



# GACO NEWSLETTER

1st QUARTER - January-March 2023

## Guided By Grace, We Serve in Love

Grand Avenue Community Outreach (GACO) exists as a volunteer-driven, non-profit organization which provides social services and outreach programs designed to meet physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. We are brought together through a spirit of compassion, helping our neighbors, and seeing the collective benefit of our efforts improve life in our community.

As a faith-based organization, we, at GACO, also realize the importance of gifting the grace we receive from our Lord and Savior to people in need. We understand the challenges of life make days and nights difficult to manage. Basic needs of food, clothing, medical and dental care, as well as support and friendship go a long way to help circumstances be more bearable.

Through God's grace, we find that those who serve also reap the benefits of extending themselves to

others in service. In the world's way of thinking, giving means depleting what you have yourself but in God's economy, giving means gaining God's favor and His blessings. Proverbs 11:25 tells us "A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed."

At GACO, we know obedience to God's plan puts us in connection with other like-minded people who gather together to daily fulfill this mission of our ministries. We thank our many volunteers for their service to these ministries. We extend an invitation for you to join us and be guided by His grace to serve in love.

If you need more information about GACO services or how you can help, please call us at 712-580-4732, at [info@gacoutreach.com](mailto:info@gacoutreach.com) or Facebook. To God be the Glory!

## Thank YOU!

We at GACO are more than blessed with dedicated volunteers for our various ministries.

The continuous service of Knights of Columbus members to unload the bimonthly Food Bank Truck, help with freezer sorting and cleaning, provide carry-out bimonthly at HHE Distribution Days, the painting of the north entrance, and other assorted acts of service.

Sisters' Mainstreet Café for its Easter cereal drive.

We thank the host of anonymous donors who have given to special projects.

**Community Kitchen: Mon & Thurs. 5-6:30 PM**

**His Hand Extended: 2nd and 4th Thursdays | Food and Clothing Outreach: 1-4 PM**

**Free Clinics of Iowa- Medical Clinic | 3rd Thursday 4-8 PM**

*Dental Care will be referred to other providers until the Dental Clinic resumes its operations*

# GACO Tenant Profile- United Way



Hi! My name is Donna Call, Board Secretary of the United Way of Spencer. United Way is committed to support 501c3 agencies that improve the quality of life for members of their community. Our slogan is "People helping People".

Our mission is to help raise funding and allocate it to agencies that focused on the needs of elderly, children, low-income, etc. and disburse it to support aid in their purpose in the betterment of the community. Even abandoned animals are included in our desire to improve the entire community.

As Secretary, I carry a cellphone, so I am able to be reached by call or text every day at any time. We help assist giving information to those seeking assistance. Funds do not go to individuals, though. Our funds are strictly given to support agencies.

As Secretary, I have served with the United Way for 26 years. I began while seeking my teaching degree in college, and became very committed after getting to know the various charities and their purposes. I am a servant of the Lord, and am committed in my heart to want everyone's life to be improved... especially the children and the elderly.

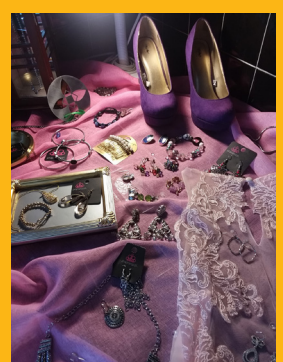
"I am just a servant in a vast wheel that turns, along with many others, that keeps our eyes and ears open to help. We live in a very giving community, and we are very blessed in so many ways. It is relatively peaceful and very caring. Hand in hand, we walk to help lift those that are struggling. It truly is an honor to stand among them."

United Way can be contacted by calling 712-262-0380 anytime, leave a message, and I will return the call. An email can also be sent to [uwayofspenceria@yahoo.com](mailto:uwayofspenceria@yahoo.com).

GACO, and other 501c3 organizations in our area, are so thankful for the support of the United Way of Spencer to various services provided to and for the community.

