



THE COMPASSIONATE CONNECTIONS CENTER
WINTER 2023 ISSUE

EMERGING IN EVERY WAY



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Throughout the year, we've witnessed numerous mission moments encapsulating Compassionate Connections' essence. These moments, big or small, speak to the positive change we collectively bring to the lives of those we serve. From providing essential personal hygiene products to car seat safety checks and pop-up clothing resources, each instance reinforces our commitment to creating a more compassionate and hopeful community.

As we close the chapter in 2023, I extend my deepest gratitude to each member of the Compassionate Connections family – our supporters, volunteers, partnering organizations, and the entire community. Your belief in our mission and your active involvement have been the driving forces behind our success.

We look forward to the opportunities and challenges that the coming year will bring. The seeds of compassion that we've planted together are sure to blossom into even more significant achievements and positive impacts. With your continued support, Compassionate Connections is poised for another year of growth, service, and making a meaningful difference.

WINTER 2023

NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

A Message from the Executive Director

Free Holiday Clothing Giveaway

Hygiene & Cleaning Supplies To Help A Neighbor In Need

Spotlighting our Partnership Programs

Bursting at the Seams...

Donation Item of the Month

Get Involved!



Compassionate Connections Inc.
@ThecompassionateconnectCenter

FREE HOLIDAY CLOTHING GIVEAWAY

More often than not, we forget the dignity that comes with having clothing and footwear that fits. In March of 2023, The Compassionate Connections Center received a generous donation of brand new shoes from New Threads of Hope of Wauwatosa, and what happened next proved that sometimes changing your shoes can change your life.



Randy and Carol Erickson, and Adam and Kristy Erickson own and operate a large farming operation on the south end of Clintonville. Well-fitted shoes and boots are a necessity for their employees. We recruited the help of another incredible volunteer, Guadalupe, who interpreted while her young son ran back and forth from the van with options and sizes for everyone interested. By the time the day ended, more than 150 pairs of shoes were distributed to their extended farm family.

Later that day we received this message from Carol, **“We would like to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for donating the wonderful footwear. Our farm employees and their families are some of the recipients of the beautiful footwear. Most of our guys don’t speak English, but they had the biggest smiles, letting us know how happy they were to receive these for themselves and their children. They are very religious families and go to church often, so when they saw the dress shoes – they were so grateful to pick out a pair. With the assistance of McKayla, an associate from Compassionate Connections, Clintonville, we took multiple pairs of footwear to the farm so they could come to the car and pick out pairs they liked. There were so many different colors, sizes, and styles, that they were amazed at the selection. Our sincere thanks and appreciation. Randy and Carol Erickson, and Adam, Kristy and Family”**. This distribution reminded us that sometimes the most beautiful moments are the ones you didn’t plan on.

Before the end of 2023, New Threads reached back out to offer two and a half pallets of winter wear as well as children’s size 3T-16 Holiday wear, (from sparkly tights to bow ties and dress shoes, we knew these treasures needed to be delivered in time for both School and Church Holiday programs). We were able to partner with the Clintonville Public Library to set up a Holiday Pop-Up Shop for people to come in and pick out their Holiday clothing, free of charge. It can sometimes be difficult for people impacted by poverty to participate in some of these *dress-your-best* events but because of this partnership, we were able to make sure no child missed out.



Telling the individual stories of how shoes and clothing impact the lives of all of each recipient is never as powerful as watching people walk out the door with clothing they can be proud of. Thank you, New Threads of Hope, for trusting us with these donations and giving us many days of beautiful moments and stories. This is just the beginning of our impactful partnership.



HYGIENE & CLEANING SUPPLIES TO HELP A NEIGHBOR IN NEED



The Compassionate Connections Center is partnering with *The Family Radio's Help for the Homeless Hygiene Drive* to stock shelves of homeless and crisis programs in 19 Wisconsin communities. The drive is scheduled for **February 11th-March 3rd**, and all collected items stay in our community.



Clintonville collected over 5000 hygiene items last year and hopes to collect even more this year by reaching a goal of 6000+. You can assist by hosting a collection box, making a donation, or spreading the word.

SPOTLIGHTING OUR PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

Harvest of the Month - Healthy Eating Initiative



The Compassionate Connections Nutrition Mission Program is teaming up with UW-Extension FoodWise to roll out our new Harvest of the Month Healthy Eating Initiative. By partnering with Hailee, Nutrition Educator at FoodWise, we will showcase a new seasonal fruit or vegetable with tasting samples, recipes, and educational materials. Our goal is to encourage children and families to try new fruits and vegetables, provide a variety of recipes to incorporate new harvest items, reduce food waste, and support Wisconsin farmers and the local economy.



Here is a glimpse of our featured Harvest of the Month items for 2024:



- January- Sweet Potatoes
- February- Beets
- March - Greens
- April- Sweet Peas
- May- Asparagus
- June- Lettuce
- July- Cucumbers
- August- Tomatoes
- September- Carrots
- October- Apples
- November- Winter Squash
- December- Cranberries

Let's Taco Bout' It

CAP Services Mental Health Navigation Services have been partnering with the CCC for more than two years to normalize the mental health needs of people in our community. Frank Bellamia sees walk-in clients in our office twice a month, bringing with him, resources, connections to mental health practitioners, and a calm we all look forward to. In May, we hosted the Let's Taco Bout' It - Mental Health Event.



By partnering with the Clintonville Public School District and the High School Sources of Strength Chapter, we offered calming activities, meet and greets with Frank, and introduced participants to the services CAP Services Mental Health Navigation has to offer, all while enjoying the all-you-can-eat taco bar. Keeping the conversation light and Frank's natural ability to put the people he meets at ease, made this event a huge step forward in our joint effort to normalize and prioritize everyone's mental health, all while laughing, crafting, and eating.



