



Winter 2020

“For everything there is a season,
and a time for every matter under heaven.”

Ecclesiastes 3:1

WCM HAS A 2020 VISION!



WILKINSBURG
COMMUNITY MINISTRY

Since its founding in 1968, Wilkinsburg Community Ministry has successfully responded to opportunities and overcome adversity thanks to the creativity, faith and tenacity of its Board of Directors and its dedicated staff and volunteers. WCM has always been true to its mission to respond to the persistent needs of people of all faiths, addressing the human service crises in our community. As we move into a new decade, WCM has made bold and realistic plans to adapt to the ongoing needs of the residents of Wilkinsburg, especially in the area of Urban Survival programs. Let's take a look back at the year 2019 and look ahead, program by program, to the plans for 2020 and beyond:

Child Nutrition/Hungry Kids moves to Community Forge

The Children's Nutrition program is no longer viable for WCM: we have become a victim our own success. We serve so many kids that the program is expensive, but not enough kids (like a school district) to make it pay for itself. These are non-profit programs intended to break even, and every year an increasing portion of our budget has gone to pay for the program's expenses that are not reimbursed. In 2019, approximately 65 percent of our fundraising went to defray the costs of the program, and we ended the year in a hole.

Administratively, the program was not viable for WCM's small staff. It required an additional administrative staff person (15-20 hours a week) to do right, because the state wants two sets of eyes on everything. Every menu has to have detailed nutrition data. Items used in food service must have child nutrition labels.

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

This is a thick “Well” because we have a lot to share: our annual donors, program changes, new staff, budget, board members, and other news. It’s a lot to take in, and I’ll be happy to come to any of your groups or congregations to give you an individual report on our progress.

Needed programming changes inaugurated this Fall have been bittersweet. Our success in reaching Wilkinsburg area children through the childhood nutrition programs has placed the program beyond our financial viability. On January 1, we transferred the program to Opening Doors for Kids and Families, at Community Forge (the old Johnson school), where most of the kids we fed were engaged in after school programming. We are sure that Mike Johnson, the new program director, and CEO of Opening doors, will provide the necessary leadership to build on the program’s success and take it to the next level of outreach. We are sending the staff - Holly Bland and Rosetta James - to insure the continuity of home cooking and nutrition. The program will continue to feed the current participants: PLEA, Saturday Basketball, Wilkinsburg Children’s library programs, and the FROGS program at the First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood, as well as the programs operating at Community Forge. We want to thank the South Avenue United Methodist Church for its use of their wonderful kitchen for the past years.

As we shed one program, though, we are now able to focus more attention on Urban Survival programs, described on the next page. Urban Survival is principally directed at Food Insecurity in Wilkinsburg, and adjacent issues that challenge families with limited incomes. We also address some other on-going needs: school uniforms, Back-To-School backpacks, clothing emergency (underwear and socks) kits for the teachers at Turner and Kelly, and other on-going needs. In addition, we continue to serve as a collection point for the Christian Church of Wilkinsburg’s *New to You* shop.

We also want to thank the many generous people who supported WCM in 2019; their names are listed in this issue of the “Well.” A special thanks to our donors who gift a monthly sustaining gift!

In November, we learned that our van would not pass inspection without major expense - mechanical and body work. We traded it in for \$2000 against a 2019 Nissan van, at Bowser. Team Michalek at the Power of Bowser gave us a great deal! The new van is safe, perhaps slightly bigger, and runs smoothly.

And finally, this year we said goodbye to Shirlee Pope and Laura Coll, and welcomed new staff members, Carlos Gasca-Yanez and Marie Chirieliesson.

Cheers and joy!

Ruth Kittner
Executive Director, WCM

WCM Vision for 2020 and Beyond (Continued from page 1)

Food serving is measured in ounces - 4 ounces or 6 ounces for older kids - and second helpings aren't reimbursed. Every year the paperwork becomes more extensive.

In October, the executive committee discussed a couple of options: (1) scale back the food program to only the PLEA School, and/or modify the food program to a combination of sponsor-to-sponsor agreements, and some at-risk programs; and (2) cancel the program altogether as of January 1. In late October, a third alternative presented itself: transferring the program to a different sponsor, either Opening Doors for Kids and Families or the Learning Commons, both of which operate at Community Forge (the old Johnson school).

