

ASSISTANCE CENTER OF TOWSON CHURCHES

2023

ANNUAL REPORT



ACTC

116 W. PENNSYLVANIA AVE. TOWSON, MD 21204

ACTCSERVES.ORG

410-296-4855

A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear ACTC Family and Friends,

This year will bring an end to my years on the Board of Directors of the Assistance Center of Towson Churches. I have enjoyed working with the other members of the Board, the staff and the many volunteers that make this such an important ministry in our community.

Perhaps the most important action that was taken by our Board were the bylaw changes that were acted on by you, our members, last spring. The Rev. Dr. Ed Kay and our voluntary counsel Anne-Therese Bechamps, Esq. were most helpful in guiding Barry Rollins and myself in fashioning those bylaws. In those changes we were attempting to make the Board less involved with the day-to-day operations and more active in insuring that we remain faithful to our mission and the vision we identified in our Strategic Plan you approved in October 2022. I believe the new smaller Board is operating well and is paving the way to keeping our shared ministry alive and relevant.

Our Executive Director, Linda Lotz, has continued to work with vision and boundless enthusiasm to see that the center meets the needs of all of our neighbors who come seeking help. She has been ably assisted by all the other members of her staff.

I have been honored over the years to be affiliated with the work of the work of ACTC. Looking to the future I feel most positive about our service to God and our community. We are currently working on several new partnership possibilities to broaden our ministry and enhance the support we provide to our neighbors.

Sincerely,
Fred Weimert

Fred Weimert
President



Linda Lotz
Executive Director



WE TRUST GOD TO GUIDE US AND PROVIDE WHAT IS NEEDED.

HELPING NEIGHBORS IN NEED

- 46,600** people assisted
- 39,088** people provided with food, paper goods, personal hygiene products, and baby supplies
- 7,625** homeless individuals and dependents assisted with food, mail pickup, and other services
- 1,479** individuals and families helped financially
- 597** people provided with bus tokens and gas vouchers
- 416** children given Christmas presents
- 72** individuals newly released from incarceration provided with food and household necessities

SHARING GOD'S BOUNTY

- 330,787** pounds of food distributed
- 2,879** Thanksgiving baskets collected and shared

BEING OF SERVICE

- 12,000** hours of volunteer time



WE BELIEVE IN BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH CARING FOR OUR NEIGHBORS.

Our volunteers are Christ's hands and feet on earth to enthusiastically and generously serve our neighbors who are facing economic and personal challenges. They are truly the heart of ACTC and are the reason we are able to accomplish so much. Their work, in many different roles, provided significant positive impact for good in our community: 250 regular volunteer shifts and 2-3 large group volunteer events per month.

In 2023 alone, our financial assistance volunteers helped 297 families avoid evictions, 38 families avoid BGE turnoff and provided 448 nights in area motels for the homeless and for families who were in transition, fighting the ongoing effects of the pandemic housing crisis.



PROVIDING FOOD TO FOOD-INSECURE NEIGHBORS

In 2023, ACTC served those who came for groceries every two weeks within our 21 zip code service area, and provided lunch every weekday to more than 35 homeless individuals and their dependents. We began the year with six months inventory in our warehouse, provided primarily through unlimited federal grants that were available through 2022. In early 2023, we began to need to purchase vast amounts of food as we continued to provide as generously as before. This continued through the year. We have many volunteers who worked in the center in Towson, the warehouse in Timonium, and the Trinity Episcopal Church undercroft, with collection points continuing at Ascension Lutheran, Trinity Episcopal and Valley Baptist Churches. As food continued to be expensive and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits were cut back to pre-pandemic levels, our neighbors came to get help make ends meet and be able to provide enough food for their families and themselves.

GIVING TIME AND COMPASSION

Without the more than 1,000 hours of volunteer time given selflessly each month, we could not have kept families facing eviction in their homes, provided food and personal care items to the homeless and groceries to the housed, listened to and addressed the concerns of callers, or matched generous supporters with struggling families during the Christmas season. Whether the task at hand involved hosting food drives, making sandwiches, packing groceries, picking up donations from stores, setting up or trouble shooting computers, dropping off water and fruit, waiting on clients, creating a separate door for homeless lunches, or transporting food, our dynamic and cheerful group of volunteers were the ones who kept the wheels turning!

WE STRIVE TO PROVIDE A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE FEELS WELCOMED AND RESPECTED.

Those we serve often come to us with various histories of trauma, thus it is important for ACTC to foster an environment where our neighbors feel welcomed and respected. It is our aim to remove shame and restore wholeness and hope; to listen to our neighbor, help them receive what they need, or refer them to those who can better help. This is the important work of the volunteers who work with our neighbors directly by distributing food, financial assistance and other services.



