



Joy and fellowship shared at client Christmas party

The staff, Board members, and volunteers of Conestoga Valley Christian Community Services held a Christmas party and holiday meal pickup on Saturday, Dec. 15 for food bank clients.

It was a great day that included delicious homemade cookies, food, crafts for the children, and a Santa's workshop for parents. All guests were welcome to take home a handcrafted Christmas ornament that were donated from local groups.

This was the first year for the party, that was intended to include all of our clients with or without children and senior citizens, who are often alone during the holidays.

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Back on Track program offers hope

Financial coaching and support helps individuals and families to stay in their homes and create stability

A young couple received news they were not expecting, and the result would throw them into financial turmoil.

The husband and wife, who both work full-time jobs and have children together, were shocked when their longtime landlord told them he was giving them 30 days to vacate their apartment because he wanted to rent it out to another tenant.

The family loved their home, so the news stung. To make matters worse, they had no savings, made just enough income to pay their bills, and could not afford moving expenses, a security deposit, and first month's rent up-front for a new place. Without any other

Client Christmas Party 2018



Special thanks to community members who made and donated beautiful Christmas ornaments that were given to our guests to take home.

- Fairmount Homes
- The Critters -- crochet and knitting club -- at Mennonite Homes
- Conestoga Valley High School art students
- Family Day volunteers



options, they took up residence in a motel room that charged a high daily rate which made it difficult to save for a new place.

Unfortunately, their story isn't unique, and they fall into a category often called the working poor, because they earn just enough to pay their bills, rent or mortgage, and for daily living expenses but have nothing appreciably saved for an emergency. And because they live paycheck to paycheck, all it takes is one sudden incident – an eviction, a car breakdown, a health issue – and they are sent into a downward spiral of debt that is hard to overcome. And, depending on the magnitude of the financial burden the end result can lead to homelessness.

To address this need and to help people stay in their homes, Conestoga Valley Christian Community

Services created the Back on Track (BOT) program in January 2018 with a grant from the High Family Foundation and a private donor. BOT offers a caring and compassionate approach to helping couples and individuals to take control over their finances and to get them connected to area resources for further support if needed.

Each person referred to the program is invited to meet with one of the financial coaches at CVCCS to find out more about their situation. Once an initial interview is complete, the counselor reports back to the BOT committee to determine if the program is a fit for them. If it is found that the person's financial situation is not too far gone and that the payment of a one-time bill would help them with a fresh start, they are approved.

Once they are accepted, the clients must agree to participate in three financial coaching sessions at CVCCS. These are private, one-on-one, meetings to teach basic money management, budgeting, and

to create a savings plan tailored for them. They will also have access to the food and clothing bank up to three visits, so they can focus their money on paying down debt or savings.

The program takes a holistic approach to teach financial literacy and to change mindsets towards money that often perpetuate intergenerational poverty. And because each case is unique, every plan is personalized to that particular client, so it is sustainable for the long term. If needed, financial coaches Dottie Slothower and Gayle Smith will

refer clients to area resources that help people find affordable housing, educational programs to increase job skills, and employment opportunities.

Over the past 12 months, CVCCS has empowered numerous clients with getting their lives back on track. In its first year, BOT has

paid for car repairs so clients can go back to work or continue with medical treatments, assist with rent or security deposit for people who suddenly lost housing through no fault of their own or needed to find more affordable housing, advocate on behalf of someone who took out a predatory loan in a time of desperation, make a car payment for someone who lost their job after 30 years and was attending a certificate program to learn a new job skill, and more.

As for the young family who was living in a motel, the BOT program helped them pay a security deposit to rent a new home. They are now on a path to a better financial future.

CVCCS looks forward to helping more families in the new year with a fresh start, but we need the support from our community to continue this service. To donate to the BOT fund or for more information, call us at 717-208-3711 or go to www.cvccs.org.