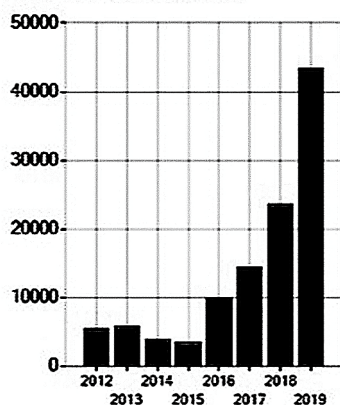
These are relatively new programs providing outreach and services to girls, boys, and families, and over half of the meals WCM prepared went to Community Forge for these programs. The chance to operate in the kitchen at Community Forge changed the dynamic of the administration of the program, too, because the kitchen, the dining room, and the office are located in the same building. It means less monitoring and streamlined oversight. Most meals would be served in-house; meals are transported only to PLEA (34 a day), Saturday Basketball (25 a week), the library (75 a week) and to the FROGS program at the First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood (30 a week).

The full board voted in the November meeting to transfer the program to Opening Doors for Kids and Families as of January 1. Michael Johnson, CEO, has taken over management of the childhood nutrition program. The staff will move there after the Community Forge kitchen is renovated. Mike, who is also a member of the Wilkinsburg school board, plans to continue the program throughout the school year, and provide meals for kids during the summer, which was a key requirement as far as WCM was concerned. WCM is also developing a pantry relationship with the programs at Community Forge, in which working parents could get emergency food when they pick up their kids, and providing nutritional resources for the children.

Changes in the Urban Survival Program

In 2019, with a grant for the Junior League, WCM expanded its food pantry program to include people in the neighboring communities of Swissvale, Edgewood, Braddock, and Forest Hills. We also expanded a bit north to include some of the folks in Homewood.

Total Pounds Distributed



Food Insecurity Program. We now get regular distributions not only from the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, but also from Costco. Costco contributions come every Monday: usually about 700-1000 pounds of fresh produce and baked goods. Rick Masten and his Merry Men pick up the food from Costco.

Later this year, we will inherit (back) 2 double commercial refrigerators and another commercial freezer, plus about 30 linear feet of shelving after the Child Nutrition program vacates South Avenue United Methodist Church. The equipment will allow us to store more food and to provide regular distribution of milk and eggs.

Since 2012, our distribution of food (by pound) has increased from about 5,000 pounds (in 2012) to over 45,000 pounds (as of mid-December 2019). That's an 800% increase in food distribution. This reflects the changing needs of the working poor - our families are working, some are working two jobs.

Most of our seniors struggle to make static income cover rising food and housing costs. Generally, half of our clients are seniors.

(Continued on next page)

WCM Urban Survival Program (Continued from previous page)

WCM offers food assistance in two ways: the Food Pantry and the Walk-Through Shop. The Food Pantry provides enough food for a family for a week, while the Walk-Through Shop provides food for one or two days. Pantry distributions occur Monday through Friday from 9 to 1 p.m. On Monday and Tuesday we have fresh produce and baked goods. On Wednesday we have fresh baked goods from Market District. Sometimes we get bread from Five Points Bakery. The Walk-Through program encourages people to come for fresh produce 2 times a week, and Walk-Through (cans and other items) once a week. Food Baskets are available at all times, but we ask that families limit these to once every 2 months. If they need more, we coordinate their sign-up for St. James Church’s monthly distribution.

Highmark Walk. In May, 2020, to help fund the expansion of our food pantry program, we will be participating in the Highmark Walk. Stephen Simpson-Hunt, of the Wilkinsburg-Regent Square Rotary, will organize our participation in the Highmark Walk. Other food pantries indicate that they can generate enough funds to support their annual purchase at the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank through their participation in the Walk.

Food Pantry and Walk-Through Statistics

Note: SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Recipients must meet certain eligibility requirements.)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Emergency Food 2019	339	482	434	498	496	432	396	441	389	288	286	236	4717
SNAP Households	47	97	55	84	55	83	64	76	123	110	110	91	995
Veterans	22	46	15	33	15	22	13	16	22	38	40	29	311
Disabled	11	28	19	29	19	18	30	82	89	74	91	69	559
New Households	55	111	90	101	78	96	57	123	36	40	44	18	849
Emergency Food 2018	42	42	83	52	116	50	70	56	80	80	165	200	1036
SNAP Households	23	16	31	30	31	27	19	34	23	28	45	100	407
Veterans	6	3	6	7	7	7	6	7	11	11	15	52	138
Disabled	13	16	15	15	16	16	14	9	13	13	19	38	197
New Households	35	21	45	40	27	15	29	28	33	32	78	100	483
Walk-Thru 2019*	243	269	321	312	356	246	198	222					2167
Walk-Thru 2018	130	118	183	133	164	183	199	296	168	396	133	210	2313
Walk-Thru 2017	129	113	92	124	144	125	120	148	110	133	144	110	1492

* After September 2019, Walk-Through was discontinued as a separate count per the Department of Agriculture

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WCM Urban Survival Program (Continued from previous page)

Myths and Reality About the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

People who get SNAP (food stamps) don't work.

Fact: the overwhelming majority of SNAP recipients who can work do work

SNAP drains tax payer funds.

