

Gaithersburg HELP

A Note From Executive Director Margo Goldman and Assistant Executive Director Kevin Ramsey

In 2022, Gaithersburg HELP continued to serve residents in the Gaithersburg and Montgomery Village area. Even though the pandemic technically ended during 2022, we saw significant increases in requests for food and infant needs that challenged us during the year. The high rate of inflation contributed to the increased demand. The impact of inflation was compounded because HELP had to buy more products at a higher price. In response, we took steps to cut costs and established a partnership with the Capital Area Food Bank so that we could purchase food at a lower cost than available through our usual provider. Despite these efforts, our expenses greatly exceeded our income by year end. Fortunately, we had enough funds to cover the costs because



a huge surge in donations at the beginning of the pandemic allowed us to increase our savings and weather the storm. We know that we must continue to be prepared to meet unforeseen

client needs, but we have been buoyed by the generosity of so many individuals who donated throughout the year. We are also grateful for the steadfast support of our member congregations, which supplied food donations, financial assistance, and many volunteers. We continued to foster essential collaborative relationships with staff and volunteers from many organizations. Through these networking relationships, we are gaining a broader and deeper view across our service landscape. Those connections help us to avoid duplicative effort and missed opportunities to support our community members. The connections also help us diagnose and address issues that hamper our missions. HELP continued a partnership with Epworth United Methodist Church (a member congregation) to provide food for 20 households each week. By the end of 2022, we had provided Epworth with food for **920** households in addition to the **4,794** other households served directly through our pantry. Unfortunately, the high cost of food compelled us to end the Epworth partnership in January 2023. As we entered 2023, we felt confident that we had the resiliency necessary to meet challenges arising from many quarters.

Program Highlights

The following pages summarize the activities, achievements, and challenges in Gaithersburg HELP's major programs during 2022.

- > Pantry and Infant Needs
- > Food/Infant Needs Coordinators
- > Spanish Language Services
- > Rx Financial Program
- > Upper Montgomery Assistance Network (UMAN)
- > Transportation Program
- Volunteer Program
- > Financial Review



Our Vision

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

Pantry and Infant Needs

The Pantry and Infant Needs Program experienced large increases in numbers of clients served in 2022. Food was provided to **4,794** households; a significant increase from **4,100** households served in 2021. Food was provided to an additional **920** households through the Epworth partnership. Clients had other options for food assistance through the Gaithersburg CARES Hub, So What Else, Manna, and local churches. Although the worst of the food supply chain problems diminished, we still had random supply chain problems with such items as rice, cut-up fruit, and cereal.



Donations from member congregations that were only slowly returning to inperson services remained low. Fortunately. we continued to benefit from the County's US Department of Agriculture grant that provided about 400 pounds of

fresh fruit and produce every Monday free of charge. HELP began purchasing fresh produce after the County grant ended in July.

Through our Infant Needs Program in 2022, we supplied diapers to **2,082** infants up to 3 years of age, formula to **701** babies, and pull-ups for older children with special needs. As 2022 ended, the percentage of clients using the Spanish line for food and infant needs remained higher than in the pre-pandemic years.

Food / Infant Needs Coordinators

Food/Infant Needs Coordinators made appointments for Englishspeaking clients to pick up food at the Gaithersburg HELP pantry. While informing people about Gaithersburg HELP's various services, team members also referred them to additional sources of food and social services in Montgomery County. Volunteers worked from home by telephone. In 2022, we had 14 volunteers, but we continued to seek more volunteers for this important

role, which imparts a new understanding of the needs of people in our community. Members of the Food Coordinators team supported the annual client survey in May 2022.

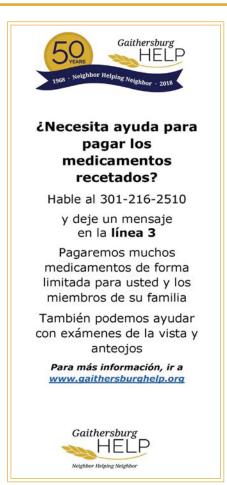


Spanish Language Services

The long-term economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic seemed more noticeable in the Spanish speaking community in 2022 than in 2021. There were about 18 percent more Spanish speaking households scheduled in 2022 than in 2021, although 21 percent fewer than in 2020. The Bilingual Coordinator (BC) team scheduled food for **3,097** households (compared to **2,625** households in 2021, **3,932** households in 2020 and **1,582** households in 2019). Approximately 75 percent of the total diaper requests were handled by the BC team. There were 292 new Spanish speaking households in 2022 (compared to 175 new households in 2021, and over 800 new households in 2020). The BC team trained one new volunteer, but by the end of 2022 was down to nine regularly active BCs. Calls were managed with one morning volunteer daily and one afternoon volunteer two or three times per week. During 2022, the team continued to handle many calls from clients asking for help in paying rent and utilities. BCs referred clients to social service agencies and organizations, and many other food resources, but very few requested services for Covid-19 positive clients. Members of the BC team helped conduct the annual client survey and helped with translations of information provided to clients.

