

ASSISTANCE CENTER OF TOWSON CHURCHES

2022

ANNUAL REPORT



ACTC

116 W. PENNSYLVANIA AVE. TOWSON, MD 21204

ACTCONLINE.INFO

410-296-4855

Dear Friends,

As 2021 ended, we found our neighbors' need for help continued to increase, and so our financial assistance volunteers continued to work even harder to help families stay in their homes. By the end of 2022, ACTC and its volunteers were able to help approximately 1,000 neighbors with nearly \$800,000 in funding from when we began in November of 2020. We were able to do this through the generosity and concern of our supporters for those most affected by the pandemic. In addition, we gave generous food supplies to all in need.

Also in 2022, we completed our strategic review and plan, which was adopted on October 31st. It required most of the year to complete as it involved interviewing and surveying member churches, partners, volunteers, clients and staff, so that we could identify both the strengths and the opportunities for growth of the organization as we prepare for the future success of ACTC's mission.

As part of this process our board came together to update the ACTC mission statement, and to write a vision statement and values to guide our work going forward:

Mission statement: "ACTC is a faith- and community-based nonprofit that brings volunteers and partner organizations together to serve our neighbors who face food insecurity, economic difficulties and related personal and spiritual challenges."

Vision statement: "We envision a community where physical needs are alleviated with Christ's compassion for neighbors by members of the Church and community working in partnership."

Values:

- We **trust God** to guide us and provide what is needed.
- We believe in building community through **caring** for our neighbors.
- We strive to provide a place where everyone feels **welcomed and respected**.
- We believe that acts of **love and kindness** can change lives.
- We commit to the responsible **stewardship** of the gifts of our member churches, volunteers, donors and others.
- We value our **partnerships** with member churches, volunteers and others in our shared service.

These will be woven through this 2022 Annual Report as we aspire to live into our mission, vision and values.

Sincerely,

Fred Weimert
President, ACTC Executive Board

Linda Lotz
Executive Director



WE TRUST GOD TO GUIDE US AND PROVIDE WHAT IS NEEDED.

HELPING NEIGHBORS IN NEED

- 52,838 people assisted
- 37,000 people provided with food, as well as toiletries, paper goods, baby, cleaning, feminine and incontinence supplies as needed
- 6,614 homeless individuals and dependents assisted with food, mail pick-up, and other services
- 2,464 individuals and families helped financially
- 1,130 people provided with bus tokens or gas vouchers
- 314 children provided with Christmas gifts
- 80 individuals newly released from incarceration provided with food, bedding, and other household necessities

SHARING GOD'S BOUNTY

- 470,000 pounds of food distributed
- 2,237 Thanksgiving baskets collected and shared

BEING OF SERVICE

12,345 hours of volunteer time



WE BELIEVE IN BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH CARING FOR OUR NEIGHBORS.

Our Christ-like volunteers, all of whom enthusiastically gather to help our neighbors who are facing economic and personal challenges, are the lifeblood of ACTC. The work of the volunteers, the backing of the ACTC Executive Board, and the support of the staff has truly been a heroic, courageous effort, which has had a significant impact for good in our community.

In 2022 alone our volunteers helped 453 families prevent eviction and provided 685 nights in area motels for the homeless and for families who were in transition, combatting the residual effects of the pandemic housing crisis.

FEEDING THE HUNGRY IN THIS TIME OF NEED

When our community was hungry in 2022, volunteers worked tirelessly to collect, sort, transport, stock, pack, purchase, prepare, and distribute food to those in need (with no zip code requirement). Despite the chronic struggles of the COVID-19 pandemic, the food ministry persisted by the hands of ever-willing volunteers based primarily at the center in Towson, the warehouse in Timonium, the Trinity Episcopal Church undercroft, with collection points at Ascension Lutheran, and Valley Baptist. Unfortunately, when federal funds for Food Grants through the Maryland Food Bank ended in November 2022, we made the difficult decision to return to our service area of 21 zip codes, which affected approximately 15% of the population we served during COVID. Up until that point, however, we successfully provided food, hygiene, and infant care items to anyone in need, every two weeks, as established in our 2020 model.

