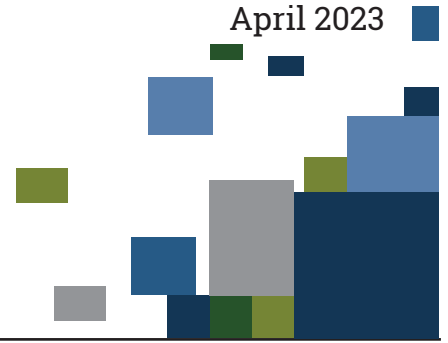


MINISTRY WITH COMMUNITY

rebuilding lives

April 2023



Finding Housing: The Work, The Wait, & The Unexpected Challenges

For many of our members, their biggest goal can also be the most elusive.

“A space to call your own is life changing,” says Austin Barcy, LLBSW, one of Ministry with Community’s Social Workers. “It can help improve mental health and substance use disorder among many other things. It can also be a big adjustment, but we’re here to help people navigate it.”

Finding housing can be difficult in the best of circumstances, but if you don’t have financial means, have a past eviction, are on disability assistance, or struggle with reading and writing, it becomes a much more complex and lengthy process. This is where our social work team can help.

First Steps

“Obtaining a birth certificate and ID is often the first hurdle in the process of getting into housing,” says Evelyn Thompson, Program Coordinator. “It can take six to eight weeks to get a birth certificate in Michigan, so we get that process started right away and fill out the



Austin Barcy, LLBSW (left), Social Worker, and Evelyn Thompson (right), Program Coordinator, in the Social Work waiting area at Ministry with Community.

paperwork to apply for a Housing Choice Voucher.”

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority provides Housing Choice Vouchers through a federal program. These vouchers help to cover the cost of rent for unhoused individuals with little or no income. Some may still cover part of their rent on their own, but the voucher will cover a set amount each month that is paid directly to the landlord.

The Search Begins

“Once we’ve applied for all of the documents we need and filled out the voucher application, we’re in the

waiting period,” says Evelyn. “This is when I tell people to start looking for apartments and start meeting landlords so they have options lined up.”

Vouchers aren’t accepted by all landlords. Some are wary of the system or, due to stigma, uncertain about accepting tenants who have been unhoused.

“I go and talk to landlords in person,” Evelyn says. “Some love the voucher because they know they will be paid. Some haven’t worked with it before, so I explain it to them and let them know that we will be working with the tenants and providing support to them.”

The mission of Ministry with Community is to empower people to make positive life changes.

Evelyn has spent years building relationships with landlords. “Often, if a landlord knows that we at Ministry with Community are working with an individual, they will accept the voucher from them,” she says.



MSHDA brochure explaining applicant guidelines.

Waiting Requires Resources

When approved, you are placed on a waiting list before your name is pulled to use the voucher. The waiting period between applying for the voucher and having your name pulled can be long. It may only take a couple of months but it can take up to 2 years.

“This is when we have deeper conversations about how they became homeless so that we can help them connect with the resources they need,” says Evelyn.

It also helps to have access to the other services we provide while someone waits. If you are waiting for housing, you can still have a meal, wash your clothes, check your mail, and do all the other daily tasks you need to do to stay healthy and ready for housing.

“For some people, this is the first time they’ve had housing as adults.”

**– Austin Barcy, LLBSW,
Social Worker**

Triumph Brings New Challenge

When a member gets into a place of their own, it’s a celebratory moment, but our work doesn’t stop.

“For some people, this is the first time they’ve had housing as adults,” says Austin.

According to Evelyn, “We often need to teach people how to be in housing.”

Ongoing support can include help with learning how to grocery shop, practice using a stove, navigating relationships with neighbors and landlords, or referrals to other local organizations for more resources. Ministry with Community also provides items like sheets, blankets, toiletries, and household cleaning supplies for newly housed members.

“We take pride in our work and pride in our people,” says Evelyn. “We have to think like we’re in their shoes. When we talk to the members, they are us. We know their story and it makes us more passionate.”



**CLICK HERE TO
SUPPORT THIS WORK**

Follow us on Facebook to keep up with news, events, and more at MwC.