Fact: Every \$1 in SNAP benefits paid out generates \$1.73 in economic activity

SNAP is abused by the people who receive the benefit.

Fact: SNAP has a fraud rate of less than 3%, which is the lowest of any public benefit program

Undocumented immigrants get SNAP benefits.

Fact: Undocumented immigrants have never been eligible for SNAP.

In addition to its Food Insecurity program, Urban Survival continues to have several other components:

Expansion of our holiday food baskets - to add Easter, Memorial Day and Labor Day in addition to Thanksgiving and Christmas. We have learned that this is an important way to strengthen communities by encouraging families to gather on special days of celebration. Of course, our big holidays remain Thanksgiving and Christmas. In 2019 we distributed 200 boxes for these holidays.

Back Pack Project - distribution of 600 back packs to Wilkinsburg elementary school kids in August. Back packs include notebooks, pencils, pencil sharpener, extraneous school supplies, and small hygiene kits.

Seats and Feets - Initiated by Waverly Presbyterian Church several years ago, Seats and Feets provides socks and underwear to the Kelly and Turner schools. We also include gently used school uniforms.

Heads and Fingers - provides knitted or crocheted hats, scarves and mittens for kids. The knitting club at Longwood at Oakmont is busily making sweaters for the kids as well. We also collect grown-up gloves and hats, which are distributed as available through the pantry.

WCM Budget for 2020

INCOME	BUDGET	EXPENDITURES	BUDGET
Gifts from Individuals	\$48,000	Wages, Taxes & Payroll Fees	\$66,000
Gifts from Congregations	\$49,000	Office Expenses	\$28,000
Foundation Gifts	\$20,000	Urban Survival Program	\$ 9,300
Business and Organization Gifts	\$ 5,000	Loan Repayments	\$19,100
Fundraising Income	\$ 5,000	Financial Audit	\$ 3,400
Fees for Food Programs*	\$ 5,000	Fundraising Expenses	\$ 1,200
		Miscellaneous & New Programs	\$ 3,000
		Capital Equipment	\$ 2,000
TOTAL BUDGETED INCOME	\$132,000	TOTAL BUDGETED EXPENSES	\$132,000

*Owed for 2019, but payable in 2020

MEET OUR NEW STAFF MEMBERS



Carlos Gasca Yanez joined the staff in early December as the new pantry coordinator. Carlos grew up in Mexico City, but has lived in several cities in Canada and the US. He has a master's degree in Community Economic development and is interested in developing sustainable communities.

Marie Chirieliesson, pantry assistant, joins us from an internship from AARP. She has been working with us since October, helping in the kitchen, and generally keeping us tidy and neat. Marie has learned the ins and outs of the pantry, attacks new projects with zest and gets along with everyone.

WCM PURCHASES NEW VAN

After tens of thousands of miles of trips delivering Meals on Wheels in Wilkinsburg and making trips to and from the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, our 10 year old van sadly met its demise this summer. The van was purchased new back in 2010 using funds from a \$15,000 grant from Walmart in conjunction with the Meals on Wheels Association of America. This little workhorse served WCM well for all those years. As Ruth mentioned in her message, this past November we had to trade it in to purchase a new (to us!) Nissan van. Let's hope it lasts as long as its predecessor did!

2020 WCM BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTED

Executive Committee

Darlene Thornton, President, New Testament Missionary Baptist Church

Jane Fox, Vice President, Sixth Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh

Larry Viehland, Treasurer, Mifflin Avenue United Methodist Church

Tom Ochs, Financial Secretary, First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood

Claudia (Kim) Viehland, Secretary, Mifflin Avenue United Methodist Church

Joe Davis, Member-at-Large to the Executive Committee, Proprietor, Biddle's Escape

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Pat Hauser, Member-at-Large

Janet Hellner-Burris, Pastor, Christian Church of Wilkinsburg

Jeff Hoener, Member, South Avenue United Methodist Church

Marsha Morris, Waverly Presbyterian Church

Jane Opgaard, Member, Sixth Presbyterian Church. Chair of Development Committee

Michael Rucker, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood

Ex-Officio

*Ruth Kittner, Executive Director, Wilkinsburg Community Ministry

Ad Hoc (non-voting) Member

Roger Schneider, Webmaster and Editor of the "Well"

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

Many thanks to the following individuals, businesses and organizations that made contributions to support WCM in 2019. (Please forgive us if we have inadvertently omitted any names.)

Individuals

Rhonda Apossos	Claude & Loretha Hoyer	Evelyn Elizabeth Payne
Jeffrey Arriza & Nancy Pepper	Kevin & Ellen Hughes	John R. & Margery Pepper
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	Marcus & Nancy Patterson	Betty Wilson
	Joan Paul	Rev. Philip Wilson
		Mr. & Mrs. Harry Winslow

** Indicates Monthly Gift*

(Continued on next page)

MORE THANKS

Individual Contributors, cont'd.