GIVING TIME AND COMPASSION

Without the 1,000+ hours per month of dedication from our seemingly endless stream of volunteers, we could not have kept families facing eviction in their homes, provided food and personal care items to the homeless and others, listened to and addressed the concerns of callers, or matched generous sponsors with struggling families during the Christmas season. Whether the task at hand involved hosting food drives, making sandwiches, packing groceries, picking up donations from stores, setting up computers, dropping off water and fruit, waiting on clients, or transporting food, our dynamic and diverse group of volunteers were the ones who kept the wheels turning.



WE STRIVE TO PROVIDE A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE FEELS WELCOMED AND RESPECTED.

Those we serve often come to us with various histories of trauma, thus it is important for ACTC to foster an environment where our neighbors feel welcomed and respected. It is our aim to remove shame and restore wholeness and hope; to listen to our neighbor, help them receive what they need, or refer them to those who can better help. This is the important work of the volunteers who work with our neighbors directly by distributing food, financial assistance and other services.

In 2022 we surveyed our neighbors who were coming for groceries and found that more than half of them had children at home and came twice a month; three-quarters come by car and the others walk or take a bus, and 95% “always feel welcomed.” We also surveyed our neighbors coming for lunch and found that more than half found ACTC through a friend, and that 82% “always felt welcomed.” Finally, we surveyed our neighbors who were receiving assistance for eviction or utility turn-off prevention and found that three-quarters are employed but only 60% work full-time. Of these individuals, 93% came to ACTC for eviction prevention, and 94% of them were able to avoid eviction or loss of residence. All of our neighbors that we surveyed expressed concerns about access to food, housing, transportation, employment, mental health, and child care.

For everyone born, a place at the table,
for everyone born, clean water and bread,
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
for everyone born, a star overhead,

and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:

~Shirley Erena Murray



WE BELIEVE THAT ACTS OF LOVE AND KINDNESS CAN CHANGE LIVES.

Graduates

ACTC has a prison release ministry with Baltimore County Detention Center and Maryland Presbyterian Church. On May 12, the Baltimore County Circuit Court Adult Drug Court Program held a Graduation Ceremony. The peer mediators who walked beside them during this time said, "Jenna Shank, Ron Jones, Mark Hessler and Kermit Hewins graduated. Their first stop after being accepted to drug court and released was to ACTC. Their lives have totally transformed and they have their family and life back. So thankful to everyone at the Assistance Center of Towson Churches."

Keisha

"In the beginning of 2022, when I lost everything and I moved here from Essex, after I lost my husband who died in his sleep and then I lost my home. When I moved to Towson I looked for help, found ACTC with a Google search and called. ACTC provided a week at the Days Inn, Loch Raven and Taylor, and food for me and my five daughters and one granddaughter. I got along well with the manager of the motel, and she gave me a job. I am able to work the front desk and take care of my family."

Eric

"ACTC is indispensable to those that are homeless and in need. It literally keeps people alive and provides human contact with nonjudgmental people. ACTC provides dependable help... it is my "survival center."

Michelle

"ACTC has been a blessing to me and my family. Without them it would be very hard to cope with my cancer and treatments. We receive food every month. Honestly do not know how we would be able to feed our family of 7 without this regular assistance. All is given with compassion, smiles, and a few jokes to lighten my load. You are always there for me.

Never had anyone treated my family the way you do. Not always just about the food, it is the way you care. It helps me know that someone does care about me and my family. Never complain, always have good words for all who come. It brings joy to my soul to listen to the way you speak with everyone who comes for help. When I am down, I can call and receive encouragement and prayers.

After I pray with them I feel better about the challenges I face. Been coming for probably 10 years or more. I always refer people to ACTC as they are loving and very spiritual. All good things, I love them! The volunteers - compassionate, caring, they lift me up and give me joy. Go and experience it for yourself!"





