

EAST END COOPERATIVE MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

2024 | SPRING

EECM.ORG

DELIVERING HOPE

EECM HOSTING DRIVE-UP DONATIONS ON MAY 4

ON SATURDAY MORNING, May 4th, from 9am to 1pm, dedicated EECM volunteers will be waiting for you to drive up and drop off non-perishable food and/or monetary donations. Our first outdoor collection, held last October, was a great success — and a lot of fun.

With children from food-insecure families out of school over the summer, coupled with drastically increasing demand for food at our pantry and at our community lunch, we hope you can swing by to make a donation.

Volunteers will greet you at the Harvard Street side of our building, just off Centre Avenue. You won't even need to get out of your vehicle. As you drive up, food donations will be taken on the right side of the street, while monetary donations will be on the left side.

We are so thrilled to be collaborating again with Highmark Wholecare, which has been so generous with volunteering and donating at past events.

Non-perishable food items needed for drop off include: Rice, pasta, macaroni, boxed mac and cheese, soups and broth, peanut butter and jelly, canned fruits and vegetables, canned meat and fish, breakfast cereal, pancake mix and syrup, jello, and pudding and cake mixes.

As for cash or check donations, if you can't stop by to see us on May 4th, you can always donate by using the event QR code shown at right.



DONATE ONLINE





EECM HONORED

CITY COUNCIL PRESENTS A SPECIAL PROCLAMATION HONORING THE HARD WORK OF PUBLIC SERVICE GRANT RECIPIENTS



James Blount, Education & Employment Coordinator; Dr. Nicole Harrington, Director of Housing and Employment Services; Jerry Parfitt, Vice President of Finance and Administration; and Michael Bartley, Vice President of Development and Public Relations

On Tuesday, April 2, EECM staff members received a special honor at Pittsburgh City Council Chambers. As part of National Community Development Week, the city council presented a special proclamation recognizing the hard work of city Public Service Grant recipients.

An organization from each city council district was recognized and Council Member Khari Mosley nominated East End Cooperative Ministries to be honored. EECM was specifically thanked for its efforts on behalf of its most vulnerable clients and residents and the proclamation specifically made mention of the dedicated Housing and Employment Services programs.

EECM's Director of Housing and Employment Services Dr. Nicole Harrington said, "we work hard every single day to make a difference for our residents and all whom we serve and this public honor is truly a highlight for our staff, our donors, and all who pitch in to help."

VOLUNTEERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

Here at EECM, we always say volunteerism is the backbone of our success. And it's no secret that without volunteers, our services just wouldn't be what they are and we could never keep up with the recent demand for food and other services.

On a daily basis, our small army of volunteers works tirelessly to make sure pantry clients get what they need. In the early morning, volunteers are in our kitchen prepping and cooking food and then serving it at our community lunch which serves, on average, some 150 people a day. On any given evening, a volunteer group prepares and serves dinner to our resident population.

Our volunteers are a diverse group. They are young, college-age people from Duquesne University or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints among other groups. They are retirees from all around the region who work to make a difference. They are EECM donors and board members and people from local congregations who've been giving their time to EECM for generations.

EECM Volunteer Engagement Director, Rev. Tracy Hudson says, "... we hear from many volunteers that being here is so important to their own well-being.



Volunteers from UPMC help prepare Community Lunch

"They want to give back to their community and we are so happy to have them."

EECM has far more volunteers than paid staff and it's what sustains our budget and our organization. We'd love to have you join us. Go to eecm.org and click on the volunteer tab and complete the registration form. Once the registration has been completed and submitted, state background clearances are also necessary and Rev. Hudson is happy to answer any questions about volunteering here at EECM.

'NOTHING BUNDT CAKES' PARTNERS WITH EECM

A unique and delicious business has opened on Penn Avenue in the heart of East Liberty, and EECM is proud to be their primary charity and collaborator.

Nothing Bundt Cakes held its grand opening on Saturday February 24, with 20% of its opening profit donated to EECM.

EECM CEO Rev. Darnell Leonard and VP of Development and PR Michael Bartley were invited to join local businesses and dignitaries at the ribbon cutting ceremony.

The new store got a rousing welcome to the neighborhood that day and Rev. Leonard told the crowd: "... EECM is proud to partner with you and, as always, we are so grateful for your monetary donations and of course, always happy to get leftover cakes for our pantry clients."



OVERFLOW SHELTER A SUCCESS

It's no secret that the summer of 2023 brought confusion and what was called "a homeless crisis" hit the downtown area of Pittsburgh. A large shelter on Smithfield Street abruptly closed with homeless clients forced to stay outside and sleep on the streets overnight. Leaders from the public and private sectors scrambled for solutions as a public outcry dominated local media stories.

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services reached out to East End Cooperative Ministry for help, inquiring about whether we had ample space to help take some of the homeless folks who were displaced by the downtown shelter closing.

With our own homeless shelter and recovery housing at capacity, EECM scrambled to find space. "We quickly told the county that we found several rooms that we could immediately transform into shelter space," said EECM Housing

Director, Dr. Nicole Harrington. On June 21, EECM was the first agency designated by the county as an Emergency Overflow Shelter to deal with the homeless crisis.

