

# Westside CARES

Uniting religious fellowships of the Westside in care and compassion towards those in need...

October 2008

## Westside CARES April 2008 – March 2009 Executive Board

### **Chair**

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Wilson UMC

### **Chair-elect**

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Gateway Presbyterian

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- John Scharrer  
Sacred Heart
- Bob Smithwick  
Holy Rosary
- Zoe Lance  
St. Paul Catholic Church
- Georgia Thompson  
Gateway Presbyterian

### **Community Representatives**

- Patricia Severn  
First Congregational Church
- Rich Strycker  
Greccio Housing

### **Executive Director**

- Stephen Brown

## From Steve's Keyboard The Position of Westside CARES

A couple of months ago a reporter from our local daily paper contacted me for a quote to be part of a larger article about the plight of nonprofits in the current economic downturn. And so I did some checking of our income in comparison with past years.

I and was mildly gratified to see that we are showing increased income this year over any previous year.

In the area of contributions from individuals, we have received 8% more this year compared (to this date at the end of August) than last year. This in the face of the loss of one very significant donation of \$5,000 per quarter, specified for our food pantries. But to put this into some wider perspective, we are seeing an even larger increase in the numbers of people coming to us seeking help; 19% more this year (to date at the end of August) than last year.

So we are seeing some very modest growth in income, but this growth that is more than offset by a large growth in neighbors needing help. Much like the stock market of late, our position is fluid and variable.

There is something else to be said about our position. It's something Lyle said in the Bethany Baptist pantry one day. It had been a hard day, helping to empty the shelves at a rate that surely meant running out before all of the requests for a four-day basket of food could be honored. It was a day when the pantry volunteers were looking forward to locking the door at 3 p.m. and saying "it is enough for today." When I offered to close the place down, Lyle looked me over and said, "as long as there are people needing food, we'll keep serving."

I find great comfort and great challenge in that position. I am comforted to know that we are staffed by people of clear and strong faith, because Lyle isn't the only person who holds such an attitude. I am challenged to more completely embrace that same faith.

As we approach the "season of generosity" please know that we are in a position of financial "fluidity" and we remain grateful, and in need, of your steadfast faithfulness.

In Hope,

*Steve*

*Stephen Brown*

1930 West Colorado Avenue ♦ Colo Spgs, CO 80904 ♦ 719-389-0759  
Hours: Mon-Thurs—9:30am - 12:30pm ♦ Thursday evenings—5:00pm - 7:00pm  
[www.westsidecares.org](http://www.westsidecares.org)

## Program News

### **Westside CARES Fall Food Drive is October 17 and 18. Volunteer!**

At our Spring Food Drive last May, volunteers from all of the member churches collected over \$17,000 worth of food. These donations are vital to the operation of the four church-based Food Pantries! This is especially true in this time of economic uncertainty and cut backs from Care and Share.

Volunteers are needed to help with various aspects of this huge effort! To hand out brochures and receive food donations at west side grocery stores, contact Ann Smith at 520-9510. To transport food from the stores to Westside CARES, truck owners and others should contact Steve Brown at 389-0759, ext. 101. For those interested in sorting food for distribution to all of our church-based food pantries, contact Joan Corder at 687-6925. Finally, to donate food, organize a group of volunteers, or if you are not sure where you can be the most help, please contact Mary Frances Kerr at 389-0759, ext 108.

### **Thanksgiving Baskets**

Once again this year Westside CARES will put together 40 Thanksgiving baskets to give to our neighbors in need. Westside CARES gives vouchers to 20 area schools, who determine the recipients. Those neighbors then come to our offices the week of Thanksgiving to pick up the basket. Each basket contains the food items that will make a traditional holiday meal for a family.

Pastors and lay representatives of each of our member churches are asked to organize the effort within your church to provide a turkey or a ham plus a quantity of one assigned item of food. The entire list of churches and foods can be found in this newsletter.

Some of our larger member churches have asked about setting a goal above and beyond what we have requested. If your church can or wants to do this, go for it! Additional food donations are used in our on-going Food Pantries' offerings to provide food that is more fitting for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Thank you for your support of this annual project!



## **Christmas at Westside CARES**

In addition to the usual services that Westside CARES assists with, during the holidays there are two unique, seasonal programs that we administer for neighbors in need.

### **Christmas Adopt-A-Family**

Even as you read this, letters are being sent to 20 west side schools for families in need to apply to be "adopted" for Christmas. Last year, 48 families were adopted by friends and supporters of Westside CARES. This year, we anticipate helping 60 families in need. It is not too early to let us know if you are interested in helping make someone's Christmas a bit brighter. Please leave a message at 389-0759, ext 103, if you are interested in adopting a family.

### **Christmas Unlimited**

Westside CARES also partners with Christmas Unlimited in helping needy families with children 12 and under get gifts for Christmas. Many organizations throughout town process very detailed applications of families in need. Once the applications have been sorted, verified, and checked for duplications, the parents then are able to make an appointment to "shop" for presents for their children at the Christmas Unlimited warehouse.