Rx/Financial Program

In 2022, the Rx/Financial Program funded **279** prescriptions, eye exams, and glasses for **128** individuals. The Rx/Financial team fielded many calls from families needing information regarding rent and utility relief, unemployment, and many other needs. Appropriate referrals were given to help them navigate and address those needs.



UMAN

Gaithersburg HELP continued its monthly funding and strong collaboration with UMAN to assist clients facing eviction or utility disconnection. As the pandemic continued into 2022, the program manager and volunteers continued to telework. Because of significant federal funding coming to the states and county, few referrals came from the MD Department of Health and Human Services needing UMAN's additional funds. In addition, the moratoriums on evictions and utility disconnections were extended into 2022. UMAN provided larger assistance funds to those clients who did not qualify for the federal funding and worked closely with the City of Gaithersburg Community Services staff to assist city residents as needed.

Transportation



In 2022, the Transportation Program provided **670** rides to medical and social services appointments for seniors and adults with disabilities. Several volunteer drivers left the program during the year. As a result, rides provided by taxi increased from 57 percent in 2021 to 65 percent in 2022. We hope to recruit more volunteers for the transportation program soon. The City of Gaithersburg awarded its grant for services for seniors and disabled adults to a new contractor in 2022. The Chinese Culture and Community Service Center (CCACC) became the prime contractor providing health care services under the grant. Gaithersburg HELP continued as a subcontractor providing transportation services. The new partnership with the CCACC Health Center was a learning experience for both agencies. Flyers about HELP services had to be translated by CCACC so they could be read by clients in the local Asian community. Flyers about the services available at the CCACC Health Center were prepared and distributed to HELP clients also. The new partnership has improved our cultural awareness of the local Asian community. CCACC referred clients to us for transportation services. We look forward to serving more clients under the new contract.



Volunteer Program

HELP's focused recruiting activities brought us numerous new volunteers during 2022 despite the continuing challenges resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. Through our website, <u>www.gaithersburghelp.org</u>, our participation in Montgomery County's Volunteer website and various other focused resources, we have attracted a steady stream of applicants. As we head

into 2023. we have seen most volunteers returning after receiving the Covid vaccine and booster. A potential goal for 2023 would be to recruit more individuals from our member congregations for various volunteer



positions. Students, full-time workers, congregations, and organizations who want to volunteer in groups or have time constraints, have been able to contribute greatly by sponsoring and staffing food drives. We continue to have a constant need for Transportation Drivers and Schedulers.

Financial Review

During 2022, HELP's income continued to decline from the overwhelming level of community support we received during the pandemic year of 2020. Overall income declined 4 percent from 2021 and over 30 percent from the 2020 levels. Nevertheless, HELP continued to receive significant funding from the Montgomery County Government and the State of Maryland. Funding from the City of Gaithersburg fell for the first time in many years as the City shifted a portion of its support to the Gaithersburg CARES Hub. For the first 6 months of the year, HELP continued to receive approximately 400 pounds of fresh produce each week at no cost through a pandemic-related USDA program. Unfortunately, this program ended as of June 30 and we now purchase a similar amount of produce. Continued strong financial support from approximately 280 unique individual donors and our supporting congregations enabled us to maintain a healthy financial situation. Although we ended the year with a deficit of \$70,000, we have reserves exceeding \$300,000. We are grateful for the continuing support provided by all our donors.

HELP's expenses for the year increased by 25 percent from the levels of 2021. Increased demand coupled with inflationary price increases meant that both food and infant needs expenses increased significantly—by 41 and 36 percent respectively. Apart from our food and infant needs expenses, the remainder of HELP's expenses declined slightly during 2022. Because of our decline in income and increased expenses, HELP for the first time this year mailed a fundraising solicitation to past supporters. As a percentage of our overall expenses, our Management and Fundraising expenses remain quite low at 3 percent. As an allvolunteer organization, HELP remains a low-cost provider of emergency services to the Gaithersburg community.

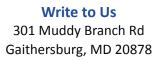
2022 Financial Summary			
Income	Expense		
\$603,500	\$673,800		
35% Individuals	81% Food		
33% Grants	7% Client Rent/Utilities		
21% Donated Goods	5% Infant Needs		
10% Congregations	3% Mgmt/General Fundraising		
<1% Businesses	2% Prescriptions		
<1% Other	2% Transportation		



Contact Us







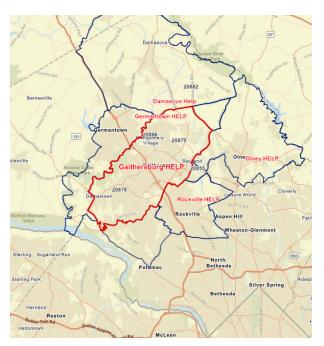
Give Us a Call 301.216.2510

	=

Visit our Website gaithersburghelp.org

Our service area includes all of zip codes 20877, 20878, 20879, 20880, and 20886, plus parts of:

- 20850 (west of Shady Grove Rd and north of Piney Meetinghouse Rd)
- > 20855 (west of Redland Rd/Muncaster Rd)
- 20882 (south of Brink Rd and west of Olney-Laytonsville Rd)















301 Muddy Branch Road Gaithersburg, MD 20878

301.216.2510

www.gaithersburghelp.org