Sponsored Meals

December 15: Allan Hunt and Rochelle Habeck in honor of Kelly Henderson & family and all MwC staff

December 17: Breakfast & Lunch: Society of Muslim Women

December 19: Breakfast & Lunch: Betty Upjohn Mason in honor of her grandson, Captain Andrew Orosz

December 21: Breakfast & Lunch: Lutheran Church of the Savior

December 23: Breakfast & Lunch: Molly Fairbanks and Richard Pulaski in memory of Jean Bright

December 25: Breakfast & Lunch: Our Christmas Day Sponsor, Ascension Borgess

December 26: Breakfast & Lunch: Molly Fairbanks and Richard Pulaski in honor of Sean Micklin and Heather Richeson

December 31: Breakfast & Lunch: In honor of Jim Luginbill, by his three daughters

January 6: Breakfast & Lunch: Donna and Maynard Knight in honor of their family

January 7: Breakfast & Lunch:
Barb, Jay, Rob, and Sabine
Goodwin in memory of Tom
Goodwin's January birthday

January 8: Breakfast & Lunch:
Harold Ballen in celebration of his
birthday

January 11: Breakfast & Lunch:
Mary Powell in memory of her
beloved husband, James H. Powell

January 14: Breakfast & Lunch:
The Scheffel Family in honor of
the kitchen staff at MwC

January 20: Maggie Westra of
Westra's Wonders

January 21: Timothy Price in
honor of Vivian and Earl

January 23: Westwood United
Methodist Women

January 27: Breakfast & Lunch:
Maggie Ebrite

February 6: Breakfast & Lunch:
Mary Powell in memory of her
beloved husband, James H. Powell

February 9: Breakfast & Lunch:
In memory of Alan and Marilyn
Jacobs, from their three children

February 11: Breakfast & Lunch:
In celebration of Deb Wickman's
birthday

February 12: Breakfast & Lunch:
Dr. Gary and Cynthia Ruoff in
celebration of Edward Ruoff's
birthday

February 14: Kuipers Advisors

February 17: Breakfast & Lunch:
Kaye Bennett in honor of The
Hardy Family

February 23: Breakfast & Lunch:
Molina Healthcare

March 11: Dick and Jane Easton
in memory of Ken & Betty Judd
and Truman & Harriet Easton

March 14: Johnny Hazard

March 16: Breakfast & Lunch:
Prudence McCabe in honor of
David Walker

March 30: Breakfast & Lunch:
Karol Dill in memory of
Anne Oman

Thank you to everyone who has
participated in our
Sponsor-a-Meal program!
If you're looking for a way to
thank someone, celebrate a
milestone, or remember a loved
one, consider sponsoring a meal
at Ministry with Community.

A gift of \$350 provides a 3 course
meal for 300 people. A gift of
\$500 provides both breakfast and
lunch for 300 people.

On the day your meal is served
you and your honoree will be
recognized on Facebook and
by mail.

Please contact Matt Claus,
Development Director, at
269.343.6073 x131 or via email
at
development@ministrywithcom
munity.org to sponsor a meal!



In Memory Of:

George Acker
Nancy H. Acker
Sandy Allen
Lenore and John Armstrong
Jane Goldberger
Larry and Diane Hawkins
Anne Anson
Patricia and William Hanavan
Steven King
Pledgeling Foundation
Joe and M. Rebecca Schmitt
Glenna Zollinger
Peggy Baker
Anonymous

Joe Effrice Barbee
Chiquita Elmore-Barbee
Ronald Block
Patricia K. Block
Carter Bowen
Anne B. May
Alva Burleigh
Faith Burleigh
David Bushouse
Cindy Bushouse
Thomas Chase
Lenore J. Lorion
Stephen Comensoli
Peter Comensoli
James P. Conway
Robert and Candis Warner
Charles Coverdale
Janice and Jerry Elve
Lucille and Jim Conway
Robert and Candis Warner
Phyllis Curtis
Garrett and Laura Boersma
Grace and Mark Cook
Kim Cummings
Martha Ford
Marlena and Kenneth Kirton
Sue Kovats-Bell
William J. Venema
Deborah Weurding
Jacqueline L. Wylie
Bob Davidoff
Kent and Deborah Fisher
William A. Decker
Greta Decker
Adrienne DeNooyer
Jane Hanselman
Ruth Diephuis
Dave and Carol Diephuis
Marsh Draper
Joyce Draper
Evan Ebling
Lois E. Ellis
Nancy B. Ellin
Jane Ellin-Dela Paz
Rose Marie Fear
John Fear
John Folz
Mike Hardy
Neal Gardner
Colleen Crabiel
Barbara Gernant
Karen Gernant
Paul Gernant
Karen Gernant
Matthew Gray
Carol Gray
Susan and Mike Gray
Barbara Albanese
Harold L.J. Grenke
Lenore J. Lorion
Sistina J. Grenke
Lenore J. Lorion
Roger Henderson
Kelly and Scot Henderson
John Hilliard
Sharon and Paul Hartwigsen
James Hughes
Vona Hughes
Frank R. Jamison
Paula Jamison
Mort Judd
Dick and Jane Easton

