

BACN

BENZIE AREA CHRISTIAN NEIGHBORS

A CARING COMMUNITY OF NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

SEASON OF NEIGHBORHOOD 2017

OUR COMMUNITY PROVIDES ALL THE PIECES THAT COME TOGETHER TO MAKE BACN'S PIE.
WE HOPE YOU ENJOY READING ABOUT SOME OF OUR FAVORITE SLICES!

VOLUNTEER SLICE

A few short years ago, Eric Fournier was a statistic. More quiet and reserved than his high school peers, he found school difficult—not academically, but socially—and eventually dropped out.

“Eric is a great kid who was spending a lot of time isolated at home,” says BACN volunteer Nancy Ellis. Ellis, who attended the same church as Eric and was a family friend, invited him to volunteer at BACN. “I felt like BACN would be a safe and supportive environment where Eric could learn to succeed.”

Volunteers remember Eric as the kid who at first “pulled his sweatshirt hood up around his head and didn’t talk much.” But as Eric learned the ropes sorting clothing, he eventually made friends among the other volunteers, and began greeting people at the donation door, helping them unload items from their cars.

Exercising those social skills led to a year-long job at Wendy’s, and his current job at Ric’s Food Center in Interlochen, where Eric is stationed at the front register, and is the first face greeting customers.



Eric is now enrolled in the Michigan Works GED program, and after graduation would love to pursue a career in stand-up comedy. He greatly admires the work of George Carlin and Lewis Black. He says if he has a chance to pursue college studies, he is interested in early Judaism theology.

“Volunteering at BACN definitely helped me,” says Eric. “Both the donors and other volunteers were very friendly. Eventually interacting with people got easier.”

**“FROM MY EXPERIENCE,
DON’T WORRY ABOUT GOING
TOO FAST. TAKE THINGS EASY
AND YOU’LL FIND YOUR
WAY EVENTUALLY.”**

ERIC FOURNIER



CHURCH PARTNER SLICE

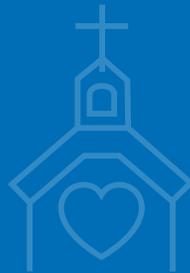
HEAVENLY PIES!

For about 20 years, members and friends of Blaine Christian Church (Arcadia) have gathered on a Saturday morning in November to make hundreds of apple pies. The pies, which can either be baked or frozen, are pre-sold with all proceeds going to missions.

Before each pie-making event, which takes place at the White Owl Township Hall, apples are bagged in pie-portion, crust is made, and the sugar/cinnamon is combined. Workers—wearing aprons and bringing their own rolling pins—stand around stations equipped with pie tins, all the ingredients and water for pressing the crust together.

Each table decides if they will work individually or in mini-assembly lines. As pies are made, other workers carry them to the packaging and boxing area, and also continually bring new ingredients to each station.

In 2016, over 900 pies were made in a few short hours! Most were purchased by individuals, and there were some large business orders. BACN is but one organization that benefits from sales, and we are grateful for these Heavenly Pies!



NEIGHBOR SLICE

A Neighbor was looking through items in the clothing store, when she found a fake fur coat in great condition.



Thrilled, she put her purse on the floor, took off her sweater and slipped the coat on. She snuggled into the coat and said to no one in particular, "Oh! I feel so beautiful. This is the best I've looked in years."

BE A DONOR SLICE

Each year, BACN's major fundraiser is the Summer Match. This year, the John L. Mulvaney Foundation has generously provided the first \$50,000, challenging our community to match their donations for a total of \$100,000.

Summer Match 2017 is a \$100,000 pie. You'll see a banner in BACN's yard detailing the growth of this pie, as slices fill in to match the Mulvaney half. BACN takes no government funding, and every individual donation is such an important slice of our pie! We invite you to help your Neighbors during this time of high impact. Have fun watching as our pie grows through August!

Summer Match - Be A Slice of BACN's \$100,000 Pie!



GOVERNANCE SLICE

In 1962 I had my first exposure to Benzie County, visiting my best friend from high school whose family had property on Crystal Lake. I then moved to Benzie County in 1972, and was employed by a CPA firm and Paul Oliver Memorial Hospital. During those years I was a member of the Kiwanis Club of Crystal Lake and served many other agencies and my church. I became the Benzie County representative on the Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency Board of Directors. My time on that Board provided my first exposure to the fact that numerous Benzie County residents struggle daily to meet their basic needs.

In 1983 I moved back to Kalamazoo working 25 years for city and county governments. Part of my career was spent as Finance Director for Kalamazoo County Human Services Department, which allowed me to have further exposure to the struggles of people living in poverty.

Retirement in 2009 brought my wife Cheri and me to Beulah. When I was asked to serve on the BACN Board of Directors, it was easy to say yes as I believe very strongly in the mission of the organization. I am impressed with the staff and core of volunteers who give so freely of their time for the Neighbors that we serve. While the food pantry and clothing

center assist people with an immediate need, I'm pleased that BACN also provides education opportunities and job search and skills training by partnering with other non-profit agencies.

As I look back over my life, I realize that there have been many people who have helped me--a teacher, minister, supervisor and a friend or mentor. I believe in trying to help others improve their lives, and that is why I'm pleased to spend my time volunteering with BACN.

"I BELIEVE IN TRYING TO HELP OTHERS IMPROVE THEIR LIVES..."

