

News

Spring 2015

Visit us at: www.GaithersburgHELP.org







Gaithersburg HELP Volunteer Appreciation Potluck Dinner!





We hope all HELP volunteers will join us on Sunday, April 26 from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm for our Volunteer Appreciation Potluck to be held at Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church, 610 South Frederick Ave. We want to share a meal, have a great opportunity to meet and share experiences with our fellow volunteers, and most importantly to say **Thank** You to each of you!! If you have not already received and responded to your Evite, please contact us with your RSVP at info@gaithersburghelp.org.



Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church





#30374

Gaithersburg HELP depends on donations from individuals. Workplace campaigns are an easy way to give. Please consider designating Gaithersburg HELP to receive a portion of your **United Way**, **CFC**, or other campaign contributions. JustGive is available at any time for your gift.



From the Executive Director

I'm pondering two "S" words these days (three, actually).

- Hoping one S is finished for the year (snow),
- Looking forward to the second (Spring), and
- Warming up to the third (strategic planning).

Many of our readers are familiar with strategic planning and have participated in this exercise. I have managed to avoid it for many years. However, my predecessor noted that HELP has moved beyond the most recent plan and it was time to begin again. I did my background work to try to understand the process, while he identified a few key "staff" to work on developing a new plan. We started meeting last Fall and continue to meet monthly identifying key goals and priorities for HELP. The best part of all of this is—I think I like strategic planning after all! It reasserts the value of all that HELP has accomplished since 1968 as well as the current importance of the work we do. It also provides a wonderful forum for considering, in a small group initially, the potential for continued growth and direction for the organization. We can think "outside of the box" (as a friend asked recently, "What box?") about new ways to deliver support to the community in our four program areas. It helps us uncover things that we can do better. We look forward to sharing with you in our next newsletter our new strategic plan. In the meantime. Enjoy reading up on all of our current activities.

Cheers,
Linda Hanson
Executive Director





Fundraising Update

Thank you, **Potomac Pizza** in the Kentlands, for sponsoring a dine-out benefitting HELP in January. Thanks to Amy Fink for organizing the event. Poor weather was a factor so we especially appreciate all who took part!

Our next dine-out event will be at the popular **Dogfish Head Alehouse** on Tuesday, June 16. Watch for more information on our website or emails.



Summer Food Drives

Are you a leader of, or know a contact for, summer swim teams, camps, or other group activities? We encourage these groups to hold food drives for Gaithersburg HELP because summer is our slowest time for food drives, yet demand stays high. If you know someone we can contact, please email donations@gaithersburghelp.org.

And look what happened last summer...

Seneca Creek Community Church held a HUGE summer food drive—100 bags huge—last summer. All food drives are very important and appreciated by HELP, but we get very few in the summer months when demands often rise with kids out of school. Hats off to the Seneca Creek Community Church members!

P. S. Of course, we THANK our member congregations that have <u>ongoing</u> food collections that are brought in weekly. Every can or box makes a difference in a hungry person's life!

Janet Neumann











Linda Hanson, "Person of Character"

Our own Linda Hanson, Executive Director of HELP, was honored as a Person of Character by those who have witnessed her long tradition of selflessness. For this all-volunteer organization, she provides collaborative, inclusive leadership that makes emergency food, transportation and prescription assistance available to our community's most vulnerable. She also will become President of the Gaithersburg Rotary Club in July, she is involved with PTA and Interact Clubs, and has served in advisory capacities on several City committees. The award was presented by the Mayor and City Council on January 20.

We congratulate you, Linda!

Another Successful Food Drive

The January cold weather didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the Gaithersburg HELP volunteers who participated in the Manna Food Drive at the Flower Hill Giant on January 17 and 18. The generosity of those shopping at that Giant meant we could deliver more than 750 pounds of food to our pantry at the end of the weekend. Thanks to all volunteers who gave their time. It was especially heartening to have the support of a number of

Volunteer Opportunity...

energetic teenagers.

Upcoming Annual USPS Food Drive

scheduled for **Saturday May 9**. We need SSL as well as adult volunteers starting at 3 p.m. Work consists of sorting, loading and unloading donated food. It will take 3+ hours total. The food will be transferred to the pantry and will need to be unloaded there. Interested volunteers should contact our wonderful volunteer coordinators at volunteer@gaithersburghelp.org.



Pantry Cleaning Crew

We owe a big THANKS to the group from **First Baptist Church** for making our pantry shine in October! They were a delightful, hardworking team that scrubbed, dusted, vacuumed, and washed everything from windows to refrigerators.

If you have a group that would like to participate in a monthly pantry cleaning, please contact volunteer@gaithersburghelp.org



Open Volunteer Positions

Is there a job for you?

- Monthly pantry cleaning, evening or weekend; small group
- Work-from-home people
 - -Infant Needs phone line, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm on Tuesdays or Thursdays
 - -Infant Needs packer, 2:00 to 4:00 pm on Tuesdays or Thursdays
 - -Spanish translators, mornings 2-3 times per month
- · Client drivers, daytime hours

Plus these leadership positions

- Administrative Assistant
- Assistant Executive Director
- IT Director
- Social Media Assistant
- Transportation Program Director
- For a current pantry volunteer—coordinate and supervise pantry work for small groups of adult volunteers from community services organizations



Food Recovery is Happening Here!

