



Light Lines

A publication of United Methodist Christians in Partnership

Lancaster, Pennsylvania

FALL 2020

Professional Clothing Bank Has Completed Its Time of Service

LUMINA and Otterbein UMC have partnered together to provide free business wear to men and women in need for over twenty years. When the Lancaster County Council of Churches moved from Marshall Street to their new location across the street from us, we realized that we were both providing the same service. Then Career Link, our biggest referral group, started their own professional wear bank. That meant three organizations within a mile of each other were offering the same services to many of the same people. When the pandemic struck our area, LUMINA closed the Professional Clothing Bank. We did not want to put our volunteers at risk. We could no longer process clothing donations. We could no longer help clients.

After several months, Pastor Jonette Gay of Otterbein and LUMINA Director Correen Russo decided together that it may be time to close the PCB permanently. Trends have certainly changed over the years. Suits and sports jackets have not been in demand for some time. It seems that people do not feel they need to dress as formally for an interview as they did years ago. The PCB has also experienced a lower number of clients in the past few years. Leaders



felt that perhaps God is calling us to pursue a different ministry with the space the PCB has taken at Otterbein. In fact, Pastor Jonette has already been talking with the nearby elementary school principal about ways Otterbein and LUMINA may be able to help local children using church space.

Other clothing banks were contacted, but they have also not been able to process donations. They did not have a need for more dress clothing. In August and October LUMINA held two outdoor clothing giveaways on the church's sidewalks. The events were advertised through email to our partner agencies as well as to the public on social media. Visitors included several refugee families, local neighbors, homeless men, and women from the YWCA. Masks and hand sanitizer were offered to both volunteers and visitors, and racks of clothing were spaced far apart for safe distancing. Hundreds of items were distributed. Many people were blessed!

The bank now stands empty except for some shelves and racks. A few volunteers passed through

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Website Down Temporarily

For the past six years, LUMINA's website has been hosted by Flockhosting, a nonprofit set up to help churches and Christian organizations get their information online without great cost.

Sadly the creator of Flockhosting, Chuck Brown, passed away in February. His family decided to shut down the company and all its activity. Therefore luminaoutreach.org will be down until we find a new host and recreate our website. Stay tuned!

Our Vision for Lancaster and beyond: All persons restored to the vital and productive lives which God intended.



Our Mission: to share the love of God by equipping and encouraging people who experience poverty and hardship.

Professional Clothing Bank *Continued from page 1*

recently and shared memories of helping men and women there. In essence volunteers often guided clients to find not just a decent outfit, but their dignity and self-confidence following a life upheaval of some kind. Some of these clients even returned at times to say thank you after they had successfully found employment.

We at LUMINA are eternally grateful to the men and women who have given their time and energy to the Professional Clothing Bank over these past twenty years. These volunteers took the initiative to decorate the rooms with eye-pleasing displays. They counted and inspected each donation of clothing and carefully hung it on the racks or placed it on the shelves, so that the rooms looked more like a department store than a charity. Volunteers treated visitors with respect. They helped clients match colors or accessorize tastefully. And often they would share encouraging words or even prayers with someone who seemed to need



them. Volunteers made it possible for clients to regain a feeling of worthiness. To all the volunteers of the PCB throughout its existence, LUMINA now declares, "Well done, good and faithful servants! You truly made a difference in this world!"

Focus on the Family at Camp

Because of COVID-19 Gretna Glen had to cancel resident camps this summer. That opened up a new opportunity for families to camp together instead. LUMINA could still send children to Gretna's Family Camps, but only if a responsible adult could stay the entire time to care for them. Families stayed in their own cabin or room in the lodge. They ate together at the same table in the dining hall for each meal. They practiced social distancing while at camp, but they still were able to enjoy campfire cooking, archery, fishing, boating, climbing, and other camp activities. Gretna Glen and LUMINA split the cost of sending the family, and LUMINA provided transportation and made sure the family had everything needed to get the most of the experience.

One family who loved their weekend in the woods was Crystal Garcia and her three children. Carmen, Tatianna, and Kevin had excellent attendance and behavior records at LUMINA Kids' Night, and they had really looked forward to their earned summer week at camp. After the pandemic disappointed them, they were so happy to learn they could go for a weekend with their mom!

Mom Crystal said she enjoyed a break from cooking three meals a day, and she surprised herself at the archery range. She loved seeing her children have such a great time, and she was happy to be able to worship with them after months without church services. Carmen, the oldest, led in the campfire cooking. Tatianna excelled at the climbing wall. Kevin loved everything!