"A big challenge was evident from the start, because our overflow shelter space was on the first floor and we didn't have bathing or shower access for our overflow clients," Harrington said. But, the EECM Development team quickly negotiated with The Hillman Foundation who generously and quickly funded portable showers just a step or two outside the overflow space. Dr. Harrington says the clients were very grateful for the hot showers.

EECM provided 20 extra beds each night and our overflow shelter was at capacity for nearly every single night until the overflow program ended throughout the county on March 31, 2024.

"It was truly a big success," said Harrington.

REMEMBERING ELLIOTT OSHRY

For decades, Elliott Oshry not only served EECM in an official capacity on the Board of Directors, but he could be seen evenings making meals for residents, as well as so many other works of dedication and service.

In anticipation of the EECM Golden Gala celebrating our 50th Anniversary, Oshry served on the Dinner Committee and procured countless sponsors and individual gifts.

Oshry had an esteemed career in the Pittsburgh region concentrated on fundraising. He was the recipient of many philanthropic awards.

"He was my mentor and no matter what appeal or event we were working on, Elliott wanted to know how he could help," said EECM Vice President of Development and Public Relations, Michael Bartley.

Oshry assisted in the funding established for building Community House and just about every major fundraising goal EECM has had over the years.

He died in September and EECM's Board of Directors and Staff profoundly thank him for his unyielding dedication and love for EECM. Elliott Oshry's contributions will not be forgotten.



THANK YOU SARRIS CANDIES!

For years, Sarris Candies in Canonsburg has loaded up trucks and dropped off specialty chocolates and other treats to be distributed to our EECM clients in the pantry and at Community Lunch.

The latest bulk drop-off came in February as Sarris drivers came with a few thousand individual boxes of peppermint bark and chocolate covered caramels and chocolate covered Oreos.

EECM thanks Sarris and its generous workers for donating their products for our clients who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford the high-end chocolates and candies.

MEET OUR STAFF

“HI KRISTA!”

These two words can be heard every day and all day inside and outside the EECM Community Food Pantry.

To say that Krista Brolley is one of EECM's most popular employees is an understatement. “She just seems to have time for everyone and she's always in a good mood,” said one pantry client.

Brolley manages the EECM food pantry. While she makes it look easy, operating our pantry these days can be most challenging. Demand for pantry food has increased exponentially in recent years. In 2023, the pantry saw some 10,000 additional visits. And right now in early 2024, the pantry is experiencing an average of 500 visits a week.

Brolley has to balance meeting these demands with making sure pantry food is ordered properly and stocked well so that no individual or family is turned away. Not to mention, she must guide scores of volunteers to unload trucks at the loading dock as well as stock the shelves and organize client orders.



“Despite the always crazy busy demands at the pantry, we manage to do it all with a smile and keep moving. And that's because we have the greatest and most dedicated volunteers anywhere,” says Krista.

She says she loves to say “Hi” back and she welcomes all to our pantry and building.

SUMMER CAMP ADDS NEW PROGRAM

The EECM Children and Youth Summer Camp will have an exciting new addition this year. The FBI, Pennsylvania State Police, and several local police agencies — even a K9 team — will come to speak to and inspire the Campers.

The police addition was introduced to EECM by The Child Guidance Foundation, which financially supports our summer camp. The foundation works with police agencies to give presentations to local children so that the kids understand how police can partner with the neighborhoods and children to work together for a safer city.

“A big part of the purpose of this is that our campers meet the officers here. We never want our kids to have a first encounter with the police in an emergency or a negative situation. We want them to meet the police as public servants, and so we welcome this unique and positive addition to camp,” said EECM Children and Youth Director Terry Levels.

EECM Summer Camp will be held from July 1st to August 2nd.



EAST END
COOPERATIVE
MINISTRY

6140 Station Street
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WELCOME GRACE TAN

East End Cooperative Ministry welcomes Grace Tan to the EECM Board of Directors. Grace is a Partner at TNTP, a national nonprofit working to re-imagine America's public education system. She has extensive experience working to improve student experiences in K-12 public education. Grace has also worked at Pittsburgh Public Schools and Accenture and began her career as a high school teacher in Baltimore. She also serves on the Board of Directors of the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy. She and her husband live in the East End and have two college-aged sons.

SAVE THESE 2024 DATES

- May 4 | Help EECM Deliver Hope outdoor event
- July 1-Aug 2 | EECM Summer Camp
- July 25 | Farmers Market at EECM
- August 15 | Wellness Clinic noontime in the Chapel
- October 5 | Help EECM "Deliver the Holidays" event

EECM BOARD

- David J. McAllister, Board Chair
- Mark L. Sinicrope, Treasurer
- Beth Henke, Secretary
- Amie Bolewitz
- Joan Eichner
- Andrea Haney
- Jeff McIlroy
- Jessica Spradley
- Grace Tan
- DeWayne J. Tuthill
- Jeffrey Troutman
- Rev. Darnell Leonard, President & CEO

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