



THE

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Missionary

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Food PLUS Nourishes Our Neighborhood

It's no exaggeration that the Food PLUS Center is a life-saver: "It helps keep me alive because without this food I'd have to find other means to eat," says William DeLoache. With the groceries from the Food PLUS Center, nearly 1000 individuals and families are able to stay healthy with nutritious food and to use their scarce funds to pay other bills.



Some customers start lining up at 6:00 am—four hours before opening time—to be sure to get some meat or eggs, which run out fast.

Nearly half of our food recipients are elderly people trying to supplement their fixed food budget. Other participants are on disability or looking for work. All are DC residents with proof of income and Social Security identification.

Donated food comes to Food PLUS Center from local grocery stores, the Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB) and individual donors. Amtrak also donates its unsold sandwiches, salads and cheese trays every morning. The CAFB offers a variety of produce as available: cucumbers, potatoes, collard greens, onions, carrots and sweet potatoes

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The Gittens Get a New Start

After three years of homelessness, Epiphany and Humberto Gittens are here to stay. Both Army veterans, they travelled all over the country searching for jobs and a home they could afford—staying with friends and family, in hotels when they had the money, and finally, in their car. From their first meeting in Washington, DC, working in San Diego, then travelling to North Carolina and Virginia, the Gittens returned to Washington, DC, in March 2014, hoping to settle with their three children.



This young couple and their three children no longer have to live in their car.

Epiphany left the Army in 2007 when their first son was born, and Humberto was discharged in 2011. He took classes in culinary arts in the different cities they visited, but the homes were out of reach; "We just weren't able to find a place we could afford," said Epiphany. They decided to return to DC to be near family and the Art Institute of Washington, DC, where Humberto could enroll in the culinary arts program. Epiphany is studying forensic psychology at St. Augustine University, with a goal of helping child victims of crime.

Here in DC, they found Central Union Mission's Food PLUS Center on a list of resources. "We are so glad we came," said Epiphany. "At the Food PLUS Center, you're not just a number. They gave us a hug; we talked together, cried together. It's more than just getting some free food. The people have great hearts and were telling us, "You are down now, but you can get up."

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DC's Homeless Numbers Are Up

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's new 2014 "Point in Time" survey is out, revealing the number of homeless and food-insecure people in our area. Last year, the total number of homeless people was down 11%—a much-touted statistic. Since 2013, however, we lost that foothold and gained 12.9% more homeless people in our city.

We don't need statistics to show us that the need has increased. Twice as many people are coming to the Mission in search of food and clothing this year. Our shelter is always full. Clearly, our community is not feeling any economic recovery yet.

Summer is often hard on homeless and needy people. We sometimes let vacation plans crowd out our routine

giving, so this is a critical time for our supporters to step up. We are grateful to you for your faithful gifts.

Blessings,

Steve



Learning teamwork on the Camp Bennett ropes course.

A Counselor's Note...

I love working at Camp Bennett. There is no other place on Earth where I feel more at home.... My first summer, I had the great privilege of introducing a little girl to Jesus for the first time, and it ... remains one of the highlights of my life.

I graduated from college last year and am dreading the day I will not be able to return to the place that has shown me it is possible to truly love and have a passion for one's "job." I just wanted [you] to be encouraged and to know that camp truly is life-changing; God continues to use it in a powerful way.

-Elise Peer

Fun with a Purpose

How would you help a needy child grow in independence, build teamwork and listening skills, experience nature for the first time and get strong from physical activity or even develop a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ—all in one week?

That's exactly what happens for inner-city children who spend a week at Camp Bennett in Brookeville, MD. They return

home with confidence from their new skills ready to start a successful school year.

For only \$75 a day, you can create a lasting transformation in a child's life. Contact **Tracy Duncan** at **202-745-7118, ext. 260**, or tduncan@missiondc.org for sponsorship information. ■

Food PLUS Nourishes Our Neighborhood

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were recent selections. Our participants' favorites include frozen meat like chicken or fish, eggs and day-old baked goods.

Besides food, Food PLUS Center offers clothing, furniture and household items like eating utensils, wall decor, shampoo, flower vases, pillows, blankets or tablecloths. Beds, dressers, chairs, office desks, couches and kitchen tables and chairs are some of the most popular furniture items. Participants can select up to 12 free items twice a month.



Our volunteer Phyllis Leath (left) helps customers check out. She enjoys getting to know our regular guests.