### **Welcome to our new Neighbor Advocate volunteers!**

Welcome to Jodie Bennett, Barb and Howie Firestone (Christ the King Lutheran), Cathy Swab, Marsha True (Springs Mountain Sangha), Alison Zarlingo (Sacred Heart Catholic) and Rose Mead (Sacred Heart). Each of these new staff members brings unique skills, spirit and energy to our team and we give thanks for them!

*"I prefer to be remembered for what I have done for others, not what others have done for me."  
—Thomas Jefferson  
1743-1826*

## Upcoming Events

### **General Membership Meeting**

Wednesday, November 19, 12:00 noon, at Wilson UMC, 6460 Flying W Ranch Rd. 80919, 598-0407  
All Member churches are reminded of the General Membership Meeting on Wednesday, November 19. Voting members (a clergy member and their lay representative) and any other interested church members are invited to attend.

### **Thanksgiving Worship Service**

Wednesday, November 26th, 7:00 p.m., at Gateway Presbyterian, 731 Castle Rd., 80904, 473-3430  
Join us for an ecumenical worship service of thanks. Pie social to follow.

## Community Outreach

### **Report back to our Members Annual Conference on Homelessness**

On September 29, over 65 leaders in our community gathered at First Presbyterian Church for the sixth annual Conference on Homelessness, organized by Homeward Pikes Peak. Steve Brown, Linda Anderson and Jennifer Kleinschmidt attended on behalf of Westside CARES.

The morning was highlighted by two large group presentations, and punctuated by smaller break-out sessions on various topics. The first large group session addressed traumatic brain-injuries that are occurring with the military and the impact on local communities as these combat veterans return home, many at-risk of joining the homeless. The second session gave insight into the unique challenges of dealing with young people who are homeless.

The afternoon was dominated by a panel discussion assessing the philosophy that has been in place for the last five years: *"The philosophy of helping the homeless in the Pikes Peak region shall be to expect the entire community: organizations, individuals, and governments to act in a responsible and efficient fashion to prevent homelessness and to assist and hold accountable each homeless individual in moving toward self-sufficiency in a manner commensurate with his or her capabilities."*

Lively and, at times confrontational, discussion followed the panel presentation. A future meeting, not yet scheduled, will occur with the goal of taking this assessment conversation into creating a rolling ten-year plan.

## **Who are the other "workers in the vineyard?"**

If you think of the work that Westside CARES does, we are assisted by many other organizations and able individuals. People helping people. So, who are some of these other people doing this very human work? Let's begin by introducing those who made up the panelists from the discussion of community philosophy at the Annual Conference on Homelessness. Most of the panelists are long-time leaders in our community's response to the problems of poverty and homelessness.

Medical director of the Peak Vista Homeless Clinic, Greg Morris, has been described by Bob Holmes as one of only two or three individuals in this city – along with James Dixon of Catholic Charities – who can safely go in and out of homeless camps in our region. It included Frank Stampf, Executive Director of Partners-In-Housing. Frank is retired military who was the Operations Director at Partners before taking the helm. Partners in Housing is a self-sufficiency and transitional housing organization with 70 affordable housing units city-wide, including 30 efficiency-type units in Colorado House – a former downtown motel converted into housing in 2003.

Jeannine Holt has a long history in various agencies around town and is now Executive Director of Harbor House, the relatively new organization that operates under the "housing first" model where the hardest people to help – those with mental illness and substance abuse issues - are helped first with housing and then with supportive casework. This model is successful in both human terms and in financial ones as well – saving the city almost \$45,000 per person in the program. The panel also included Matt Parkhouse, a long-time local gadfly on issues of homelessness and a volunteer with Homeward Pikes Peak. His skills as a nurse have been put into use by several of the Ithaca Land Trust houses for many years.

Joe Vazquez is the Executive Director of Springs Rescue Mission, an evangelical faith-based program assisting primarily single homeless men and women through a variety of programs and an entrepreneurial venture that offers printing services. And the group was rounded out by Steve Handen, founder and volunteer "emeritus" of Ithaca Land Trust which runs several houses for homeless individuals as well as about 30 units of affordable housing for homeless individuals and families. Steve is a retired Catholic priest, and another long-time and tireless advocate for low-income and homeless people.

## I Love Colorado Springs... and Greccio Housing

One of our partner organizations, Greccio Housing, has developed a wonderful Monopoly-style board game that celebrates Colorado Springs. Saturday, October 25 from 11 am to 4 pm they will be hosting a board game tournament. Westside CARES will benefit from donations of canned food being collected at this tournament. Teams and individual players for the tournament can register or find at more by calling Greccio Housing at 475-1422.

## Thank you to our Donors

Part of the wonder of Westside CARES is the sense of ownership and responsibility held by so many of our supporters for the continuing ministry of this organization.

