



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Gaithersburg HELP

Neighbor Helping Neighbor Since 1968



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

In 2024, Gaithersburg HELP assisted **5,254** families with food, representing **23,545** individuals; funded **260** prescriptions; and provided **878** rides to medical appointments for the disabled and elderly. Although we began 2024 with a significant budget deficit, we concluded the year on sound financial footing due to the generosity of individual donors; the financial support of our member congregations; funds awarded by private foundations, the City of Gaithersburg, and Montgomery County; as well as proceeds of such events as the Interfaith 5K Race and the Kentlands 5K Race.



Recognizing that our clients have many needs beyond the services we provide, we've found opportunities to partner with organizations to meet those needs. Several local medical centers referred clients to us for prescription funding. We referred clients to the Gaithersburg CARES Hub for diapers, and clients were referred to us for formula and baby food. We supported rent and utility assistance by providing **\$24,000** to the Upper Montgomery Assistance Network (UMAN).

The essential collaborative relationships formed with staff and volunteers from many local organizations give us opportunities to explore problem solving techniques, find innovative ways to support our clients, and keep Gaithersburg HELP at the forefront of assistance organizations. Through these networking relationships, we are gaining a broader perspective on the needs of our community while augmenting our ability to meet those needs.

In January 2024, we welcomed a new president, the Rev. David Sonnenberg of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. His leadership and guidance assisted us as we navigated the complexities of external forces that impacted our role in the community. We are grateful for the steadfast commitment of all our member congregations, which provided food donations, financial assistance, and many volunteers during the year.

We continue our focus on careful stewardship of our assets, and we look forward to another year of providing our services to all community members who request them.

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.

Program Highlights

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| › Pantry and Infant Needs | › Transportation Program |
| › Food / Infant Needs Coordinators | › Volunteer Program |
| › Spanish Language Services | › 2024 Grants |
| › Rx / Financial Program | › Financial Review |

Pantry and Infant Needs

At the beginning of 2024, we made the decision to stop providing diapers to our clients because of the high cost and difficult logistics of sourcing them and keeping the pantry stocked. That decision was the major change in our Infant Needs Program. Beginning January 1, 2024, we began to refer our clients to the

Gaithersburg CARES Hub for diapers while we continued to provide infant formula to families that need it. In 2024, we supplied formula to **617** infants. At year end, we had provided food to **5,254** households--a somewhat lower number than in 2023.



Our food coordinators ensured that clients knew they could supplement food from our pantry with food from Manna Food Center, the Gaithersburg CARES Hub, So What Else, Nourish Now, and other local food assistance organizations. Our partnership with the Capital Area Food Bank and food purchase credits awarded by the County's Office of Food Systems Resilience greatly assisted us in keeping thousands of families fed with a healthy selection of foods despite the effects of inflation that drove market prices higher throughout the year. Our families receive fresh fruits and vegetables, milk, cheese, frozen meats, cereal, and other shelf-stable foods packed in accordance with family size.



Food / Infant Needs Coordinators

Food/Infant Needs Coordinators made appointments for English-speaking 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 2024, we had **15** 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 2024.

Spanish Language Services

The Bilingual Coordinator (BC) team made appointments for food and formula and helped coordinate transportation and prescription requests for our Spanish-speaking clients. There were about 18 percent fewer Spanish-speaking households scheduled for food in 2024 than in 2023, and about 13 percent fewer than in 2020, the first year of the pandemic. The BC team scheduled food for **3,414** households (compared to 4,174 households in 2023, 3,932 households in 2020, and 1,582 households in 2019). Approximately 64 percent of the total food requests were handled by the BC team. We served **313** new Spanish-speaking households in 2024 (compared with 423 new households in 2023, and over 800 new households in 2020).

The BC team trained three new volunteers and lost one longtime volunteer. Two volunteers who had paused volunteering due to work obligations were able to return as BCs in the evening. At the end of 2024, there were 12 regularly active BCs. The schedule was managed with one morning volunteer daily and one afternoon volunteer, three times per week. During 2024, the team continued to receive many calls from clients asking for help in paying rent and utilities. BCs referred clients to social service organizations, medical clinics, and other resources for food and diapers. Members of the BC team helped conduct the annual client survey and helped with translations of information provided to clients.