Volunteer Needs

Casserole Ministry -- Do you and your friends love to cook? Join our casserole ministry where you and your group schedule a time to work in the CVCCS kitchen to make casseroles, soups, and cookies for the food bank. We supply the ingredients or you can bring your own. The goodies are then offered to our food bank clients. For more information, contact Deb at 717-208-3711, ext. 103.

Clothing & Food bank -- If you have time on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays during the day to help in the clothing or food bank, go to www.cvccs.org and click on the volunteer link to fill out a volunteer application.

Food Bank Needs

- Taco Kits
- Canned fruit -- peaches, pears, pineapple (no applesauce please)

To donate food, please contact CVCCS 717-208-3711.

Clothing Bank Needs

- Gently used boys clothing sizes 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 14
- Underwear and socks for men, women, and children. (no fuzzy socks please)

To donate food, please contact CVCCS 717-208-3711.

Volunteer Spotlight



Marie is the pleasant face who greets our clients at the front desk one to two days a week. A people person by nature,

Marie loves talking to everyone, and she has made real friendships with the people we serve. Her interest in their lives has lead Marie to offer words of encouragement and support, and to offer prayer when requested.

Recently, a returning

client who is having health issues asked Marie to pray for her health to improve. Marie enthusiastically agreed, placed her hand on her shoulder, and prayed with the woman.

“If someone asks for prayer I am happy to do it,” Marie said, flashing her dazzling smile.

Thank you, Marie, for being our amazing prayer warrior! Everyone should have a Marie!

“When we love, we always strive to become better than we are. When we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better too”

— Paulo Coelho

Rooted off to a great start

CVCCS kicked off the Rooted After School Tutoring & Mentoring Program for a new school year in October. The program pairs at-risk children in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades from Smoketown Elementary School with adult mentor volunteers.

The program meets every Tuesday afternoon through May, and provides a fun and nurturing environment where children can unwind from the school day and talk to their mentors, work on math and reading skills, play games, and engage in a bible lesson.

In its second year, the program experienced a happy dilemma this year. There were more adult volunteers (15) than there were children (12). This meant there were substitutes available when a mentor could not attend a

session, and some children had two mentors.

The first family dinner was held in November that gives parents and siblings of the children a chance to dine with the mentors in an effort to get to know each other. The dinners are held at CVCCS after a regular Rooted session every other month.

This year, staff members Dottie Slothower and Deb Sprunger have been instrumental in making this year a success by assisting CVCCS President Lisa Horst with planning the activities, creating the dinner and snack menus, and to offer support to the mentors.

Prayers are welcome for the children and mentors that they continue to grow in the love of Christ.



Program Stats for July - Dec. 2018

Food Bank



People Served:

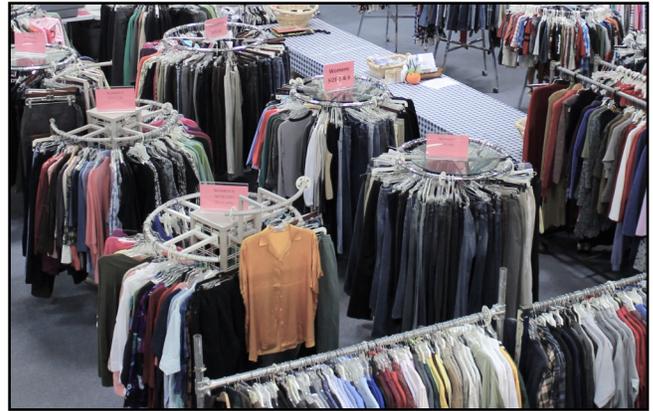
1,867*

**Does not include Christmas meals distributed*

Pounds of food donated:

35,229.5 lbs

Clothing Bank



Families Served:

246 families

Articles of clothing donated:

8,427

Coats donated: 178

Thank you!

Your support of CVCCS is greatly appreciated!

We at Conestoga Valley Christian Community Services are so grateful for your donation on Extraordinary Give day! Because of you, we raised \$25,450!!

**THE EXTRATM
ORDINARY
GIVE**

