

BACN

BENZIE AREA CHRISTIAN NEIGHBORS
A CARING COMMUNITY OF NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS



SEASON OF
HEART
2019

HEART | Having compassion, faith, or other deep inner resources.

DEAR FRIENDS

This summer marks my 10th year at BACN. I began my journey here as the part-time Volunteer Coordinator, and with the help of a supportive Board of Directors transitioned into the Executive Director role.

When I first came to BACN, we were still busy serving our area's most vulnerable population—those living at poverty level. Fast-forwarding to today, we find ourselves needing to reach out to the population growing most increasingly vulnerable—our working families.

There have been some very pivotal points in this journey. How well I remember the economic downturn that began in 2008, and the resulting impact of the growing number of Neighbors. I remember the hard work, frustrating moments and absolute wonder of the time when, in 2010, we were able to move into our current facility. And most recently, I'll never forget the months of work done to determine our community's growing needs and the role our facility will have in addressing those.



Over the 10 years, I'm most proud of BACN's constant—our "heart". Through

all the change and growth, BACN remains a place where Neighbors receive a personal touch—a caring, listening ear and words of encouragement. While we might not get to see the truly transformative ending to each Neighbor's situation, we do get close enough to know that each small action taken creates the momentum for that transformation.

Last summer we celebrated 35 years. We are no longer learning on the fly, but instead use relative data to determine how our mission can continue to stabilize the community. I'm thankful for our Board of Directors, who continually monitor the landscape and prioritize our Neighbors in any decision-making.

Thank you for being a critical part of this journey. What will the next 10 years hold? We can't know for certain, but thanks to you, we do know we'll be here and ready to serve.

Gratefully,

Gerri VanAntwerp,
Executive Director

HEART IN ACTION

GOING THE EXTRA MILE

“Dan” is a 75-year-old Vietnam veteran living in Benzie County. Although struggling with severe medical challenges, he takes great pride in self-sufficiency. “Dan works hard to take care of his own needs and wants to do that,” says Liz Ham, BACN’s Services Coordinator. “We’ve been able to step in during some of his really tough times to make sure he gets the care he needs.”

Bob Scholl (pictured below with Liz), a BACN volunteer of 13 years, has been especially touched by Dan’s plight. He says, “To name a few of the things Dan has dealt with, he’s not only a 5-year war veteran, he’s been in a long struggle with cancer. He’s had two bone marrow transplants, but they have yet to get him into remission. His bones are prone to breaking. One arm has broken in five places, and today he cannot use it at all. In 2016, he suffered a heart attack and struggled through that recovery. Recently, the cancer caused him to have all his teeth removed, and for months his gums have not healed properly for dentures. It’s unbelievable the things this man has dealt with, and yet he keeps such a positive attitude.”

Dan receives help through the VA Hospitals in both Ann Arbor and Saginaw. Bob and Liz coordinate with local partners to see that Dan has his nutritional and medication needs met, and his home remains safe and in good repair. Dan relies heavily on the Benzie Bus for transportation, but there are times when that’s not enough. Bob has personally driven him to the VA in Saginaw on more than one occasion.

This past winter when Dan was at BACN Liz noticed he looked pale and ill. He shared that the heater in his home was not working. He was not only ill, but exhausted from trips outside for firewood. He told Liz he hadn’t called for the help because he thought that might involve an ambulance run he could not afford. After conferring with BACN’s Executive Director, Liz drove Dan to the hospital where he was admitted for emergency care.

Afterward, Liz was able to work with the Department of Health and Human Services and a local HVAC contractor to ensure a new furnace was installed in Dan’s home. Liz sums up the “heart” of working with Dan by saying, “Sometimes you just feel overwhelmed by the things a Neighbor is going through. I’m proud to work in a place where people are willing to personally go the extra mile when needed.”



HEART FOR WORKING NEIGHBORS

The growing Sleeping Bear tourism wave is a boon for our area, and provides plenty of opportunities to work 2 or 3 jobs during warmer months. While residents may wryly joke about the notion of “a view of the bay is half your pay”, the reality is there’s nothing funny about the struggles of our area’s cost of living and wage scale. Many of our working families—those making sure the area’s amenities are robust—depend on BACN to remain year-round residents. This affects not just individuals and families, but also the local service businesses. “The seasonal employment situation really has an impact on us,” says Scott Strong, hairdresser at A Love of Hair (Honor). “When our customers have their hours cut after the summer season, they cut back on having their hair done.” Strong goes on to praise the ingenuity and work ethic of local residents. “One of the first things I noticed after moving here was that when I asked my customers what they did for a living, they spoke of having several jobs and side-businesses. Rarely did they have just one job. I’ve lived and worked all over the country, including metropolitan areas like New York City and Miami. Never have I met such hard-working and industrious people as the ones who live here.”



