

Newsletter



Food Program for Students Needs Funding

Weekend Blessings provides meal bundles to children who face food insecurity

Conestoga Valley Christian Community Services needs your help to provide Weekend Blessings to local children in need.

Founded in 2012, Weekend Blessings are meal bundles for children on free and reduced fee lunches in the Conestoga Valley School District to take home for the weekends. Each meal bundle contains two breakfasts, two lunches, two dinners, and snacks and drinks when available.

There is an urgent need to fund the program in order for it to survive. We learned over the summer that the very generous family who has funded the program since its founding cannot continue this year.

CVCCS is asking for both monetary and food donations to keep the

program running.

Feeding children in need

About 130 children a week are served through the program. The Weekend Blessing's meal bundles are assembled on Tuesdays by a very dedicated core group of volunteers at CVCCS. The bags are then distributed to school guidance counselors the same day.

On Fridays, children go to their guidance counselor to ask for a bundle, that is then discreetly dropped into their backpack, so no one needs to know. The bundles include easy to make meals that children can safely prepare themselves. We found that for a majority of the children served by the program, they are often responsible for

Victory helps kids kick off the school year

The church raises money to purchase new shoes for clients in the backpack program

Thanks to the generosity of area churches and our neighbors in the community,

we were once again able to provide backpacks, school supplies, and new shoes to



the children served by the CVCCS food bank.

Over the summer, the kids were invited to CVCCS to select a backpack of their liking and stuff it with binders, pencils, pens, crayons, pencil boxes/pouches, notebooks, earbuds, and more.

Our partners at Victory Church at Greenfield sponsored 75 children to receive a pair of new sneakers. The children were sized for the shoes during their backpack appointment. The supplier works with clothing banks to provide affordable and quality shoes for children in need.

Blessings *cont'd from page 1*

making their own meals. The individual size, easy to open products helps to accomplish this goal.

One of the questions we often receive is why don't we include fresh fruits, veggies, and dairy in the bundles? We can't because the bags are assembled and delivered to the schools on Tuesdays and the children don't receive them until Friday. The counselors do not have refrigerators in their offices and we do not want anything rotting in their offices or for the child to receive inedible food. CVCCS tries to find nutritionally dense foods like multi-grain crackers, cereals, and pasta products. Chicken and tuna salads in a can are also good sources of protein.

The cost to run Weekend Blessings in 2018-19 was \$33,600. The individual size and convenience type foods (like pop-top soup cans and single portion cereal boxes) tend to be more expensive and usually can only be purchased at retail prices. CVCCS is working on gathering information from the families that will allow us to procure food using federal money and from federally funded resources to help defray some costs.

The cost to provide a Weekend Blessings bundle to one child is \$8.00 a week. ***For \$290 you can provide Weekend Blessings to one child for the school year!***

There are ways you can help: Give a monetary donation or start a Weekend Blessings food drive.



Feed the Hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be bright as noon. –Isaiah 58:10 (NLT)

- Canned soups (pop-top cans would be best)
- Canned pasta (Chef Boyardee type)
- Boxes of mac & cheese
- Fruit cups (Dole and Delmonte kind in plastic bowls that come four to a pack)
- Applesauce cups
- Individual sized cereal boxes or bags
- Oatmeal packets
- Pop-tarts or breakfast bars
- Single servings of peanut butter
- Non-refrigerated meat or cheese snacks (example Slim Jim's)
- Individual boxes of raisins/cranberries

We appreciate any amount of money or product you can give to keep the program going.

Thank you!

To donate money:

1. By check -- make it payable to CVCCS (write Weekend Blessings in the note area) and mail to CVCCS, 2420 Gehman Lane, Lancaster, Pa. 17602., or
2. Pay online by going to cvccs.org and click on the donate button at the top of the home page.

You can also start a food drive with your family, church, or in the community by collecting the following:

School *cont'd from page 1*

CVCCS served 124 children, with the majority of them attending school in the Conestoga Valley School District. The families expressed their gratitude for the shoes, backpacks and supplies.

"The smiles on the children's faces when they were told they could choose a pair of shoes from a catalog was priceless," said Angela Trout, Director of Development for CVCCS.

"It is wonderful to know that the children we serve will be starting the school year off right with a good pair of shoes and the school supplies they need."

Thank you to everyone who made this year's Back to School Drive a success, they include: Victory Church, Highview Church of God, Forest Hills Mennonite Church, Mellinger Mennonite Church, Salem Hellers Church, Groffdale Mennonite Church, Leola United Methodist, Will Stone, the Buckwalter family, and our friends in the community.

