- ❖ Patty Norris, Gaithersburg Church of the Nazarene
- ❖ Susan Oxford, Epworth United Methodist Church
- ❖ Tony Pu, Derwood Alliance Church
- ❖ Kevin Ramsey, Shady Grove Presbyterian Church
- ❖ Barbara Richardson, First Baptist Church of Gaithersburg
- ❖ Maria Tirado, St Martin's Catholic Church
- ❖ Suzie Ward, Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church

A copy of the current financial statement of Gaithersburg HELP, Inc. is available by writing to Treasurer, Gaithersburg HELP, Inc. at 301 Muddy Branch Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20878. Or you can call 301.216.2510 #7. Documents and information submitted under the Maryland Solicitation Act are also available for the cost of postage and copies from the Maryland Secretary of State, State House, Annapolis, MD 21401. 410.974.5534



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