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# the Westside CARES

C O N N E C T I O N

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Uniting religious fellowships of Colorado Springs' Westside in care and compassion towards those in need

JANUARY 2009

from  
Steve's



ONE OF THE MOST prominent facts about Westside CARES is how we have grown. Between 2001 and 2005 we tripled the numbers of persons coming into our offices looking for assistance. This measure continues to rise year by year. In response to this we have added staff, both paid and volunteer. We have expanded our hours of service, and our pantries have valiantly labored to meet the ever-growing numbers of neighbors who have found us. Our cash income has risen from \$60,000 in 1994 to \$275,000 at the end of 2008. We have added two new member churches in the past three years.

What we have not changed is the basic character of our services. **CARES** is an acronym for: **C**ommunity **A**ction, **R**esources, and **E**mergency **S**ervices. Our growth has been primarily in the quantity of the services we provide to our neighbors in need. We are specialists in *emergency services*: four days of food, \$90.00 worth of Goodwill clothes, one-time rent help, not more than \$350.00 in utility assistance. Almost none of these growing services will effect a long-term change in the quality of our neighbors' lives.

One of the special gifts that Westside CARES tries to offer to all our neighbors is the quality of our hospitality. We often receive comments from folks who commend us on the way we welcome and engage with our neighbors. This precious gift could be endangered if we continue to simply grow in quantity. We will probably see even more growth in need in the coming year or two, so how shall Westside CARES grow to best respond to the needs of our community and to the time-honored task of helping our member churches fulfill their God-given vocation of generosity?

My hope is that we can sustain the qualities that mark us, as well as expand the variety of services and relationships we offer to our churches and our community. What shape these services and relationships may take is still unformed, but our enduring qualities will guide us.

**Steve Brown**, executive director

## Change is a Constant

IF YOU THINK you are noticing a few changes in our newsletter, you are! We hope our new title "the Westside CARES Connector" describes what this newsletter hopes to do — to connect us. Please notice the contact information at the bottom and throughout. We are reaching out. Please find your place and reach back!

The switch to white paper is more environmentally friendly. We take seriously the notion that we are stewards of God's Earth. We will also be going to an every other month printing. We think that this is the right interval to nurture good connections between us while also being a good steward of all the resources that go into producing the newsletter.

We want to thank Deb Corder, who valiantly stepped into the volunteer role of designing and laying out our monthly newsletter. She has done a marvelous job at it, (despite Steve and Mary Frances who never saw a deadline that they didn't like to push). Thank you, Deb! And we welcome Lisa Dearborn, a volunteer from our member churches, who originally set up our newsletter layout many years ago. Lisa is a graphic designer at Colorado College and we are fortunate for her willingness to again share her talents with us. Thank you, Lisa!



## Reporting Back

### Christmas at Westside CARES

**T**HANK YOU to everyone who helped make Christmas a little brighter for 66 westside families in need by participating in our annual Christmas Adopt-A-Family project!

Special thanks to Westside CARES Volunteer **Vera Karolick**. She donates hours and hours of work to coordinate this project and has for the last several years. Thank you, Vera!

### St. Aidan's Christmas Tradition

**S**T. AIDAN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH is one of our smaller churches, and yet, like the mustard seed of the parable, they do great things.

They meet and exceed their goals for Back-to-School backpacks and Thanksgiving baskets. For Christmas, their women's ministry (a partnership between St. Aiden's and St. Luke's Anglican Churches), called St. Monica's Guild, assembles over 75 individual boxes of gifts for children. These gift-wrapped shoe boxes are packed to the brim with thoughtful and useful items, like new socks, underwear, or gloves, toiletries, and small toys. They are labeled boy or girl, and the appropriate age of the recipient, from newborn babies to older teens. We give these boxes at Christmas and we continue to give them year round.



What a wonderful ministry, for which we give thanks!

## Program News



### Winter Coat Drive

**W**ESTSIDE CARES NEEDS items for truly cold winter weather (heavy gloves and mittens, gaiters, snow pants, coats, hats, and scarves). We ask that these items be new, or gently used and cleaned and/or mended. We accept items in men's and women's and youth and children's sizes.

## Spotlight

*on the special contributions of friends,  
a dedicated volunteer, or one of our member churches*

### Marsha True, Volunteer

**M**ARSHA JOINED WESTSIDE CARES as a volunteer Neighbor Advocate this past September. She knew of our good works in her years as a professional social worker and WIC counselor in the El Paso County Department of Human Services and as a west side resident herself. Her professional expertise, alongside her gentle and generous heart, makes her an invaluable member of our staff. Marsha has re-written the Food and Meal Referrals section of our Resource Manual. And even Santa doesn't check his list as thoughtfully as Marsha did, ensuring that we only pass along the most accurate and current information as we make referrals to our neighbors in need. She taught our staff how to check eligibility for public assistance benefits, such as food stamps and the WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program on the computer, so that when we send a neighbor to DHS, we know that they are eligible. Marsha is a member of Springs Mountain Sangha (Buddhist).

Marsha is part of the "Wonderful Wednesday" volunteer team of Ethel Lawless, Royce Gipson, and Jane Kneis who work in the Service Office, as well Joan Corder, pantry coordinator, and all the many volunteers who volunteer for the Westside CARES/Bethany Baptist Food Pantry on Wednesdays.

