



The Flame

Winter 2012

Upcoming Events

- ◆ April 18 - 21, 2012
GS Garage Sale
- ◆ June 27, 2012
Golf Outing
- ◆ July 27, 2012
Barnyard BBQ

Food Collections

- ◆ Feb. 25-26 at the White Lake Ice Races
- ◆ March 25, 12 - 3 p.m. at the HV Community Showcase

Newsletter Via E-mail

Help us save on postage, please give us your e-mail address.

If you were mailed a copy of this newsletter AND you have given us your e-mail address, either we have an error in our system or your address has changed.

To share your email address if you haven't already, or to make sure we have the correct one on file, please email us at debbieschornack@community-sharing.org

Community Sharing
2029 N. Milford Road
P.O. Box 405
Highland, MI 48357
248-889-0347

Website:
www.community-sharing.org

From the Board ...

As the saying goes, with a New Year comes new opportunity. As we look forward over the next twelve months, we see tremendous opportunity: to continue to interact and engage with local businesses and residents in order to spread the word of who we are and what we do; to ensure that our volunteers have opportunities and experiences that are fulfilling; and most importantly, to provide food, clothing and educational assistance for as many folks in our community as possible. We are excited for 2012 as our staff and volunteers continue to graciously share their many talents and creative ideas to help us grow as an organization. Innovative fundraising ideas are being explored, and continued efforts are underway to ensure we are reaching as many people in need as possible. So with this New Year, we encourage you, as groups or individuals, to seize this opportunity to express **your ideas**, share **your talents** or simply show **your support** of your community by getting involved with Community Sharing. Big or small, any assistance or donation is welcome.

With much gratitude, the Community Sharing Board of Directors.

Feed a Family, Fill a Truck a Huge Success

The Feed a Family, Fill a Truck food drive for Community Sharing, organized by the Milford Rotary Club, was a huge success. The drive was also sponsored by Bakers of Milford, Carls Family YMCA, the Milford High School Band and Sellers GMC-Isuzu Truck Center. Non-perishable food items were collected at the Milford Holiday Parade, Kroger in Milford, at Candle, Can and Carol and at the Wild Joker Raffle Drawing at the Comeback Inn. In addition, several Cub Scout, Boy Scout and Girl Scout groups collected food for the drive.

AT&T of Michigan contributed to the drive in a huge way: they donated \$5000 towards the purchase of food for the pantry. Their donation allows for the purchase of nearly 700 pounds of cereal, 575 pounds of canned meats, and 1750 pounds of canned soup; all are critical but expensive staples that we provide to our clients. The AT&T donation was facilitated by Mike and Eileen Kowall, who represent the areas served by Community Sharing in Lansing.

Community Sharing was in a crisis mode as the year ended. A dramatic increase in the number of eligible residents seeking assistance, along with rapidly rising food prices, and a decrease in donations and available grants caused us to be concerned about our ability to provide for our clients. The Milford and Highland Township communities including citizens, schools, and local businesses, along with AT&T came up in a big way. Nearly four times the food items, along with close to \$9000 in cash was donated during the Feed a Family, Fill a Truck Campaign. The generosity of the local community was incredible, and both Community Sharing and the Milford Rotary are humbled by and grateful for the support.



(l to r) AT&T Vice-Pres. Jim Kirsch, CS Vice-Pres. Claudia Schimetz, Rep. Eileen Kowall, Senator Mike Kowall and CS Dir. of Fundraising Patty Kutil

Grant Writer Needed

If you have experience writing State and Federal grants and are looking for some very satisfying volunteer work, Community Sharing needs your help. If interested, please contact Barb Maher at 248-889-0347 for more information.

Volunteer Spotlight: Ann and John McComas



Annie and John have been married for 21 years, and have 3 grown children and 2 grandchildren. John is retired from his sign company, while Annie still works part-time operating her own pet sitting business. Both are vegetarians and avid exercise enthusiasts. They also enjoy a good game of golf and are lovers of all animals (hence Annie's pet sitting business!)

They became involved in Community Sharing through John's brother, Ron McComas (who also volunteers), and have been with us for 4 years. Annie and John work in the food pantry on Saturdays, but have also helped out with many of our fundraising events. John also is our 'go to' guy when we need signs or banners made.

They love their interaction with the volunteers and with the clients too. Annie said they were interested in becoming even more active at Community Sharing in the future. We thank you for all your help in the past and present, and look forward to seeing more of you two in the future!

Tutoring Program is Making a Difference

Community Sharing's Tutoring Program continues to expand. We currently have 21 students in the program with 3 more waiting to be placed, and 33 tutors. Some students are being tutored in more than one subject. The students range from elementary school through high school and those preparing for GED testing. The most common subject is math followed by reading/English.



The tutors are pleased with the progress most of their students are making. For example, a second grader's report card showed very good grades overall, a tenth grade boy is making good progress in geometry, and a fifth grade girl's attitude toward school has improved, she is working hard during the sessions and has demonstrated improved math skills.

Pet Pantry Enables Clients to Keep Their 'Service' Dogs

A 30 year-old Community Sharing client with multiple sclerosis lives alone with her mixed breed dog. Even though he is *not* trained as a service dog, he has learned to stay on her left side, not her right side (her blind side), so she does not trip over him. When walking is difficult for her, he pushes on the back of her leg to help her take the next step. At night, when she has the most pain, he is the only one there to offer her comfort. Without the Pet Pantry, she could not afford to feed her dog.