Meet our new staff members

Brittney Anderson



Conestoga Valley Christian Community Services is pleased to announce that Brittney Anderson is our new volunteer coordinator. Brittney, who holds a Bachelor's degree in nursing from Liberty University, brings a wealth of experience in human services. She was a nurse for a local school, a retirement community, and assisted military families with signing up for WIC

while she and her husband were stationed on the Marine Corp Base in Okinawa, Japan.

During her time as a nurse, Brittney was responsible for converting paper records into digital files. That experience will serve her well as CVCCS is hoping to do the same, and Brittney will be the head of the project. She coordinates volunteers, answers phones, takes food and clothing appointments, and assists with updating and editing donor records.

"I am really enjoying working here at CVCCS," Brittney

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Dave Unangst



Dave Unangst has plenty of experience managing people and projects. And he brings that experience to Conestoga Valley Christian Community Services as the new warehouse operations supervisor.

Dave started this newly created position in early July, and you can find him working alongside the volunteers stocking shelves, lifting heavy items, maintaining expiration dates, processing food donations, and more.

The Ephrata native, and father of five — ages 5, 8, 11, 13, and 17, Dave knows all too well the importance of maintaining a busy schedule with diverging needs. In addition, he is tapping into his experience as a warehouse broker to help CVCCS procure items for the food bank.

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Donate To CVCCS

You can help Conestoga Valley Christian Community Services serve our neighbors in need. Simply fill out this form, detach, and mail with a check to:

**CVCCS
2420 Gehman Lane
Lancaster, Pa. 17602**

Yes, I want to make a difference in our community and help my neighbors in need (circle amount)

\$75 \$100 \$150 \$250 Other \$_____00

I cannot contribute to CVCCS at this time but please keep me in mind for future campaigns.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Program Highlights for fiscal year 2018-19

Food Bank

- Serve 3,659 people for the year.
- 165 families received Thanksgiving and Christmas meal boxes.
- Cooked and delivered 62 holiday meals for Thanksgiving and Christmas to Nathan's Village – a low-income senior citizen housing complex in Leola.

Clothing Bank

- Distributed 18,042 articles of clothing to 501 families. Serve approximately 55 adults and 50 children monthly.
- Church partners donated \$34,500 worth of new socks and underwear for clients.



Back on Track

- Assisted and counseled 26 families and individuals to get “back on track” with their finances.
- Of the clients served, 62 percent was for housing, 26 percent for transportation, 8 percent for utilities, and four percent for other matters.

Weekend Blessings

- Serve 130 children each weekend during the school year with a meal bundle of two breakfasts, two lunches, and two dinners.

Rooted Afterschool Tutoring & Mentoring Program

- Pair 13 children in 4th, 5th, and 6th grades from Smoketown Elementary School one-on-one with adult mentors.
- Group meets every Tuesday afternoon during the school year for Bible lessons, tutoring in math and reading, and fun group activities. The goal is to foster healthy relationship between the child and their mentor built on trust and consistency.

Summer Meals Program

- 2,207 meals provided to children, 18 and younger, three days a week at three sites in the Conestoga Valley School District.
- Approximately 84 students served a week.

School Ready (Backpacks, School Supplies & Shoes)

- Serve 125 children from Kindergarten through 12th grade.
- Value of supplies and shoes distributed was approx. \$5,000. All items were donated.



Volunteer Spotlight

Mentor walks in faith with at-risk children

Kris Augsburger, a member of Mellinger Mennonite Church, is a longtime volunteer with Conestoga Valley Christian Community Services and a former learning support aide at Smoketown Elementary School.

Kris dedicated her summer breaks to serving children through the CVCCS Summer Meals Program. In 2016, when she heard that CVCCS was launching the Rooted Afterschool Mentoring Program, she jumped at the opportunity.

“When I worked with kids in learning support, I found that some children who struggled at school also had struggles at home, and I prayed there was a way to minister to them,” Kris said.

Through the Rooted mentoring program, she feels that her prayers were heard. In her third year as a mentor, Kris is enjoying her time getting to know the children and their families. She has mentored two boys and is awaiting the assignment of a new one this year.

“The boys that I have mentored over the last two years couldn’t have been more different but both experiences were wonderful,” Kris said.

While one child seemed confident, popular with his friends,



Kris Augsburger is going on three years as a mentor for the Rooted Afterschool Mentoring Program.

and a fast learner, the other child struggled at home, in school, and in social situations. Kris said that both boys were a joy to mentor, but she was touched by what the child who was less confident told her.

“I could see his home life affected how he felt about himself and the world around him,” Kris said. “He would share his heart and life with me, and I always found myself saying, ‘I’ll pray for you’ but I wasn’t sure how that sat with him because faith wasn’t discussed in his home. At the end

of the year he thanked me for praying for him. That really made it all that much more special.”