¿Necesita ayuda para pagar los medicamentos recetados?

Hable al 301-216-2510

y deje un mensaje en la **línea 3**

Pagaremos muchos medicamentos de forma limitada para usted y los miembros de su familia

También podemos ayudar con exámenes de la vista y anteojos

Para más información, ir a
www.gaithersburghelp.org

Gaithersburg HELP
Neighbor Helping Neighbor Since 1968



Rx / Financial Program

In 2024, the Rx/Financial Program provided critical support by funding **260** prescriptions for **95** individuals, ensuring they had access to essential medications. Beyond prescriptions, we also sponsored eye exams and glasses, helping numerous clients improve their vision and overall well-being. Our dedicated Rx/Financial team responded to countless inquiries from families seeking guidance on rent and utility assistance, unemployment support, and a variety of other urgent needs. With compassion and expertise, we connected them to the appropriate resources, empowering them to navigate challenges and find the help they needed.



Transportation Program

In 2024, the Transportation Program provided **881** rides to medical and social service agency appointments for seniors and adults with disabilities. In 2023, we had provided 878 rides. The numbers for 2024 equaled a 3 percent increase over 2023. The increase in the number of rides and a decrease in the number of volunteer drivers contributed to increased program costs because we paid for more taxi rides. Although the meter cost for taxi rides did not increase during the year, we concluded 2024 over budget. We hope to recruit more volunteers for the Transportation Program soon.



Volunteer Program

In 2024, we strengthened our volunteer recruitment efforts through a multifaceted approach, leveraging our website and by participating in community volunteer events. These initiatives successfully attracted many new volunteers who contributed to various programs across our organization.

Over the course of the year, we welcomed **25** new volunteers who provided essential support, particularly in our pantry program. Notably, we made progress in addressing two historically challenging areas—our Transportation Program and bilingual



coordination/assistance. While we were able to recruit some volunteers for these roles, they remain difficult positions to fill; and ongoing efforts will be needed to ensure sufficient

coverage. Additionally, we have identified a growing need for volunteers with expertise in technology and social media management to help enhance our digital presence.

To further improve our recruitment efforts, we are actively exploring additional outreach strategies using digital platforms and other online resources. Expanding our reach in this way is anticipated to provide us with better visibility online and exposure to our programs to more potential volunteers.

Volunteer Program (cont'd)



In parallel with our recruitment initiatives, we also took significant steps to improve our volunteer management processes. In 2024, we conducted an ice cream social to thank our volunteers.

This was the first

volunteer appreciation event since the pandemic. We revamped our volunteer application processing and management system. Additionally, we implemented more streamlined onboarding procedures. These improvements have substantially reduced the time required to integrate new volunteers into our programs.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to refining our recruitment strategies, strengthening our engagement efforts, and addressing key volunteer gaps to ensure continued success in meeting our community's needs.



2024 Grants

Throughout the year, we have received generous support from federal, state, county, and city agencies, as well as foundations that are aligned with our mission of basic needs assistance. Below is a list of our government and foundation grant awards for 2024. These grants complement our individual, congregation, and business donations, and the value of the donated food we received. Some of these awards will be expended over more than one year, and they do not include any carry-over funds from 2023.

<i>Gaithersburg HELP 2024 Grant Awards</i>	
Montgomery County	\$100,481
City of Gaithersburg	\$43,200
State of Maryland	\$36,672
John Edward Fowler Memorial Foundation	\$20,000
Johns Hopkins Corporate Giving Program	\$15,000
Adventist Healthcare Community Partnership	\$12,500
FEMA Emergency Food & Shelter Program	\$12,455
Carl M. Freeman Foundation	\$10,000
Montgomery County Interfaith 5k	\$5,500
Pepco	\$5,026
Kentlands Community Foundation	\$5,000
Chester County Community Foundation	\$5,000
Anonymous	\$5,000
Philip L. Graham Fund	\$3,500
Wegmans	\$500
TOTAL	\$279,834