It is for these gifts, and many others, that we recognize and thank Marsha in this month's Spotlight!

We treasure all of our member churches and all of our amazing volunteers. We can't wait to see where the SPOTLIGHT will shine next!

### Dining Out for a Good Cause

**S**PECIAL THANKS to The Mason Jar restaurant in Old Colorado City for their ongoing support.

They have made a pledge to donate a percentage of their gross receipts to Westside CARES. This gift is not contingent on any activity by Westside CARES supporters and there is no deadline.

Please help us raise funds for Westside CARES by dining out at The Mason Jar restaurant and thank them for their support.



## Upcoming Events



### ● ON-GOING IN JANUARY

#### **January Board Training**

To support of the role of our member churches in their "Guidance and Governance" function, the Executive Board of Westside CARES will be undergoing governance training in January. This training will include selection of Board Mentors who will train and orient incoming Board Members who are elected at the March Annual Meeting. This training is intended to pave the way for a strategic planning retreat to be held later in the spring. These sessions keep the Board focused and effective in helping Westside CARES serve our community.

### ● WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21

#### **Annual Prayer Breakfast**

This year's event will be held from 7:30–9 a.m., on Wednesday, January 21, 2009 at St. Paul Catholic Church. As is our tradition, it is hosted by their Knights of Columbus Men's ministry group who put out an amazing hot breakfast spread. This year's topic is based on the scripture from the Gospel of Matthew, "When I was in prison ..." and our guest will be Christie Donner, the Executive Director of the Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition, based in Denver. Tickets are \$10 each and available through Westside CARES: 389-0759.

### ● WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10

#### **Quarterly Staff In-Service**

### ● FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20

#### **Pantry Volunteer Thank You Luncheon and Sharing Time**

We'd like to gather all of our dedicated Pantry Volunteers over a potluck lunch (11 a.m.–1 p.m.) to share ideas, best practices and a much-deserved "Thank You!" Please mark your calendars. Backup date is the following Friday, February 27. Location not yet determined.

### ● TUESDAY, MARCH 10

#### **Annual Meeting & Appreciation Dinner**

The Colorado Springs stake of the Church of Latter Day Saints, a Westside CARES member church, will host our March Annual Meeting, followed by our Annual Appreciation Dinner.

The Annual Meeting begins at 5 p.m. Member churches are reminded that each church is encouraged to have their clergy and lay representative attend to vote on the new Board of Directors, receive the Annual Report, and hear updates on the business of Westside CARES. At 6 p.m., following the Annual Meeting, we begin our Annual Appreciation Dinner. Highlights of the evening include live entertainment of the Colorado Springs Children's Chorale and a wonderful homemade meal. We also take this opportunity to present The Founder's Award, where we honor the churches, pastors and lay leaders who founded Westside CARES 25 years ago and have stewarded it through these years, and we recognize one of the leading volunteers who serves Westside CARES in achieving our mission today. Tickets are \$15 each and are available through Westside CARES.

## Looking Ahead



### ● LATE APRIL / EARLY MAY

#### **Immunization / Health Fair**

This wonderful part of our Health Ministry Outreach, is conducted in partnership with Penrose / St. Francis Health System. If you are a nurse or other health care professional and are interested in volunteering, please contact our Pastoral Nurse, Linda Anderson, RN at 389-0759, ext 104.

### ● ON-GOING IN MAY

#### **May Food Drive**

This is a major volunteer effort that not only "stocks the shelves" at a critical time of year, but it also helps get the word out in the community about the important mission of Westside CARES. And it is not too early to think about volunteering!

### ● LATE MAY / EARLY JUNE

#### **Westside CARES' 25th Anniversary Celebration Event**

We are looking for volunteers now who have experience and interest in planning a spring or early summer special event. Please contact Mary Frances Kerr at 389-0759, ext 108.

**Westside CARES**  
1930 West Colorado Avenue  
Colorado Springs, CO 80904

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Formed in 1983, Westside CARES is an ecumenical and interfaith, nonprofit collaboration of 21 religious fellowships of the west side of Colorado Springs, united in care and compassion for those in need by providing crisis human services.

### **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to serve our neighbors in need with the love and support we receive from our member churches as well as the greater community.

Specifically, we aim:

- To establish a closer relationship, cooperative spirit and programs among the churches and religious fellowships on the west side of Colorado Springs and its environs.
- To develop a network of outreach and resources to serve the emergency needs of individuals and families and to assist them to become physically and spiritually self-sufficient.

### **Member Churches**

- Bethany Baptist
- Bethany Evangelical Lutheran
- Broadmoor Community
- Central Christian
- Chapel of Our Saviour
- Christ the King Lutheran
- Church in the Wildwood
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
- Fellowship of the Rockies
- Gateway Presbyterian
- Holy Rosary Chapel
- Ivywild Community
- Manitou Community Congregational
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help
- Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community
- Pikes Peak United Methodist
- Sacred Heart Catholic Church
- St. Aidan's Anglican
- St. Andrew's Episcopal
- St. Paul Catholic
- Trinity United Methodist
- Wilson United Methodist