Michael J. Witherel, Esq. John & Ruth Wolf Russell & Lisa Zelich

Donors to the 2019 #Critical Needs Day of Giving

Barry & Jan Alfonso	Patrick M. & Rita Joyce	Mark Roth
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Julia Hudson Richards	Rev. Rita Platt	

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Community Partners

Biddle's Escape	Junior League of Pittsburgh
Buhl Foundation	Longwood at Oakmont Residents
Calvary Episcopal Church Bookstore	Pittsburgh Dry Cleaners & Furriers, Inc.
Candy Favorites	The Pittsburgh Foundation
Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank	Rotary of Regent Square and Wilkinsburg
Impact ReDevelopment	John Stanton Holdings, Stanton LLC
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Congregational Partners

Christian Church of Wilkinsburg	Newlonsburg Presbyterian Church - Murrysville
Covenant Church of Pittsburgh	Presbyterian Women of Third Presbyterian Church
Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church	Sixth Presbyterian Church
CROP Hunger Walk—Pittsburgh East	South Avenue United Methodist Church
First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood	Swissvale Presbyterian Church
Forest Hills Presbyterian Church Mission Committee	Third Presbyterian Church
Hamilton Presbyterian Church	United Methodist Women of South Avenue UMC
Mifflin Avenue United Methodist Church	Waverly Presbyterian Church
Missionary Baptist Church	Women of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
New Testament Missionary Baptist Church	Young Elders Fellowship

Thanks to South Avenue United Methodist Church for donating the use of their kitchen for our Child Nutrition Program.

PITTSBURGH EAST CROP HUNGER WALK THANKS

Special thanks to all who walked and those who contributed to the October 13 Walk. A group of 88 walkers raised a total of \$23,427.34 to fight global hunger. Of the total amount raised, 15% will come to WCM (nearly \$5,900!) and 10% will go to the East End Cooperative Ministries.

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSIDER

Network for Good: The link is available on the WCM website. Network for Good is an easy way to send regular support to Wilkinsburg Community Ministry.

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation donates 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice. Every item available for purchase on www.amazon.com is also available on AmazonSmile at the same price. You will see eligible products marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation" on their product detail pages. Your shopping cart, Wish List, wedding or baby registry, and other account settings are also the same. On your first visit to AmazonSmile smile.amazon.com, you select a charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. Amazon remembers your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation. Be sure to remember to go to smile.amazon.com when you're ready to shop. Items purchased through the regular amazon.com website do not qualify.

Monthly Gifts: You can set up your bank account to send WCM a monthly gift. It's easy. Most checking accounts offer this service as part of their bill payment option. Add WCM to your automatic payment options, and enter the address: 702 Wood Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15221. Select an amount and chose monthly. Your bank will send us a check every month in the amount you request.

RMD Charitable Giving: If your retirement finances consist of an individual retirement account (IRA), then starting at age 70 ½ you are required to take minimum distributions from your IRA. You may want to consider making an IRA Qualified Charitable Deduction (QCD) to benefit WCM.

PLEASE USE THIS NEW FORM FOR YOUR MAIL-IN CONTRIBUTION

Please consider making a new or additional contribution to WCM at this time. Contributions may be made at **ANYTIME** by going to <http://www.wcm15221.org> and clicking on the "Donate Now" button, where you can donate by credit card or PayPal. The website also has a special link to "GoFundMe." You may also use the form below. Please send your check to Donations Administrator at Wilkinsburg Community Ministry, 702/704 Wood Street, Wilkinsburg, PA, 15221.

WCM also participates in the Contributor Choice program of the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania. To designate WCM at work, please reference our agency code **242**.

I/We want to join in your efforts to help others and will subscribe the following amount:

Payable: Enclosed \$ _____ Monthly \$ _____ Quarterly \$ _____ Date: _____

- \$10 supports after-school snacks and meals for 3 children
- \$25.00 provides a turkey or ham for a family of 5 at Thanksgiving or Christmas
- \$45.00 is 3 days of emergency food for 2 adults and a child
- Other \$ _____ Please use my contribution where it is most needed

Name *(please print)* _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email address _____

- I/We would like to receive the WELL electronically.

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702/704 Wood Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15221

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Wilkinsburg Community Ministry Churches United - Serving Together

Wilkinsburg Community Ministry, a non-profit organization supported by area residents and congregations, responds to persistent needs of people of all faiths, addressing the human service crises in our community.

The Well - Winter 2020



Wilkinsburg Community Ministry

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E-mail: caring@wcm15221.org Website: www.wcm15221.org

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Pantry Coordinator	Carlos Gasca-Yanez
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