Linda Kekic
 Kathy Dilsaver
James B. Kilway, M.D.
 Neoma Kilway
Colleen Koestner
 Anonymous
Rich Lodge
 Sandy and Al Thompson
Yvonne Lowry
 Linda Stieve and Dan Coyne
Charlie Mackey
 Marie N. Mackey
Linda McCall
 Kevin McCall
 R. Kevin McCall
Arlen Miller
 Bill Krasean and Nancy Stern
Kim Taylor Morris
 Linda Stieve and Dan Coyne
Ginger Norris
 Susan and James Commissaris
 Marylan and Donald Hightree
Fr. Jim O'Leary
 Mike and Margaret Low
Anthony Oliver
 Gail and George Martin
Mark Osinski
 Joe Stockoski
Meade Parks' Mother
 Gail Nelson
Larry Provancher
 William and Mary Denise Clegg
Edith Anne Raes
 Jennifer and Dave Hauschild
William Richardson
 Carolyn and Sid Williams
Gloria Savitt
 Harrison Orr
Jessica Silber
 Lenore J. Lorion
Karel Rolland Slatmyer III
 George and Gladys Manley
Daniel Smith
 Mary Marquardt
 Julia Smith
Jackie Smith
 Margaret and Paul Best
Jeffrey Smith
 Mary Marquardt
 Julia Smith
Frank Somers
 Barbara Somers
Lois Stegink
 Nancy Stroupe
Steve Struckmeyer
 Ruth and John Hughes
Steven Tyler
 Ruth G. Tyler
Sandra Valentine
 Mike and Margaret Low
Rob VanWynen
 Linda Stieve and Dan Coyne
Florence and Barney Westra
 Karl Westra and Kristine Pioch
Leonard and Richard Wilcox
 Michaelyn Page
 Patricia Wilcox
Robin Wilholt
 Jane Adams
Evelyne Bundrant Wills
 Linda Wills Comer

In Honor Of:

Yetta Ackerson
 Anora Ackerson
Al and Michelle Andrews and Family
 Karen and Paul Keene
Kate Barnes
 Lucinda A. Boven
 Regina Buckner
Francis and Eleanor Bell
 Linda and Charles Grdina
Shawney and Kevin Bell
 Marjorie C. Lightner
Martha Cohen
 C. Frederick Deneke and James Eastman
Linda DeYoung
 Mary Budde and
 Raymond Diffenderfer
Chris Dilley
 Marcia Stucki
Karen and Ed Dzialowsk
 Melanie J. Perry
Great Grandchildren and Great Nieces/Nephews of the Dickie's
 Kenneth and Ruth Dickie
Stacie and Damian Harris
 Susan A. Agostinelli
Pamela Haywood
 D. Terry and Sharon Williams
Gary and Sharon Hilfiger
 Barbara Hart
Pat and Diane Hirigoyen
 Janice Mackay
Dan and Nan Janecke
 Donald and Linda Hunt
Craig and Mary Jbara
 Tom Cretsinger
Jeffery and Debbie Juday
 Norma Dearborn
Janet Karpus
 Margaret Bayless and Frederick Hall
Rob and Donna Keller
 Melanie J. Perry
Marlena Kirton
 Dennis and Pamela Hjelmquist
Anita Latulippe
 Denise Latulippe Cook
Betty Upjohn Mason
 Amy Upjohn and Bradley VandenBerg
Prudence McCabe
 A. Gregory and Mary Ann Laurell
 Arthur Roberts and
 Betty Lujan-Roberts
MHP Coaching
 Susan A. Agostinelli
Brenda and Cliff Mulder
 Phil Mulder
Ed and Marci Muller
 Richard and Elen Fox
MwC Staff and Volunteers
 Andrea M. Trautman
Our Grandchildren
 Audrey and John Badham
Joel Pixley-Fink
 Zaide Pixley and John Fink
Ellen Plano
 Lisa Plano
 Vicki Plano Clark
Judy Sarkozy
 Sandy Kristen