## SAY YES TO A DRESS PROM DRESS & ACCESSORIES

Here, at GACO, we practice the "renew, reuse, recycle" acts of stewardship to share our blessings with others. For the past few years, area girls and their families have created their own version of this premise with the "Say Yes to the Dress". This service connects donations of gently used beautiful prom dresses and accessories to individuals in need to enjoy. Judy Taylor and her crew of volunteers, excitedly prepare the 4th floor suite each January for eager shoppers, who, for six weeks in February and March, claim, free of charge, their ensemble for their special day. To date, 52 dresses have been given out along with countless accessories to match. We thank all who are participate to make this such a unique opportunity in our area.



# Volunteerism



As a faith-based organization, GACO has the unique pleasure of working with our community members in need, while fulfilling our call to service to share God's grace. We are delivered by His love and salvation, which inspires us to give our time, talents, and treasures for the greater good. 1 Peter 4:10 tells us, "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

Because we all have different abilities and resources, we offer a plethora of God-given gifts at our disposal to serve our neighbor, which in turn, serves our Lord. By taking a snapshot of volunteerism at GACO, we see approximately 250 hours logged monthly for work in the His Hands Extended Food and Clothing Outreach to sort and prepare inventory for bi-monthly distribution. The Grand Avenue Community Kitchen logs an average of 600 hours monthly to shop, prepare, serve, and clean-up after its bi-weekly meals.

Our Board of Directors is a "working" Board of volunteers, logging a minimum of over 40 hours a month for administrative support, 10 hours for maintenance and technology support, and up to 10 hours for financial oversight (includes record-keeping and monitoring of contracted services) in addition to scheduled Board and team meetings requiring Board participation. We thank all our volunteers for their dedicated service to GACO and its ministries.

## WHAT'S NEW AT GACO

Grand Avenue Community Outreach has recently been the recipient of a generous donation in behalf of the Heerde Trust. The United Way of Spencer Board reviewed requests from various agencies to determine awardees. Necessary exterior and interior building improvements and equipment have been identified for this funding for better service to our patrons and working conditions for our dedicated volunteers. We thank the United Way Board and the Heerde Trust for this blessing to our organization.



## Project Wish List

- *t-teams of volunteers to help with meal preparation and serving at the Community Kitchen*
- *a dedicated individual to apply for and serve as the AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteer Coordinator*
- *A stackable washer and dryer*
- *Weatherization materials for internal projects.*

# FOOD OUTREACH UPDATE

Volunteers through the His Hands Extended (HHE) Food and Clothing Outreach, as well as those who assist with the Community Kitchen, offer valuable resources to our area community through

Month	Individual visits to the His Hands Extended (HHE) Food and Clothing Outreach			
	2020	2021	2022	2023
1st Quarter- January -March	816	479	665	907
2nd Quarter- April -June	420	381	816	
3rd Quarter – July-September	485	509	1,021	
4th Quarter-October-December	473	889	1,124	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,194</b>	<b>2,258</b>	<b>3,626</b>	

their missions here at GACO. Below, you will see the number of visits to our bimonthly distributions. In addition to the food that is provided through the

Food Bank of Iowa and donations, clothes, generously donated by community members, are available free of charge. The HHE Team noted that 289 clothing items were distributed in the month of February alone. Winter coats, blankets, and other assorted items were made available through this ministry to combat the cold weather.

Quarters	Pounds Distributed to GACO Outreach and Community Kitchen from the Food Bank of Iowa			
	2020	2021	2022	2023
1st Quarter-January -March	5,707	7,135	8,101	13,714
2nd Quarter -April-June	13,847	6,237	15,110	
3rd Quarter-July-September	6,045	9,154	14,514	
4th Quarter- October -December	4,610	14,846	17,078	
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,209</b>	<b>37,372</b>	<b>54,803</b>	

The Community Kitchen volunteer team continues a steady pace to meet the growing demand for free, hot, and nutritious meals. In the first quarter of 2023, 3,525 hot meals have been provided. Our dedicated volunteers to both the HHE and Community Kitchen efforts, give their time and talents to meet the food insecurity needs of our community. We thank them for their compassion and service to do God's work in serving His people in need.