It takes a lot of work to keep Food PLUS Center running. We employ six to ten of the Mission's Work Therapy students, who are gathering experience for their resumes.

We also rely on our volunteers to help check people in, prepare nearly 4,000 food bags each month, sort and display clothing and check out customers. Volunteers also provide chapel services on some Monday and Saturday delivery days.

We need you to be a partner of this vibrant ministry! Ask your friends to help contribute food, and think creatively about how your business can get involved—especially in the summer when food and clothing donations are slow. You are also welcome to join us in serving our community by volunteering at www.missiondc.org. ■

The Gittens Get a New Start

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Living in their car was not so bad, said Epiphany; "having my family together and safe gave me hope." But they were overjoyed to learn that the HUD Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program could find them a place to live. In June they moved into a two-bedroom apartment in a gated building in Anacostia. "We were wondering how we'd get enough room, but this apartment is large," she commented. The couple's three boys, ages 7, 5 and 2, have their own bedroom to share, and with some furniture from Food PLUS Center, they are together and safe.

The Gittens are excited about their new start and grateful to Food PLUS Center for the help. "I can't wait until I have the opportunity to give back and volunteer myself," says Epiphany. "Maybe some people say that one little can of food won't help, but every little bit counts. It's so encouraging to know that you care about us." ■

But We Could Do Even More...

When Food PLUS was located at our R Street facility, we were providing grocery bags to about 75 participants a day. Now at our 3182-B Bladensburg Road location, we serve up to 200 individuals and families daily—through word of mouth alone—and we've run out of room!

According to Tracy Duncan, assistant director of community outreach, "We have to distribute food outside on the loading dock in all kinds of weather. It's so crowded, and parking is so scarce that we can't accommodate any more people." Ironically, we sometimes have to turn down donations because there's no place to store them, at the same time we can no longer accept new customer registrations.

Yet those donations are merely a Band-Aid for our friends' lives. We don't want to make them dependent on the Mission. We're equipped to offer life and job skills training, literacy training or parenting classes to help break poverty's cycle, but we just don't have the room. In a larger facility with more parking, storage and gathering space, we could help make a bigger dent in our city's needs. Ideally, our new facility should be disabled-accessible and close to bus lines and Metro. Are you aware of an available building that fits these requirements? Please contact **Deborah Chambers** at 202-745-7118, ext. 227, or dchambers@missiondc.org. ■

Friends We Can Bank On

By working through his company's Lighthouse Project, Don Strehle appreciates that no man is an island. "When more people are in need," he states, "that's when you need to help more!"

Strehle is managing director of Sterling Capital Management, an independent subsidiary of BB&T Bank, whose CEO Kelly King created the Lighthouse Project in 2009. Through this initiative, every May and June BB&T employees support community agencies financially and by volunteering. Washington, DC, has benefitted from 15 different Lighthouse Projects, and BB&T has contributed \$3 million company-wide.

Strehle knew about Central Union Mission because BB&T provided our banking services and facility loan for renovating the Gales School building. He attended our dedication ceremony in March and visited the Food PLUS Center. Later, he and the rest of his senior leadership team selected Central Union Mission for their 2014 Lighthouse Project. They appreciated the Mission's outreach to families and its faith-based approach: "The Mission is trying to help change lives, not just fill an immediate need," he comments.

Strehle said, "It was our pleasure" to bring 23 employees to volunteer at the Food PLUS Center on May 29, 2014. Together they purchased and packaged over 500 grocery bags for our customers and stocked the pantry with food they donated. Some handy workers assembled donated IKEA furniture and grocery carts. They organized clothing and displayed it in the showroom. They contributed \$8,000 in aid—including a desperately needed commercial refrigerator.



Don Strehle and his Lighthouse Project team present a new commercial refrigerator to the Food PLUS Center and Deborah Chambers, Mission director of strategic partnerships and community engagement.

The volunteers enjoyed their opportunity to help; they were thrilled to meet the employees and clients and were impressed with the other volunteers for their genuinely kind nature. "Everyone wants to find a task that they find rewarding. After helping at the Food PLUS Center, you walk out feeling good."

Strehle wants Mission donors to know that their gifts "are put to exceptional use in the community." Donors can feel reassured about their contributions and the results; "they can be really confident that they're helping people," he confirms. ■



These BB&T employee volunteers are such a blessing!