Jennifer Spengler
 Joan E. Willemstyn
Linda Stieve
 Michael Coyne
Nancy Stroupe
 Robin Davis-McNabb
The Talo Family
 Kay C. Vermeulen
Beth Thomas
 Sarah and Mitch Wilson
Mary Thompson
 Brett Thompson
Kay Vermeulen
 Joan Havenga
Lynne Wathen and Pat Hendrix
 Nancy A. Ray
Ina Way
 Anonymous
Zion Zoom Bible Study Group
 Linda Stieve and Dan Coyne

In Celebration Of:

David and Gabrielle's Wedding
 James Gluys

Jan Bell's Birthday
 Linda DeYoung and Tim Finton

Jessie Bierlein's Birthday
 Don and Sharon Schmidt

Emily Freed's Birthday
 Lara and Brian Goldstein

Howard and Hildy Kerney's Birthdays
 Michael and Sherry Kerney

Sandra and Richard Longhouse's Marriage
 Trudi Giffin

Gary Melvin's Birthday
 Constance L. Douglas
 Theresa C. Jacobson

Linda Spann and Tom Johnson's Wedding
 Catherine Wall Emerson

Please note: Memorials and Honorees listed here were received December 2, 2022 through March 29, 2023.

Memorials and Honorees received after March 29, 2023 will appear in the next newsletter.

To correct any errors, please contact Matt Claus at 269.343.6073 x131 or at development@ministrywithcommunity.org.



Getting Ready To Garden!

In late March, we purchased a mini greenhouse and filled it with seeds. Within days, sprouts started to appear.

When the time comes, we hope to have raised many of our own seedlings to fill our summer garden beds.

Over the years, the garden has become a bigger group effort with volunteers, members, and staff from every department enjoying their time tending to the plants.

Keep an eye on our social media for photos and updates!



The cucumber seeds were some of the first to sprout!



Packets of seeds we plan to grow this year.



Our mini greenhouse on wheels. Each tray contains pods of soil to plant seeds in. The wheels allow us to easily move the greenhouse to the sunniest spots in our facility during the day.

Young Supporters Continue Tradition of Giving

Maggie and Marley Westra donated 120 “blessing bags” for our members in January. The reusable, drawstring bags were filled with hygiene items, snacks, and other necessities.

These young donors have been supporting Ministry with Community for years by gifting items from our wish list and sponsoring meals. Their support is funded by donation drives and money they raise restoring and selling furniture through their business, Westra’s Wonders.

Thank you, Maggie and Marley, for all that you do for our members!



Maggie (left) and Marley (right) Westra pose in our loading dock with some of the gift bags they donated this year.

Keeping Pets Warm

We love keeping *everyone* warm, including pets!

Thanks to a special grant from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation and the help of our friends at Bark’s 5th Avenue, we were able to purchase collars, leashes, and coats so our members could keep their pets safe and warm over the winter!



Pet coats organized into storage bins by size.

WISH LIST

Rain Ponchos

Men's Boxer Briefs (sizes: medium and large)

Women's Underwear (sizes: medium and large)

Sunscreen

Shampoo (travel size)

Lotion (travel size)

Bars of Soap (travel size)

Deodorant (travel size)

ITEMS MAY BE DROPPED OFF DAILY FROM 9:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M. AT THE BACK DOOR NEXT TO OUR LOADING DOCK. PLEASE RING THE DOORBELL AND A STAFF MEMBER WILL ASSIST YOU. PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE ITEMS UNATTENDED.

Check out our wish list at ministrywithcommunity.org/wishlist.



Have we made any mistakes in our database?

Please let us know if:

- You have moved or are planning to move
- You have a seasonal address you'd like us to use
- The name(s) on your newsletter need an update
- We are sending duplicates of any mailings
- You would like to be removed from our mailing list

*Contact Matt Claus at
269.343.6073 x131 or at
development@ministrywithcommunity.org to
have your record updated or corrected.
Thank you for helping us maintain a
correct and efficient database!*

***We will never sell, rent, or share your
personal information.***

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Kalamazoo, MI 49007-3600

Phone: 269.343.6073
www.ministrywithcommunity.org

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