Financial Review

In 2024, HELP's income saw a slight increase compared with 2023. Significant funding continued to come from the Montgomery County Government, the State of Maryland, and the City of Gaithersburg. The County remained the largest contributor, providing both direct contract reimbursements for food purchases and grants distributed through the Capital Area Food Bank and Manna Food Center. Government and foundation grants now account for nearly half of HELP's income, reflecting a growing reliance on these sources. While the proportion of support from individual donors and member congregations has decreased in recent years, we remain grateful for the strong financial contributions from over **250** individual donors and our supporting congregations.



Financial Review (cont'd)

HELP’s overall expenses decreased by 13 percent in 2024 compared with 2023. Three main factors drove this reduction: a 17 percent decline in demand for food services, reduced support to the Upper Montgomery Assistance Network (UMAN) for rent and utility assistance, and the discontinuation of diaper distribution as part of our infant needs program. The decision to scale back UMAN support and eliminate the diaper program was made at the beginning of 2024 in response to the significant deficits experienced in 2022 and 2023. Although management and fundraising expenses remain low at just 4 percent of total expenses, they have continued to rise and now exceed the costs of three of our program areas.

HELP ended the year with a surplus of **\$101,500**, marking the first positive financial result since 2021. This surplus offset the combined \$108,000 deficit from the previous 2 years, leaving the organization with reserves of approximately **\$470,000** at year-end. As an all-volunteer organization, HELP continues to be a low-cost provider of emergency services to the Gaithersburg community.

2024 Financial Summary	
Income	Expenses
\$754,500	\$653,000
45% Grants	84% Food
23% Individuals	4% Client Rent/Utilities
16% Donated Goods	4% Mgmt/General & Fundraising
10% Congregations	3% Transportation
2% Business	3% Infant Needs
3% Other	2% Prescriptions

Contact Us



Write to Us

301 Muddy Branch Rd
Gaithersburg, MD 20878



Give Us a Call

301.216.2510



Visit our Website

gaithersburghelp.org

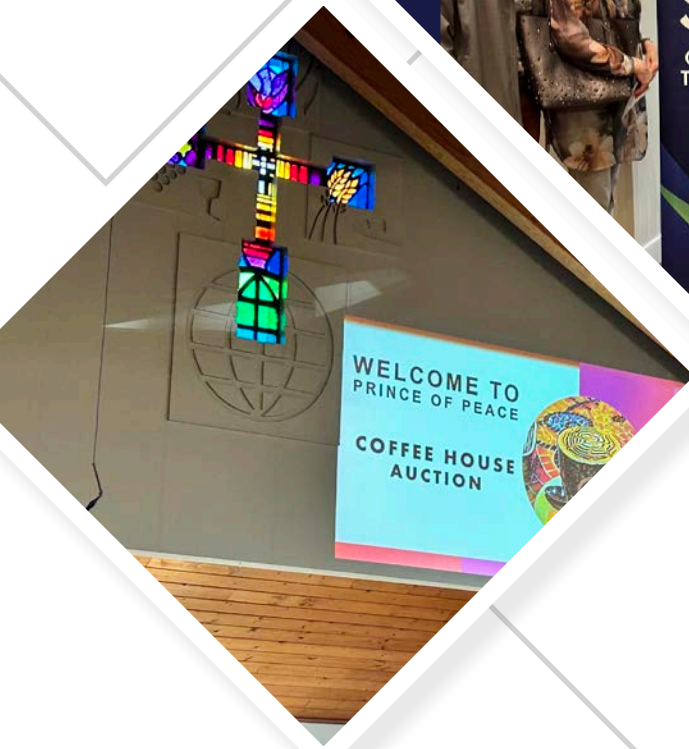
Our service area includes all of zip codes 20877, 20878, 20879, 20880, and 20886, plus parts of:

- › 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)



JustGiving





Gaithersburg HELP

Neighbor Helping Neighbor Since 1968



**301 Muddy Branch Road
Gaithersburg, MD 20878**

301.216.2510

www.gaithersburghelp.org