'And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

-Matthew 22: 37-39



Recent surveys have told us that more than half of our neighbors come for groceries twice a month, and have children at home. Three-quarters arrive by car, with the remainder either walking or taking the bus. We found that 95% say that they "always feel welcomed" at ACTC.

We also surveyed our neighbors who come to pick up a bagged lunch, and found that more than half heard about ACTC from a friend, and 82% "always felt welcomed."

Of our neighbors who received assistance to prevent eviction or turn-off notices, three-quarters are employed, but only 60% have full-time employment. In this group, 93% contacted us to prevent eviction, and actions taken were effective in 94% of cases.

WE BELIEVE THAT ACTS OF LOVE AND KINDNESS CAN CHANGE LIVES.

"Every time that I go up to ACTC, the people that are volunteering are the nicest people in the world. They take care of my family very well and they've helped me out a great deal. I appreciate everything they do for me!"

-Michelle M.

"ACTC... What it means to me. 'Hi, how can I help you?' This is the watch words for ACTC. You need a lunch, get in line. You need gloves, just ask. You need a scarf, what color? You need a friendly face to say, 'Hi, how are you today?' ACTC becomes your family, with people you look forward to seeing, week in and week out... Thank you for being my family."

-Family Member, "DOC" R.



"I would like for it to be known that the services that I received through this organization have been nothing but stellar! My son and I have received food, clothing vouchers, hygiene and laundry products, and the use of ACTC's address for mail delivery.

Your volunteers have been quite compassionate; always good conversation and words of encouragement! They go out of their way to make sure the client feels satisfied. From homeless to hotel to our own apartment, the center has stood by us every step of the way!

Our transition from the state of Florida to the state of Maryland would have been very difficult had we not had the help of ACTC."

-Delores



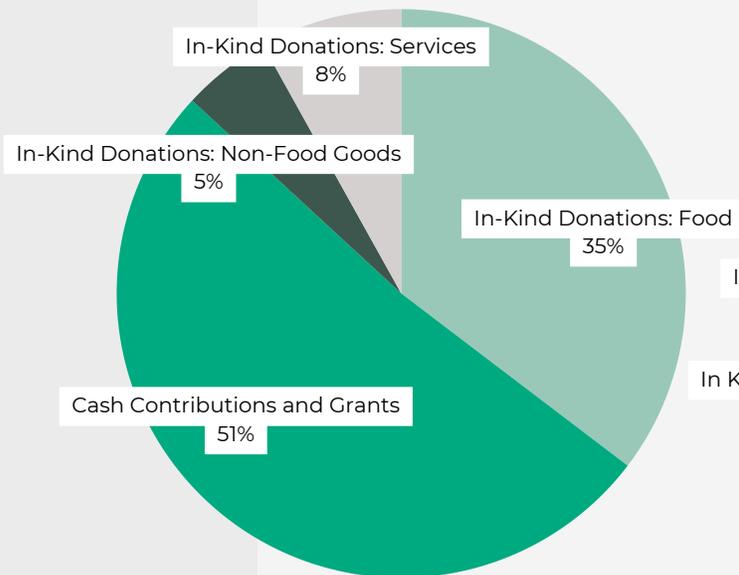
WE COMMIT TO THE RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP OF THE GIFTS OF OUR MEMBER CHURCHES, VOLUNTEERS, DONORS, AND OTHERS.

Financial aid programs that include eviction prevention, utility turn-off prevention, transportation, emergency shelter, and prisoner release, added up to roughly **\$305,000** in 2023.

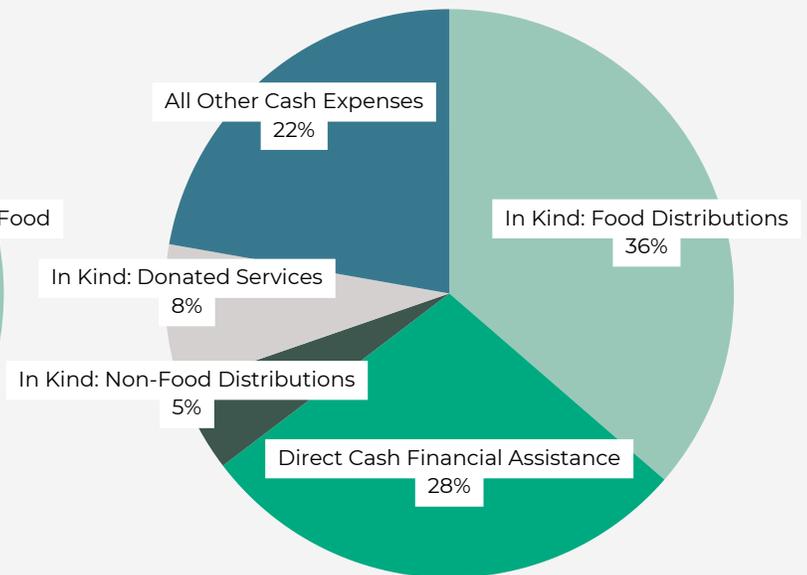
An estimated **\$600,000** was distributed through food, groceries, care bags and lunches for families and people that are homeless, Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets, and food certificates.