Waupaca County Public Health



Never has there been a truer statement than “one door opens another” than how we came to partner with Waupaca County Public Health. Jolyne with Bridging Language Barriers has been working with Public Health offering translations and interpreting services for programs including WIC, Healthy Beginnings, and the Waupaca County Public Health Nurses. As Jolyne always does and leads with her heart, she invited staff from Waupaca County Public Health to tour the CCC and learn more about what we are doing. Beginning in 2023, Waupaca County Public Health brought the mobile clinic to the CCC where they offer free services such as car seat safety checks, free routine vaccinations for children, and free early childhood screenings.

This partnership has sparked many special moments including when a young mother came in crying when she couldn't pick her son up because she didn't have a car seat. She had no idea Waupaca County was here or that they were doing car seat checks. Not only did she get a car seat for her son but also two more for her older children. Without the vital relationship building between organizations, access to basic safety necessities (such as a car seat for a child) wouldn't have been possible for the mother that day and the many other mothers like her.

Goodfellows

Even before opening our doors, our team knew that if we wanted to be successful in making a lasting impact we would need to look no further than the trailblazing organizations already making large-scale giveaway events look easy. Open to residents who live in both the Clintonville and Marion School Districts, the Goodfellows annual giving event provides presents, coats, hats, mittens, bedding, and more to families in need. Goodfellows was started in the 1940s and has not missed a single Christmas in more than 70 years. Last year there was a 25% increase in applications. The 290 families totaled to 1,131 individuals. There's truly no better example of an organization for us to follow in the footsteps of right here in our community and we couldn't be more honored to work alongside them for years to come.



The Community Clothes Closet

When your phone rings, make sure you answer it because you never know what opportunities are on the other end. The Community Clothes Closet, located in Menasha, Wisconsin, is a unique non-profit organization that provides free new and gently used casual and career clothing to children, women, and men in need. The Community Clothes Closet of Menasha had proposed coming to Clintonville every other month and providing brand-new free clothes to eligible clients both children and adults. Since receiving a call from them months ago, we have continued to reach more and more individuals in need of such services.



Bridging The Gap with Jolyne



So here we are again... 2023 has been a whirlwind of blessings. Our interpreters; Celeste Salas, Joana Luciano, Sandra Jurado, Jennifer Wucinski, and myself have been amazed by all of the things that have been accomplished this year. We are so happy to serve with partnering organizations like Thedacare Rural Health, our local Food Pantry, Traveling Clothes Closet, and Waupaca County Public Health to mention a few. We are reminded that we are just shy of closing on three years of service to our community. We now find ourselves reflecting and looking ahead to a new year, how true the statement is that as we get older the time flies by faster. As a Hispanic minority community member of Clintonville, I'm reminded that during the closure of every year, the struggle is real for many of our community families. The façade of the holidays for so many and the reality that during this time, it's hard. Amazingly, there are no barriers when it comes to social media or news screaming to buy the most expensive pair of Jordans or put the new iPhone on the credit card, our heart says "Just this one last purchase," or spending \$7.00 on a latte at Starbuck's. The heart is a deceitful thing, who can know it, the bible says. The heartbeat of giving to help those in need here at Compassionate Connections has been our greatest blessing in Bridging Language Barriers partnering with their organization. The healthy condition of the heart is what brings the partnering organizations together here to do great things for our community! This speaks loudly to my ears; in that, so much can be accomplished when the condition of the heart is healthy. Whether today we help someone or tomorrow we need a helping hand, the condition of the heart allows us to be humble and share what we have and humble enough to ask when we need help. It's amazing to know both forms of humility come from the same heart. So as we finish out the new year, friends of the community of Clintonville, I hope you take time to reflect on what you have been blessed with and what you possess to share with others.

BURSTING AT THE SEAMS...

It wasn't very long ago that we moved into our current space on 10th Street. We laughed at how much space we had and even considered not heating some of the offices. We housed the entire Nutrition Mission in our conference room and didn't even use our storage room for anything other than a bench that came with the building. But much like any baby, we grew and grew and grew. In less than a year, we had gone from one person with a computer up front, to staff using their garages to store our latest donation of clothing. It was clear to all of us, the time came to leave our nest. Leaving our current location is so bittersweet for all of us. Our close relationship with The Clintonville Area Food Pantry, The Clintonville Police and Fire Departments, and Clintonville City Hall was the result of our ideal geography.

On November 22nd, 2023 the Compassionate Connections Center became proud owners of a permanent space for our ever-growing partnerships and programs. The former Keller's Appliance and Hard Core Fitness building will now be the home of the Compassionate Connections Center. Now the hard work of designing and constructing offices, program and storage spaces, writing grants and capital campaigns for both ours and our partner spaces, and hardest of all, packing up and leaving the building and neighborhood we have grown to love. This exciting new chapter of our organization will have plenty of opportunities for volunteers and supporters to get involved so keep checking our website, and social media or stop by to learn more about our very exciting future!



DONATION ITEM OF THE MONTH

January: **Chapstick and Lotion**

February: **Shaving Cream and Disposable Razors**

March: **Toilet Paper and Kleenex**

April: **Baby Wipes and Deodorant**

May: **Shampoo and Conditioner**

June: **Body wash and Hand Soap**

July: **Feminine Hygiene Products**

August: **Q-Tips and Band-aids**

September: **Toothbrush and Toothpaste**

October: **Laundry Detergent and Dish Soap**

November: **Diapers and Pull-ups**

December: **Hats and Mittens**



GET INVOLVED!

Follow us on social



Compassionate Connections Inc.



@ThecompassionateconnectCenter

GIVE →
TODAY!