Gaithersburg HELP Supports a Countywide Initiative Focused on Food Recovery

We are all very familiar with accepting cans and boxes of donated food for our pantry. But what about the food left over from a catered event, or the extra bread that remains unsold at the supermarket, or the vegetables left in the field after the harvest? If these and similar sources of food are not "rescued" or "recovered," they are just thrown into our landfills or are plowed back into the fields. Meanwhile, more than 35,000 children in Montgomery County live in food insecure households, and more than 8 percent of the residents of the county do not know where their next meal is coming from. The environmental impact of such waste is that 23 percent of the solid waste in the county landfill is food.



Montgomery County Food Council

Challenged by these statistics, the Montgomery County Council formed a Food Security Council in 2011 that was given the mission of forming a "coordinated, collaborative system of businesses, agencies, and organizations that recover good food before it is thrown away and redirect it to feed the hungry." The Food Council formed several working groups, including Food Access, Food Literacy, Food Economy, Environmental Impact, and Food Recovery. Gaithersburg HELP Executive Director, Linda Hanson, joined representatives of other nonprofits, local government organizations, and educational systems in the food recovery effort. Through her participation, Gaithersburg HELP has a voice in influencing food-related decision making that will have an impact on our organization and can share insights based on her extensive experience in the area of hunger relief.

Led by Manna Food Center and a representative from Full Plate Ventures, the pilot phase of food recovery recently concluded. During that phase, components of the matching system were tested, including the participant profile and donation surveys, tool kit, food safety sign-off forms, matches, and three-way communication among

donor, recipient, and food runners. Working group members also documented the time it took from initial donation offer to successful food delivery. When automated matching software is operational, the matching and reporting will be streamlined, the process faster, and the matching service available 24/7. In the next phase, Manna will continue as the coordinator. The software selected that will enable online matching between donors and recipients will be set up, and a backup call center will be activated. To build awareness of the need for food rescue and to encourage donors, the working group will create marketing materials targeted for different audiences. In a separate program, Family Services will lead training for staff and volunteers who must understand the protocols surrounding safe food recovery and distribution. And a recognition program is being developed for those restaurants, markets, and farmers who participate in food recovery. The word needs to get out: there are 4,000 licensed food businesses in Montgomery County, and right now, only 40 participate in food rescue.

The benefits of food recovery do not stop with humans. Recovered food that cannot be eaten by humans can be given to animals, if safe. Further, if the food is unsuitable for humans or animals, it can be composted to enrich gardens. Last year, growingSOUL, one of the nonprofits in the food recovery working group, composted 635,000 pounds of food, and Manna Food Center redirected 65,000 pounds of food to feed local farm animals.

Gaithersburg HELP has already made use of food donated by Chipotle and Starbucks this year. Our volunteers are committed to the recovery process and will continue as stakeholders in the Food Council's working groups to advance the goals related to recovery, literacy, environmental impact, and access.

For more information, please visit www.communityfoodrescue.org More help is welcomed.

-Margo Goldman



Welcome to our new volunteers and Board members

- Darlene Finneyfrock food coordinator
- Janet Fujikawa food coordinator
- Lynda Tolbert food coordinator
- Ermon Belew IT team
- Abhijit Ghorpade IT team
- Devanand More IT team
- Elizabeth So IT team
- Natasha Bravo Food Driver
- Nathalie Marchand Food Driver
- Jose Ramon Bawa Pantry worker
- Judy Camper Pantry worker
- Lisa Doiron Pantry worker
- John Gerken Pantry worker
- George McElfatrick Pantry worker
- Patti McGowan Pantry worker
- Venkata Polavarapu Pantry worker
- Judy & David Potasznik Pantry worker
- Ed & Sandi Reynolds Pantry worker
- Page Salazar Pantry worker
- Durga Tangirala Pantry worker
- Margaret Valentin Pantry worker
- Page Salazar Infant Needs
- Robert Dymond Client Transportation
- Joe Golden Client Transportation
- Patricia Kaufman Client Transportation
- Bob Miller Client Transportation
- Janet Fujikawa Fundraising
- Karen Raetz Fundraising
- Karen Raetz Grant writing team
- Maya Reyes Grant writing team Continued...

 Margo Goldman & Barbara Richardson, First Baptist Church of Gaithersburg – Board members Leadership Position

Margo Goldman – Giant Food Drive Coordinator

Calendar of Upcoming Events

| See website for latest updates. | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| April 10 | Executive Committee Meeting |
| May 8 | Executive Committee Meeting |
| May 9 | USPS Food Drive |
| May 26 | Board of Directors' Meeting |
| May 25 | Memorial Day - Pantry Closed |
| June 12 | Executive Committee Meeting |
| June 14 | Celebrate Gaithersburg Day |
| June 16 | Dine Out Event |
| July 10 | Executive Committee Meeting |
| July 28 | Board of Directors' Meeting |
| Aug 14 | Executive Committee Meeting |
| Sept 7 | Labor Day – Pantry Closed |
| Sept 11 | Executive Committee Meeting |
| Sept 22 | Board of Directors' Meeting |
| Oct 9 | Executive Committee Meeting |
| Nov 13 | Executive Committee Meeting |
| Nov 24 | Board of Directors' Meeting |
| | (Elections) |
| Nov 26 | Thanksgiving Day – Pantry Closed |
| Nov 27 | Pantry Closed |
| Dec 11 | Executive Committee Meeting |
| Note: Executive Committee and Board of | |

Note: Executive Committee and Board of Director's Meetings are held at Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church.