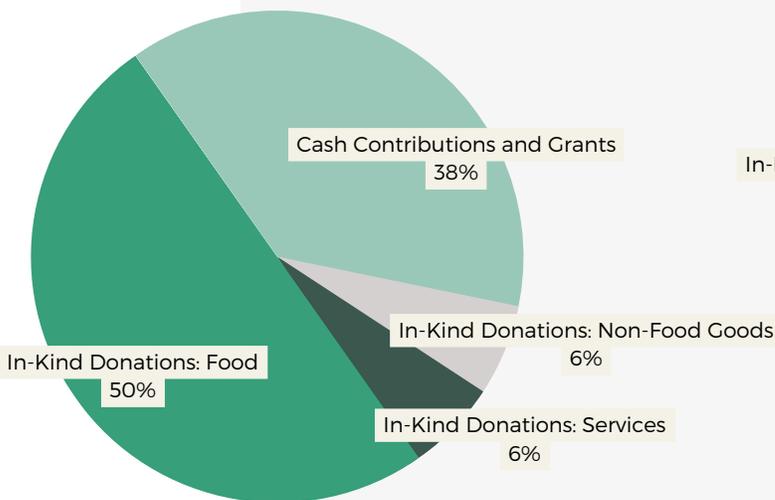
WE COMMIT TO THE RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP OF THE GIFTS OF OUR MEMBER CHURCHES, VOLUNTEERS, DONORS, AND OTHERS.

Financial aid programs that include eviction prevention, utility turn-off prevention, transportation, emergency shelter, and prisoner release, added up to roughly **\$494,000** in 2022.

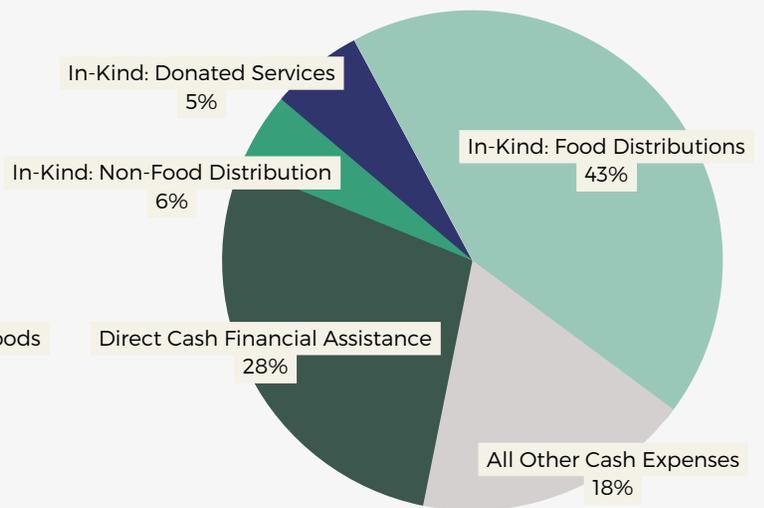
An estimated **\$782,000** was distributed through care bags and lunches for families and people that are homeless, Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets, and food certificates.

Additional care like the supply of toiletries, baby supplies, paper goods, clothing, Christmas gifts for children, and household products, were approximately **\$100,000** in total.

2022 Income – \$1,524,000



2022 Expenses – \$1,766,000



WE VALUE OUR PARTNERSHIPS WITH MEMBER CHURCHES, VOLUNTEERS, AND OTHERS IN OUR SHARED SERVICE.

ACTC values its partnerships with member churches. So much so that in 2022, when we began our strategic review and planning process, we knew we wanted to include our member churches in a special way to allow them to speak and influence our plans for the future.

This effort became what was called *The Listening Process*, which involved eleven pairs of volunteers, who were trained in the process by Ed Kay, Penny Graf, Anne South, and Kim Schultz, and then charged to contact 4-5 churches each. They requested an hour of time with each church and as a pair, led a conversation with church leaders around five survey questions. The five questions asked what the churches were excited about, what they saw happening in their community, where they were involved with mission, how they saw ACTC and what they felt was most valuable, should continue, or could be improved by ACTC. These facilitators were able to meet with 40 churches. If your church has not yet participated, we would love to speak with you!

Many organizations were extremely positive about their partnerships with ACTC, working together, seeing a common goal and meeting a common need. Others see ACTC as able to “fill gaps” and as a “trusted, well-oiled machine.” Some desire a deeper, more strategic partnership.