Another one of our families has an autistic child whose only meaningful communication is to and through the family dog. Pet food received through CS ensures this special bond stays in place.

Community Sharing strives to ensure that entire families stay intact which includes the four-legged members.

Dedicated Patrons Club

As with most charities, Community Sharing experiences peaks and valleys with monetary donations. We budget the best we can, using history as a guide. However, without a consistent cash flow it is difficult to establish viable funding levels for evictions, utility shut-offs and other financial emergencies.

To address this issue and establish a base monthly income, Community Sharing has established the "**Dedicated Patrons Club**". Through this program, donors contribute a specific amount each month.

To join this club, please contact Community Sharing at 248-889-0347, and let Debbie Schornack know that you would like to become a Patron .

Then, either

Send a monthly check to

Community Sharing
P.O. Box 405
Highland, MI 48357

and in the memo section put *Dedicated Patrons Club*. This will allow us to identify this as an on-going donation.

or

Sign-up for monthly scheduled electronic donations through your bank or credit union. Contact your bank representative if you have questions or need assistance with this process.

To all of our faithful supporters, thank you. Without you, we could not provide the services we do to the many who are in need within our community.

Facts & Stats

- ◆ Households served November 2011 - January 2012 = 1018, Average number of households per month = 339
- ◆ Individuals served November 2011 - January 2012 = 2644, Average number of individuals per month = 882
- ◆ Volunteer Hours for November 2011 - January 2012 = 2969, Active volunteers = 277

Contributions Are Still Tax Deductible

In my C.P.A. practice, I do a lot of tax planning with my clients. The main item we look at in planning is the consequence on the federal tax return. Yes, the State of Michigan took away a *tax credit* that had been in place for food pantries such as Community Sharing. However, contributions are still *tax deductible* on your Federal tax return. This is the larger of the two taxes (federal & state) and is always the main factor for any tax planning.

Keep in mind that the main reason for giving is to help someone in need, and a bonus is that you receive a savings on your federal tax return. - Robert Swanson C.P.A., CS Board of Directors

Spring Garage Sale is Coming

Did You Know

- Our semi-annual (spring and fall) garage sales are Community Sharing’s largest fundraisers. In fact, the money raised during these sales accounts for a large portion of our food purchasing budget for the year.
- It takes a bare minimum of 1000 hours and 75 volunteers to prepare for, set up, host and tear down each garage sale. It could not be done without the organized, dedicated volunteer staff we are fortunate enough to have and rely on so heavily.

How You Can Help

- Post flyers at businesses, churches and other organizations in your area to help raise awareness of the sales.
- Host a garage sale drop off at your home or business, and bring in the donated items.
- Help a senior citizen clean out a basement, garage or attic, and bring in the donated items.
- Volunteer to pick up donations (especially furniture) from senior citizens in Milford and Highland.
- Volunteer for the sale itself. We begin setting up the gymnasium on Monday, April 9th at 10 am. If you are interested in lending a helping hand, please call Roberta Lennie at 248-421-2547.

What We Need for the Sale

- Household goods
- Electronics
- Home Décor
- Toys
- Linens - Bedding, towels
- Furniture
- New items for our Boutique
- Books-CDs-DVDs
- Large and small appliances
- Sporting equipment
- Tools
- Seasonal items
- Baby items (please ensure they are not on any recall lists)

Please note, we do NOT accept donations of entertainment centers, televisions without converter boxes, computers, Christmas trees, cribs or items on the CPSC Recall List.

Donations Accepted

Monday - Thursday 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. & the following Saturdays, March 10 & 24 and April 14, 10 a.m. – noon
 Donation pick-up available for senior citizens living in Milford & Highland. For more info, please call 248-889-0347.

Community Sharing Outreach Center

Garage Sale

Wednesday, April 18, Pre-Sale, 4 – 6 p.m. (\$3 admission for Pre-Sale Only)

Thursday & Friday, April 19 & 20, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Saturday, April 21, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Apollo Center Gym

2029 N. Milford Rd., Highland (1 mile north of M-59)



CS Urgently Needs Free Storage Space

Do you have empty, secure storage space that can be used to store items donated for Community Sharing’s Garage Sales? If you have space that CS can use for free, please contact Claudia Schmietz at 248-613-2650.



Community Sharing
P.O. Box 405
Highland, MI 48357

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Address Service Requested

Community Sharing

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Community Sharing is a 501 (c)(3) corporation which provides food, clothing, pet food, emergency financial assistance, referrals, advocacy, and tutoring (K-12 and GED) for eligible residents of Milford, Highland and parts of Wixom regardless of race, gender or religious affiliation. Our goal is to help our clients achieve financial independence.

Clothing Needs

Boys' clothing Sizes 2T - 7
Girls' clothing sizes 12 mo. - 3
Hooded sweat shirts
Women's clothing (sizes 1X & up)

Pantry Needs

Chunky soups
Peanut butter, jellies and jams
Condiments
Spaghetti sauce
Canned meats
Canned meals (chili, beef stew, ravioli, etc)
Complete meal kits
Canned carrots, spinach, asparagus
Cereal and oatmeal
Canned fruit
Snacks
Personal Care Items
Household Items
Diapers
Pet Food