**BILL DUNDON
BACN BOARD PRESIDENT**



DONOR SLICE: KURT & SUSAN SWANSON



"BEFORE WE MOVED UP HERE, WE HAD BEEN TITHING TO MARS HILL BIBLE CHURCH IN GRANDVILLE. WE WANTED TO CONTINUE TO GIVE, AND WERE TOLD BACN WOULD BE A GOOD CHOICE, BECAUSE OF THEIR SERVICE TO OTHERS."

When Ann Loveless was bringing fame to our area for her 2nd ArtPrize winning work, "Northwood Awakening," another 2015 ArtPrize finalist was getting ready to call Benzie County home—he just didn't know it yet.

Kurt Swanson's winning three-dimensional piece "The Race"—a wooden recreation of three Schwinn Stingray bicycles Swanson and his brothers had as kids (in front of a backdrop of a photo of him on that bike—taken by his grandfather) was the couple's ticket north.

"I had been up in this area as a kid, as I had a friend with a family cottage on Crystal Lake," says Susan, an IT specialist. Over the years, Susan had brought Kurt to the area, knowing he would enjoy how open and friendly people were here, and the outdoor vibe.

Kurt, a tool and dye specialist, who had been a hobby woodworker for nearly 30 years, also fell in love with the area. "Finishing in the top 20 at ArtPrize was huge," he says. "It was a turning point—did I want to turn this hobby into a business? Could I leave Grand Rapids and my job?"

He could and did, and Always August Designs was created, located at 2128 Warren Rd., Beulah. Having powered through a challenging first year including a fire that destroyed the first workshop, the Swansons are enjoying life in Benzie County. Not only do they support BACN with monthly financial gifts, but Susan has also led a Cyber Safety workshop at BACN and volunteered to help us ensure BACN's confidential information remains secure. We are grateful for these talented new folks in our Neighborhood!

INFORMATION SLICES

IF THERE IS ONE THING BACN IS NOT, IT'S STATIC. NEIGHBOR NEEDS VARY REGULARLY. WE ARE ESPECIALLY GRATEFUL TO THE PROGRAMS COMMITTEE WHO HELPS VET THE NEW SERVICES WE CAN OFFER AS THOSE NEEDS ARISE.

THIS YEAR BACN HAS BEGUN:

- Providing supplemental food bags to area senior citizens receiving Meals on Wheels. This is a partnership between BACN and Benzie Senior Resources. So many of the Meals on Wheels recipients have bare refrigerators between meals. This is a very real concern since these folks are unable to travel to the store as needed. The supplemental bags provide nutrient dense foods that can tide the seniors over between meal deliveries.
- Extended hours on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month, from 4-6 p.m. These hours are being offered to help folks who cannot get to BACN during the regular hours. (Monday through Thursday 10-2). Services available during these extended hours include food, clothing and donation drop-off.
- Providing supplemental food to children for the summer. For the first time in years, Benzie County Central Schools are not providing the free breakfast and lunch kids count on during summer months. Neighbors who have children attending school may pick up a pre-packaged, supplemental bag of food twice monthly during summer, to help families counting on those meals. Items are easy to prepare and include kid-friendly things such as canned ravioli, cereal, fruit cups, granola bars and fresh produce.
- Evaluating data from the ALICE Project. ALICE stands for Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, yet Employed. Many families in BACN's service area are employed with incomes too high for government assistance, yet still struggle to provide for their families. BACN is looking at ways to make a difference to these hard-working area families.

What other needs are out there that we may be unaware of? Give us a call and let us know. We may be able to help!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CURRENT

Lynne Bekkering
Bill Dundon
Anne Hebert
Nancy Meek

Donald Schaffer
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WELCOMING FOR 2017

Harold (Skip) Comer
Linda Kehr
George Marsh
Judy Williams

DEPARTING WITH THANKS FOR THEIR SERVICE

Jim Mackenzie
Jim Ryan
Jerry Slater

NEIGHBOR SLICE 2

Sometimes BACN's help comes in the form of an exception rather than the rule. Normally transportation assistance is only given to and from work, or to doctor appointments. But when "Linda" came into the office crying, an exception was made.

Linda's ex-husband had been granted custody of their three young children over a year earlier, and had moved them to northern Ohio. At the time, Linda had been overwhelmed caring for her dying mother, and had struggled to care for the children.

Her mother had since passed and Linda was now holding a stable full-time job. On the day Linda came to BACN, her ex-husband had offered to let her be with her children for a full day if she could go the following day (which she had off from work). But, she simply did not have the money and was beside herself with grief.

BACN partnered with some other area assistance to be able to provide Linda the funds for her trip. She returned, sharing happy photos with her children, and with the resolve to change her situation.



ECRWSS
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BENZONIA, MI

BENZIE AREA CHRISTIAN NEIGHBORS

2804 Benzie Hwy
P.O. Box 93
Benzonia, MI 49616

POSTAL CUSTOMER

NEEDED SLICES

BACN is so grateful for each slice of the pie making the whole. We have some current needs...
could you be that slice?

- **VOLUNTEERS** – in every area, but especially for help unloading the Food Rescue truck. This is not a job for everyone, as it's physically demanding (up to 75 pounds lifting). This help is needed Mondays, generally from noon till 2:00 p.m.
- **DONATIONS OF FOOD AND CLOTHING** – every item is appreciated
- **FINANCIAL DONATIONS** – we are so grateful for each one
- **PRAYER WARRIORS** – please lift our Neighbors and their needs, and for the work of BACN