This takes the form of "mystery donors" who must be at work when 100 coloring books just appear to help make up our Care Pack Ministry for Children, or when dozens of handmade throws arrive as thanks from a woman who received our services, and it includes the hundreds of participants who contribute to a church's food drive. It also takes the form of "the steadfast and faithful servants" like Jerry Payne of Gateway Presbyterian who can be seen the weeks when Gateway hosts the pantry here at Bethany Baptist unloading donated food down the steep and narrow stairway to our basement or like Allie Page, Albert Gonzalez, John Sharrer, and Bob Smithwick of the Tri-Community Catholic parishes, who seamlessly lead the Sacred Heart pantry, twice a week, every week, 52 weeks a year, year in and year out.

The same goes for those who make financial gifts. Some checks arrive and we have no idea how the relationship to Westside CARES was nurtured. Others are regular contributors, steadfast and faithful.

So how do we express the gratitude that such generosity creates in our hearts? Starting soon, we will begin listing those who make financial gifts towards the ministry and mission of Westside CARES in our newsletter as a gesture of our thanks. If you would prefer to remain anonymous, please either mark that option on the donation coupon listed on the newsletter or note "anonymous" on the memo line of your check. Thank you for guiding us on how to appropriately thank you!

## Donating to Westside CARES through the Enterprise Zone

Westside CARES is recognized as an Enterprise Zone Organization. With this designation, Westside CARES can provide significant tax advantages. Any donor who gives a minimum donation of \$250.00 per year to Westside CARES through the Enterprise Zone is eligible for at 25% tax credit on their Colorado State Income Tax. Please contact Steve Brown with questions about this valuable benefit.

## Got Shelves?

If you have book or storage shelves at home that you would like to donate to Westside CARES, we are looking for shelving in good shape. Please call Mary Frances Kerr (ext 108) to arrange to either have them picked up or to drop them off.

## Volunteer News

### Our Member Congregations: Milestones Worth Mentioning...

Two of our member churches are celebrating 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries this year. Congratulations and Blessings to Gateway Presbyterian (celebrated with a full weekend of festivities in September) and Broadmoor Community Church (a Friday evening gala is scheduled for November)

Speaking of Anniversaries... Westside CARES' 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary will be in 2009. Look for special events and programs to help us acknowledge this milestone and consider where we go from here!



## Download a Song and Help Fight Hunger

Check out the Hunger Action Month theme song, "Prayer of a Common Man," available for download at [rhapsody.com](http://rhapsody.com). Country music artist Phil Vassar recorded a special version of this song in support of Hunger Action Month—and a portion of the proceeds will go to Feeding America (formerly America's Second Harvest). The song is available from September 9 until December 31.

*Editor: Mary Frances Kerr, staff  
Layout: Deb Corder, volunteer  
Send news to [mfkerr@qwestoffice.net](mailto:mfkerr@qwestoffice.net)*

## OUR MISSION

Formed in 1983, Westside CARES is an 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. 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 United Methodist
Sacred Heart Catholic Church
St. Aidan's Anglican
St. Andrew's Episcopal
St. Paul's Catholic
Trinity United Methodist
Wilson United Methodist

## Thanksgiving Baskets 2008

Church	Item	Quantity	Notes
All churches	turkey or ham	1 or more	frozen
Bethany Baptist	dinner rolls	40 - dozen packages	
Bethany Evangelical Lutheran	turkey gravy	40 cans/envelopes	
Broadmoor Community Church	pumpkin pie	40 pies	frozen
Central Christian	butter or margarine	40 - 1lbs packages	
Chapel of Our Saviour	potatoes (fresh)	40 - 5lbs bags	
Christ the King Lutheran	green beans	80 cans	
Church of Jesus Christ LDS	yams or sweet potatoes	40 cans	
Church in the Wildwood	celery (fresh)	40 bags	
Fellowship of the Rockies	apples (fresh)	40 bags	6 in each bag
Gateway Presbyterian	corn	80 cans	
Ivywild Community Church	stuffing	40 packages	
Manitou Community Congregational	juice	40 - 64oz	
Pikes Peak United Methodist	spiritual gift		
St Aidan's Anglican	cool whip	40 tubs	frozen
St Andrew's Episcopal	canned cranberries	40 cans	
St Paul's Catholic	sugar	40 - 5lbs bags	
Tri-Community Catholic	oranges (fresh)	40 bags	6 in each bag
Trinity United Methodist	jello	80 - 3oz boxes	
Wilson United Methodist	canned fruit	80 cans	

*Most families will be between 3-6 persons. Please bring items to WSC no later than November 20th.*

Westside CARES  
1930 W. Colorado Avenue  
Colorado Springs, CO 80904

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U S POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT 745  
COLO SGPS, CO



**Help sustain the Ministries of Westside CARES!**

**Yes!**

I want to make a financial commitment in order to  
sustain and extend the ministries of Westside CARES

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Church or Organization (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

*I would like to contribute:*  \$10  \$25  \$50  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you!*

*Please return this form with your check to:*

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