Thinking Outside the (Offering) Box

Sometimes people worry that they can't possibly donate enough food, clothing or money to Central Union Mission. But the truth is you have something even more valuable to our ministry: your friends! You are an influencer in your circle, and your friends want to know what you care about. When you tell them about your commitment to Central Union Mission, you invite them to join you and enlarge our network of compassionate people.

Share with your friends about why you're involved in Central Union Mission. You can become a Facebook friend and encourage them to be FB friends, too. Be sure to invite them to join you at our 130th Anniversary Fall Gala on October 3, 2014.

Then, think through your broader circle of connections, as well. How can you encourage your colleagues, neighbors, business partners, PTA committee or soccer team to help the homeless? That matching grant program or community service day at the office may be a good opportunity to



pursue; your exercise class may include a future Central Union Mission volunteer.

How do you start? Pray about the spheres where God has placed you. He will reveal how much you've been blessed and how together, you and your network can help end hunger and homelessness in Washington, DC! ■

Seniors Luncheons Return



Seniors Luncheons give local seniors a serving of fellowship along with a delicious meal.

After a short hiatus while the Mission transitioned to its new building, our Seniors Luncheons are back in full swing. We're so glad to reinstate this tradition because seniors in our area are suffering from food insecurity. (According to the National Foundation to End Senior Hunger's new report, 15.2 percent of seniors in Washington, DC, don't have access to safe, affordable food at all times, a figure 3.1 percent higher than last reported.)

Nearly 200 seniors meet monthly at Israel Baptist Church (1251 Saratoga Ave., NE) for lunch, music and an encouraging program, groceries and a spirited game of Bingo. You're welcome to join us for this fun morning; you can register to volunteer at www.missiondc.org. We're also grateful for donations of costume jewelry and small gifts for Bingo prizes. Contact **Tracy Duncan** at 202-745-7118, ext. 260, for more information. ■



No Reason for Suffering

Many homeless people are fiercely independent. They may refuse to take shelter even when their lives are in danger. Heat exhaustion and dehydration are two common summer problems that make living on the street life-threatening.

Central Union Mission is getting the word out that our clean, polite shelter is a safe place to escape the city heat. With your generous support, we can continue to provide clean water, nutritious food and air-conditioned day rooms to protect our at-risk neighbors. Thank you so much for your compassion. ■

Join Us!

Food PLUS Center Grocery Distribution

July 7-10 or July 21-24, 2014

Anytime between 10:00 am-4:00 pm

Register at www.missiondc.org to help prepare food bags for our community.

Community Block Party and Concert

July 12, 2014

You are invited to come enjoy the festivities provided by youth from Prestonwood Baptist Church (Plano, TX), including a 300-voice choir.

Seniors Luncheon

July 18, 2014

9:30 am

Come visit with our seniors and serve lunch at this monthly event.

Operation Backpack Donation Deadline

August 11, 2014

Please drop off new school supplies and backpacks for Operation Backpack 2014. Contact tduncan@missiondc.org for information.

130th Anniversary Fall Gala

October 3, 2014

6:30 pm

Please be our guest and invite your friends to this special event at the Fairview Park Marriott in Falls Church, VA. More information is at www.missiondc.org/gala.



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A copy of Central Union Mission's current financial report is available upon request by writing to 2600 12th St., NE, Washington, DC 20018 or by calling (202) 745-7118. In Maryland, copies of documents and information submitted by Central Union Mission are available for the cost of copies and postage from the Secretary of State, Statehouse, Annapolis, MD 21410, 1-401-974-5534. In Virginia, a financial statement for the most recent fiscal year is available upon request from the State Division of Consumer Affairs, P.O. Box 1163, Richmond, VA 23209, 1-804-786-1343.

Count on My Help this Summer!

I'd like to help protect needy people in Washington, DC.
Please use my gift of:

- ☐ \$41.80 to serve a healthy meal to 20 guests
- ☐ \$62.70 to serve 30 guests
- ☐ \$94.05 to serve 45 guests
- ☐ \$_____ to serve as many guests as possible

Please make checks payable to "Central Union Mission." To donate by credit card, please see our website at www.missiondc.org.

Name: _____

Address: _____

*Your gift is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.
We'll send a receipt for your records. God bless you for caring.*

Central Union Mission, P.O. Box 96763, Washington, DC 20090-6763

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