Special thanks to all LUMINA supporters who send donations to help with camp expenses each year.



Our Manifest Partnership

LUMINA is a partner in the Manifest urban alliance, working with IMPACT Missions in housing rehab projects. Some McCaskey High School building trades students intern with IMPACT their senior year, to receive training and real world experience. Manifest collects donations to provide \$200 in tools to each student who completes the program. In so doing, the churches encourage and affirm the worth and vital work of men and women in the skilled trades.

In May LUMINA and IMPACT Missions volunteers purchased and assembled tool buckets to be awarded to the graduating seniors. Because of health concerns, the awards program was held outdoors on the grounds of the school. Students arrived one at a time to receive their gifts, which included screw drivers, wire strippers, hammers, levers, carpentry squares,



and an impact driver, among other quality tools. Most of the students come from struggling families and are going on to trade school or other training, so they were very appreciative of the gift. Thanks to all the supporters in our Methodist congregations!

Super Cupboard Thrives on Zoom!

Despite a switch to remote teaching, this summer was our busiest season ever for our Super Cupboard nutrition ministry! It also marked the first time we have been able to reach families in Lebanon City! LUMINA partnered with Penn State Extension and Millersville State University to bring nutrition education to recent Spanish speaking immigrants. With the technology of Zoom, we “entered” each person’s kitchen, a space which is often considered sacred within the family. We broke the barriers of transportation, childcare and language with this particular course. Pency Seraphin, our instructor, is bilingual. She is creative and thoughtful, and she worked hard to make this Super Cupboard a success. We had a total of twenty families and a 100% graduation rate!

LUMINA purchased the groceries and packed them in bags together with new kitchen tools for each participant. The groceries were distributed the day before class, so that everyone had what they needed to cook in concert together during the online class the next day. Children and spouses often joined in, as the group prepared the recipes chosen to illustrate the nutrition facts which had been presented. New electric skillet were presented to each graduate at the end of the six week course. Every graduate expressed gratitude to the churches who made the gifts possible.

Pency did such a great job with this Super Cupboard that she was invited to present at a statewide online conference. At that conference she was honored with the Rookie of the Year Award and a

scholarship to continue her college education in health administration. LUMINA congratulates Pency Seraphin for her excellence and compassion in teaching others how to take care of the body, the Temple of the Spirit!

Staying Faithful and Creative in Uncertain Times

LUMINA has not been able to hold Kids’ Night since March. But that doesn’t mean our kids have been forgotten! Families have received gifts of food, face masks, hand sanitizer, books, toys, and craft materials during monthly visits. LUMINA staff have gathered with them regularly in a safe way outside their houses, to keep in touch with the children’s needs and get to know their families better. The School District of Lancaster has not held classes on campus since March, and the children desperately miss their teachers, their friends, and their routines. Some are failing to complete their remote school-work. Single parents are especially feeling stressed.

The Kids’ Night program could help bring some welcome respite. But LUMINA is in need of adult volunteers who feel comfortable working with the children, as well as those who are willing to transport children to New Creation UMC and back. Until we have a safe plan and volunteers, Monday night Kids’ Night program will be on hold. Please contact Correen at correen.lumina@gmail.com today if you can join our team!



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...and MORE!

LUMINA Sponsors Monthly Neighborhood Food Distributions

LUMINA is partnering with Ross Street UMC and Monte Gerizim in providing free food to our neighbors. Each month LUMINA donates \$700 to Blessings of Hope and receives 100 40-lb boxes containing fresh produce, dairy foods, and snacks. The food is delivered to the parking lot shared by Ross Street UMC and Monte Gerizim, and volunteers from LUMINA and the two city congregations hand the boxes out to cars as they drive through the lot.

LUMINA staff also deliver many boxes directly to needy families throughout Lancaster's poorer neighborhoods. In addition, this ministry has allowed us to reach new families who see us come to their streets and offer help. Many have no transportation and no easy way to get to the churches giving out food. It is a great blessing to be able to share directly with them. One gentleman who received food was living in his car. We were able to share non-perishables and grocery cards with him instead of items which would need refrigeration. We also gave him a mask so he could enter the store safely. His response? Tears of gratitude and wonder at the generosity he received. We reminded him that God loves him, and that he will one day be able to share with others in need.

Please continue to support LUMINA with your offerings, so that we can connect with those in the greatest need. If you are interested in helping to deliver food boxes throughout the city, email Correen at correen.lumina@gmail.org today.



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