

**2015  
ANNUAL REPORT**

**MEETING  
CHALLENGES.  
IMPROVING  
OUTLOOKS.**



**Dear Friends,**

Once again I find myself expressing gratitude for your steadfast support of our “Neighborhood.” During 2015, Benzie Area Christian Neighbors (BACN) worked hard to ease the challenges of our Neighbors. We also expanded partnerships and celebrated some successes. It was a wonderful year!

One of 2015’s highlights was the development of a three-year organizational strategic plan to strengthen operations and focus on goals through 2018. The plan calls for us to continue to expand partnerships with other area agencies and services. We acted on this immediately, having Michigan Works! available at BACN three days a week to guide Neighbors through education opportunities and job readiness training. Other partner agencies provided a healthcare navigator, and self-sufficiency coordinator. Our partners helped us understand the barriers to self-sufficiency, and how we can help Neighbors break through those barriers.

Neighbors faced ongoing area challenges in 2015, including the area’s low wage scale, lack of sustainable housing and transportation issues. The facts are compelling: 12% of our community lives in poverty, and another 22% earn less than the basic cost of living. Those figures are constant reminders

that the mission of BACN—helping families have basic necessities such as food, safe housing and heat—is viable not just today, but for the foreseeable future.

Within these challenges however, we see opportunities. In 2015 we began moving forward with addressing the BACN facility’s maintenance and structural issues. The Board worked toward plans that will ensure that BACN is a safe place for our entire Neighborhood, with adequate space for partner agencies to provide educational instruction and other services. These facility changes were planned to fit with the strategic plan of making BACN the “Hub of Caring” for Benzie and Northern Manistee Counties.

Thank you for having been part of our Caring Neighborhood in 2015! In the year to come, we look forward to working toward our strategic goals, never forgetting to uplift our Neighbors through interactions shaped by dignity and respect.

In gratitude,

**Gerri VanAntwerp,**  
Executive Director



Michelle and Gerri with Governor Rick Snyder.

**LOOKING FORWARD WITH HOPE AND COMMITMENT.**

**2015 had many moments worth noting...and celebrating!**

- BACN was one of five finalists for Michigan’s Governor’s Service Awards in the category of Outstanding Volunteer Program
- Expanded partnerships with the MSU Extension, Michigan Works!, Northwest Michigan Health Services, Inc., and Food Rescue. (These partnerships provided our Neighbors with cooking lessons, increased adult education opportunities, job-readiness training and access to more fresh fruits and vegetables!)
- The completion of our 3-year strategic plan
- The demolition and removal of the former unusable east wing of BACN’s facility, making our grounds ready for future improvements
- Over 12,000 hours of service given to our Neighbors by over 125 volunteers. These are volunteers who enjoy being at BACN so much that they even come on their birthdays!



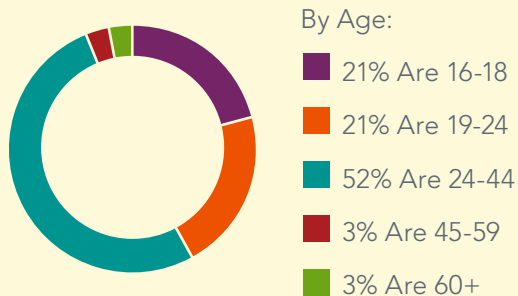
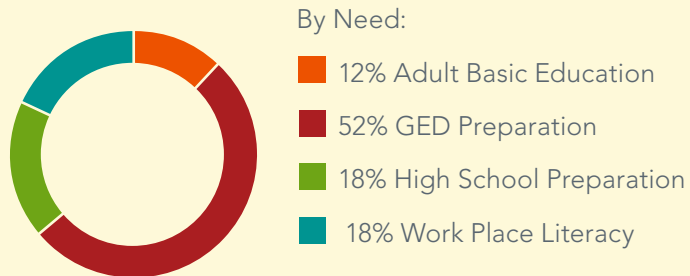
*“There is no more fun place to be than BACN, and this is where I wanted to be on my birthday”*  
Evelyn, BACN Volunteer

**Community Impact**

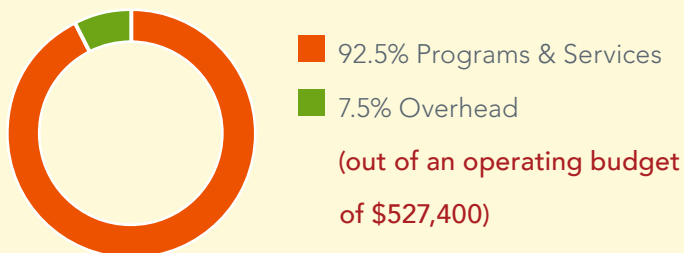
Households Served (unduplicated): 1,322  
Adults Served (unduplicated): 2,209  
Children 17 & Under Served (unduplicated): 1,177

**Our Adult Learning Lab**

Over 70 Neighbors in the Adult Learning Lab participated in educational or job training initiatives.



**How your donation was spent in 2015:**



**In 2015:**

- 34% of residents in BACN’s service area were financially unable to provide for their family’s basic needs.
- 70% of BACN’s revenue came from businesses and foundations. 27% came from individuals and 3% from churches.

**BACN Board of Directors:**

- |                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| GERRI VANANTWERP     | NANCY MEEK          |
| LYNNE BEKKERING      | JAMES RYAN          |
| BILL DUNDON          | DR. DONALD SCHAFFER |
| REV. ANNE HÉBERT     | JERRY SLATER        |
| REV. EUGENE HOUGHTON | PENNY SZCZECZOWSKI  |
| JAMES MACKENZIE      | JUDITH WELCH        |

**SAVE THE DATE FOR THE BACN POTLUCK**

Join us April 11, 2016, from 5:30 p.m. till 7:00 p.m. for the BACN Potluck. The carry-in meal (bring one dish to pass) will be held at the Frankfort United Methodist Church, 537 Crystal Avenue, Frankfort.