Vendor	2021	2022	2023				Total
			1st Quarter	2nd	3rd	4th	
Fareway (predominantly produce) to Kitchen & HHE	26,000 pounds	21,049	5,489				
Walmart (meat, groceries)	5,700 pounds	9,804	5,123				
Hy Vee (bakery)	375 pounds *	9,797	1,951				

\*Reflects limited reporting in 2021

We thank the Food Bank of Iowa for their continued partnership as we share the blessing of low-cost food because of the funding from their generous donors.

Quarters

Our GACO Food Outreach and Community Kitchen thankfully receives generous donations of rescued food from the local vendors listed below as they contract with the Food Bank of Iowa to provide produce, groceries, meat, and bakery items for local distribution. Our dedicated volunteers handle this inventory and in the case of fruits and vegetables and bakery items, diligently sort through items to assure quality before serving.

# *Our Faith In Action*

Grand Avenue Community Outreach supports these ongoing ministries. Dates are subject to holiday closures so please consult our monthly calendar of events for updated information.

Community Kitchen: Mon & Thurs. 5-6:30 PM  
His Hand Extended: 2nd and 4th Thursdays  
Food and Clothing Outreach: 1-4 PM  
Free Clinics of Iowa- Medical Clinic  
3rd Thursday 4-8 PM  
Dental Clinic-By Appointment only  
following a Medical Clinic exam, referrals will be made

-Volunteer Opportunities: Contact us at 712-580-4732 between 9 am and 2 pm or leave a message, or get ahold of us by email at [info@gacoutreach.com](mailto:info@gacoutreach.com).

-If you have a talent to share to entertain at our Community Kitchen suppers, please contact us at 712-580-4732 or at [info@gacoutreach.com](mailto:info@gacoutreach.com). Use the in-house piano or bring your own instruments to provide Christian music or pull out some inspiring Christian readings to share. Time spent with us anytime from 5-6:30 pm every Monday and Thursday will be greatly appreciated as we share God's wonderful message through music and the arts.

-Do you have a background in customer service? We need volunteer help for our Hospitality Team. Choose your day-time hours, and pick from a variety of roles to extend a welcoming hand of hope out to GACO patrons at our Front Desk or hosting at our café space, or dining room events.

-NEEDED: Strong Backs with Eager Hearts to Serve Our His Hands Extended Food Outreach the 2nd and 4th Thursdays from 1-4 pm and Food Bank of Iowa Truck Delivery two times a month requires some moderate lifting. "Many hands make for light work" so consider joining us for the few hours a month to help. Call 712-580-4732 or email [info@gacoutreach.com](mailto:info@gacoutreach.com) to get more information and sign up.

Cleaning out your closet? Need a place for clothes that don't fit? Please remember our need for clothes to supplement our His Hand Extended Clothing ministries. Those that are well worn are recycled to rugs and other textiles by One Vision in Clear Lake.

Required Minimum Distribution: Please consider Grand Avenue Community Outreach to bless with a scheduled donation if you are so inclined. Many of our donors have chosen this option to support the GACO mission while meeting their requirements for their investments. Please check with your financial advisor to find out more about this charitable gift opportunity.

GACO is delighted to share this newsletter via email with patrons who have that option to defray the costs of postage. Please advise us of your email address by contacting us at [info@gacoutreach.com](mailto:info@gacoutreach.com).

For all of our community's prayer warriors, we ask for your intercession to ask for our Lord's continued blessing on Grand Avenue Community Outreach, to provide ongoing financial support, encourage faithful volunteer service, that shares a message of help and hope to people in their time of need.

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*Your Friends at the GACO*



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