Kris said she wants people who are considering on becoming a mentor to know they don’t have to have prior experience working with students to volunteer for Rooted. She said all you need is a willingness to share your faith in God and to be a reliable and trusted friend.

“I would say the relationship piece is so important to connect and support a child, Kris said. “I think anyone who wants to do this would get so much out of it and not just for the child. The feelings I have when I walk out to my car after the program is so special because I know the impact this program has on me and the children.”

Rooted After School Program Needs Christian Mentors

Conestoga Valley Christian Community Services (CVCCS) is seeking Christian mentors to be a buddy to at-risk children through its Rooted Afterschool Mentoring Program.

Caring adults 18 and older are invited to be mentors to children in 4th, 5th, and 6th grades. No special skills required, just a willingness to share their own experiences as well as provide guidance, motivation, emotional support, and being a good role model.

Rooted meets every Tuesday from September through May (excluding holidays) from 3:15 to 5:15 at Conestoga Valley

Christian Community Services in Smoketown. Mentors are paired with a child for the school year and will be a listening ear for the child to talk about their day, play fun educational games and group activities, and engage in Bible lessons. The theme for this year is Fruits of the Spirit.

A Rooted Family Dinner will be held three times during the school year as an opportunity for mentors to get to know the families of the children and to forge trusting relationships.

For more information or to sign up, please contact Dottie Slothower at 717-208-3711 ext. 103.

Program Needs

Food Bank

- Refried beans
- Meal kits - Hamburger, Tuna, Chicken Helpers, Rice (Zatarain's type)
- Condiments - Mayonaise, ketchup, mustard.

To donate food, please contact Dave at 717-208-3711, ext. 106.

Clothing Bank

- **Urgent need - Boys clothing sizes 8 through 16.**
- Plus size clothing in men's and women's.
- Winter coats in men's, women's, and children's.

To donate clothing, please drop off on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursdays, between 10 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Please call 717-208-3711 if you have any questions. Do not leave items outside.

Rooted Afterschool Mentoring

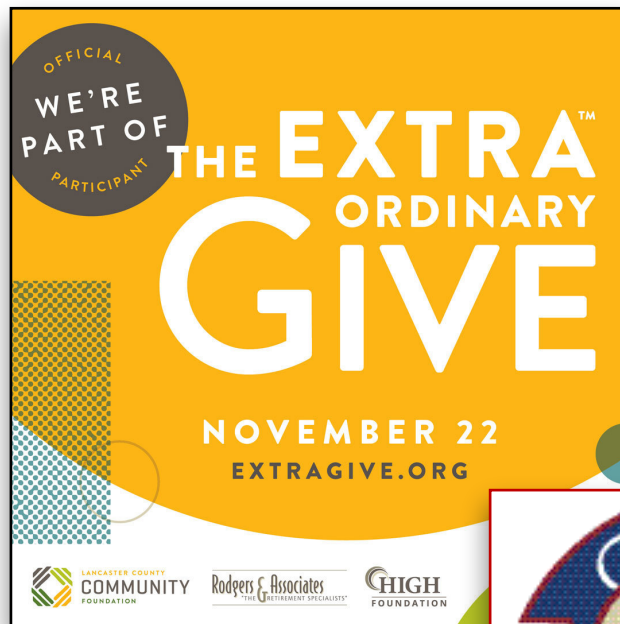
- Christians needed to volunteer to mentor at-risk children on Tuesdays, 3:15 to 5:30 p.m., September through May. Must be reliable and be 18 and or older.
- Games for older children ages 9 to 12 - Phase 10, Scrabble, Sequence, Sorry!, etc.

To register as a volunteer or for questions, please contact Dottie at 717-208-3711 ext. 103.

Weekend Blessings

- Monetary and food donations needed. See page 2 for a list of food items.

For questions about Weekend Blessings, please contact Angela at 717-208-3711 ext. 102.



Please Support CVCCS during the 2019 ExtraGive



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said. "So many people are helped here, and I feel that God was tugging on my heart to serve the community."

Brittney is a running enthusiast and is currently training to run a half marathon in September! Her husband, Eric, served in the US Marine Corp. and they have three children ages 10, 7, and 5 and live in Conestoga.

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A newbie to non-profit work, Dave said he is enjoying the experience.

"I like that what I do here is helping people," Dave said.

" Thank you so very much for the blessing of food. Robbie and I both left in tears. He even said, "there are nice people in the world!". He has been so worried about how we are going to get food and pay for a room. It has been a rough time for us to say the least. People like you and your organization give us hope and has brought a little piece of God back into our lives. Since my mother passed away three years ago it has been one thing after another. We have been struggling with our belief. We are slowly coming back." - CVCCS Back on Track Client