Some churches are experiencing difficulty maintaining and growing their congregations, particularly among younger members, and it was suggested that service projects can be appealing to youth. It was requested that communications regarding ACTC and member churches’ roles and volunteer opportunities be clearer and more regular. There was concern about whether ACTC potential supporters, clients and volunteers are aware of ACTC, as the name of our organization, the Assistance Center of Towson Churches, can be challenging and confusing.

Additional areas of concern included (1) lack of diversity among ACTC’s Board and Staff, (2) lack of understanding of trauma and food insecurity among volunteers can lead to sense of “judgment” or “standoffishness” which can be an opportunity for training and education, and (3) that waning pandemic funds (both private and public) might hinder ACTC’s ability to serve.

ACTC FOUND THAT:

- The pandemic model of more frequent, generous distribution of food is appreciated by member churches
- Member churches recognize of the value of financial support, to keep families in their homes
- ACTC is valued as a strong network partner, making and receiving referrals for help
- Community building within congregations is seen as a benefit of ACTC
- 44% of volunteers came to ACTC through their churches
- Some suggested that ACTC needs to increase awareness of its services among the homeless
- ACTC was listed as a top ministry for more than half of the churches in the Listening Sessions

MEMBER CHURCHES

Arnolia United Methodist
Ascension Lutheran
Babcock Memorial Presbyterian
Calvary Baptist
Central Presbyterian
Chestnut Ridge Baptist
Church of the Good Shepherd
Church of the Holy Comforter
Church of the Nativity
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
Daybreak Christian Assembly
Divinity Lutheran
Edgewood United Methodist
First and Saint Stephen's
First Church of Christ, Scientist
First Lutheran
Grace English Lutheran
Grace Fellowship
Greenspring United Methodist
Havenwood Presbyterian
Holy Cross Lutheran
Horizon Church
Hunt's Memorial United Methodist
Hunt Valley Church
Idlewylde United Methodist
Immaculate Conception
Joppa Bible Fellowship
Kingdom Worship Center
Loch Raven Presbyterian
Loch Raven United Methodist
Maryland Christian Church
Maryland Presbyterian
Mount Calvary A.M.E.
Mount Olive Baptist
Providence United Methodist
St. Andrew's Episcopal
St. Francis Episcopal
St. John's United Methodist
St. Paul's Lutheran
St. Pius X
Timonium Presbyterian
Timonium United Methodist
Towson Presbyterian
Towson Unitarian Universalist
Towson United Methodist
Trinity Assembly of God
Trinity Episcopal
Valley Baptist
Woodbrook Baptist

STAFF

Linda S. Lotz, Executive Director
Julie Morris, Executive Assistant
Tammy Gabel, Center Operations Supervisor
Leslie Strawhand, Administrative Assistant
Jenifer Cornelius, Bookkeeper

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES

Baltimore Community Foundation
Baltimore County Communities for the Homeless
Baltimore County Department of Housing
and Community Development
Baltimore County Retired School
Personnel Association
Boy and Girl Scouts
Building for God Community Foundation
A CAN CAN Make a Difference
CARES/GEDCO
Community Assistance Network (CAN)
The Fresh Market
The Friendly Inn
Giant Food
Greater Baltimore Medical Center
Hunt Valley Rotary Club
Ladies of the Towson Elks
Ledermark Communications & Coaching
Graul's Market
Kiwanis Club of Towson
Kiwanis Club of Loch Raven
Maryland Food Bank
Masonic Knights Templar in
Maryland
Merritt Properties
Mid-Atlantic Properties
Office of the People's Counsel
Raising Cane's
Renewal Foundation
Shoprite Timonium
Sprouts Market
St Paul's Schools
Towson Elks
Towson Service Foundation
United Churches Network (UCAN)
Wegmans Food Markets
Whole Foods Market

2022 EXECUTIVE BOARD

Rev. Frederick Weimert, President
Cathy Evans, VP Food Operations
Jesse Gardner, VP Development
Charlie Utermohle, VP Operations
Dawn Bresson, Secretary
Roger Fiery, Treasurer
Larry Fresh, Member at Large
Rev. Dr. Edward Kay, Pastoral Representative
Allen Krum, Volunteer Representative
Anne-Thérèse Béchamps, Legal Counsel to the Board
Anne Fullerton, Communications Consultant to the Board