Additional care like the supply of toiletries, baby supplies, paper goods, clothing, Christmas gifts for children, and household products, were approximately **\$77,000** in total.

2023 Income – \$1,457,000



2023 Expenses – \$1,414,000



WE VALUE OUR PARTNERSHIPS WITH MEMBER CHURCHES, VOLUNTEERS, AND OTHERS IN OUR SHARED SERVICE.

ACTC is a huge network of member churches, partner agencies and businesses, and volunteers that enable us to do everything we do. We could not do as much as we do without everyone giving of themselves in all the various ways they give!

In 2023, we began to consider how we might best serve as we move away from the pandemic. We had expanded our services to meet the increased needs of our neighbors, but found ourselves in multiple locations for office space, food storage, and food distribution, which is expensive and difficult to manage. Covid funding which helped support these costs through special grants had dried up and yet people seemed to need more help than ever.

We began to consider where we should be located, what that could look like and how to evolve to meet the needs in a new and perhaps more healthful and life-giving way. We went to visit other agencies with client-choice food pantries. We began to dream of becoming more of a community hub, and even of distributing food in multiple locations. We thought of how we would love to be able to give food that people really want to eat, food that is as healthy as possible and that we could show neighbors how to do more with what they receive. We wondered if we could offer other programs and services through partners if we had the right facility that would enable us.

In 2023, we began exploring opportunities to consolidate our operations and to better serve neighbors in the north and east of our service area. We already see more neighbors from Cockeysville and Parkville than from other zip codes in our service area, which indicate that there is tremendous need in these communities.

As we consider the future ACTC wants to:

- Create a sustainable model of service
- Continue to rely on member churches for financial support, volunteers and guidance
- Strengthen both member churches and our community through service opportunities
- Be love in action
- Listen to our neighbors and help them know they are important and valued
- Hear ideas and suggestions from our members, partners, volunteers, donors and friends
- Have a facility plan that makes sense and will help us during our next phase

MEMBER CHURCHES

Arnolia United Methodist
Ascension Lutheran
Babcock Memorial Presbyterian
Calvary Baptist
Central Presbyterian
Chestnut Ridge Baptist
Church of the Good Shepherd
Church of the Holy Comforter
Church of the Nativity
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
Daybreak Christian Assembly
Divinity Lutheran
Edgewood United Methodist
First and Saint Stephen's
First Church of Christ, Scientist
Grace English Lutheran
Grace Fellowship
Greenspring United Methodist
Havenwood Presbyterian
Holy Cross Lutheran
Horizon Church
Hunt's Memorial United Methodist
Hunt Valley Church
Idlewylde United Methodist
Immaculate Conception
Joppa Bible Fellowship
Kingdom Worship Center
Loch Raven Presbyterian
Loch Raven United Methodist
Maryland Christian Church
Maryland Presbyterian
Mount Calvary A.M.E.
Mount Olive Baptist
NewThing
Providence United Methodist
St. Andrew's Episcopal
St. Francis Episcopal
St. John's United Methodist
St. Paul's Lutheran
St. Pius X
Timonium Presbyterian
Timonium United Methodist
Towson Presbyterian
Towson Unitarian Universalist
Towson United Methodist
Trinity Assembly of God
Trinity Episcopal
Valley Baptist
Woodbrook Baptist

STAFF

Linda S. Lotz, Executive Director
Julie Morris, Executive Assistant
Tammy Gabel, Center Operations Supervisor
Leslie Strawhand, Administrative Assistant
Jenifer Cornelius, Bookkeeper

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES

Albright Farms
Baltimore Community Foundation
Baltimore County Communities for the Homeless
Baltimore County Department of Housing
and Community Development
Baltimore County Retired School
Personnel Association
Boy and Girl Scouts
Building for God Community Foundation
A Can Can Make a Difference
CARES/GEDCO
Community Assistance Network (CAN)
The Fresh Market
The Friendly Inn
Giant Food
Greater Baltimore Medical Center
Hunt Valley Rotary Club
Ladies of the Towson Elks
Ledermark Communications & Coaching
Lidl
Graul's Market
Kiwanis Club of Towson/Timonium
Kiwanis Club of Loch Raven
Maryland Food Bank
Masonic Knights Templar in
Maryland
Merritt Properties
Mid-Atlantic Properties
Office of the People's Counsel
Raising Cane's
Renewal Foundation
Shoprite Timonium
Sprouts Market
St Paul's Schools
Towson Elks
Towson Service Foundation
United Churches Network (UCAN)
Wegmans Food Markets
Weis Market
Whole Foods Market

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Barry Rollins, Director
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