DO YOU KNOW



?

Since 2015, knowledge of the area’s ALICE population (Asset-limited, Income-constrained, yet Employed) has driven BACN’s desire for outreach to working families. The most recently updated figures from The ALICE Project (Michigan Association of United Ways) shows the stark reality of this area. Combined percentage of residents living in either poverty or ALICE households:

- BENZIE COUNTY—42% of all residents
- MANISTEE COUNTY—49% of all residents



WITH A GRATEFUL HEART

We are so grateful for the heart of this community, and for the people who show consideration for their Neighbors’ daily lives. We of course appreciate the financial support that keeps BACN’s doors open. In addition, we’re humbled by the little luxuries people donate—the things they know financially strapped families will not purchase for themselves. Things like small cans of coffee, mandarin oranges, spices, olive oil, herbal tea bags, honey and wonderful-smelling soaps. Sometimes when people are overwhelmed by big things, it’s the little things that most show heart. We thank you for your heart!

“HAVING A SOFT HEART IN A CRUEL WORLD, IS COURAGE, NOT WEAKNESS.”

— KATHERINE HENSON

“
OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH BACN HAS BEEN DEEPLY GRATIFYING.

- BRIAN AND KAY MULVANEY,
 JOHN L. MULVANEY FOUNDATION

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the annual Summer Match challenge. In 2010, the John L. Mulvaney Foundation began offering the community a challenge over the summer months. They would match, dollar-for-dollar, the amount the community could raise up to a certain gift level. The challenge took off like wildfire, and to this day the community enthusiastically times their gifts for this window when they have the most impact. In any given year, the Summer Match provides nearly 20% of BACN's annual funding, and is the largest annual fundraiser for the organization. Over the years, the impact of the Summer Match has been over a million dollars. Community involvement is exactly what Brian and Kay Mulvaney delight in seeing. They say, "We have been honored for 10 years to partner with our wonderful community in the Summer Match campaign in support of BACN as they continue the critical work of serving our neighbors." Our gratitude to the Mulvaney's for their care for Neighbors!



“
NO ACT OF KINDNESS, NO MATTER HOW SMALL, IS EVER WASTED.

- AESOP



HEART FOR NUTRITION

For years Michelle Northrup, BACN's Director of Operations, has been working with the Northwest Food Coalition and other partners so the BACN pantry can offer nutrient-dense foods. She was tickled recently to overhear a Neighbor express excitement at the large amount of produce to choose from during her pantry visit. "We know that when Neighbors shop at a grocery store, their limited funds dictate the choices," says Michelle. "For example, do they spend a dollar on one orange that might provide a snack for only one person? Or, do they spend that same dollar for two boxes of mac n cheese to feed their entire family? Now that we have more produce at BACN, Neighbors can often buy the less expensive items at the grocery, and use BACN to supplement the more expensive things. At BACN, they can now get that orange, mango, asparagus, or bagged greens."



HEART OF COMFORT

Former educator Judy Welch is stepping off the BACN Board of Directors in 2019 after serving in that capacity since 2010. She says, "I've had so many meaningful experiences here...notably while volunteering at food drives, and in connection with the WOW program (Women on their Way). The memory that most stays with me happened as I was working the BACN reception desk. A former student came in for the first time, and I could tell she felt embarrassed and uncomfortable. I was able to chat with her, which put her at ease. I think my being the one who was there definitely made her more comfortable. In my experience, that familiarity and neighborliness—that we're all here for each other—is key to the heart of BACN."

THE HEART OF EDUCATION

Returning to school for a high school diploma is not an easy decision—often students are juggling jobs and raising families in addition to their studies. BACN's partnership with Northwest Michigan Works/ Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District, provides a place for these students. At BACN, they receive academic help built around their schedule and at the pace needed. We thank Sue Oseland (Northwest Michigan Works!) for not just the providing the certified classroom instruction, but also for the heart—the listening ear and encouraging presence—that in 2019 helped 6 students achieve their goal of a GED or high school diploma!





ECRWSS
POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 6
BENZONIA, MI

BENZIE AREA CHRISTIAN NEIGHBORS

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

POSTAL CUSTOMER

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Lynne Bekkering
- Linda Kehr
- Alan Luedtke
- George Marsh | **VICE PRESIDENT**
- John O'Neal | **TREASURER**
- Penny Szczechowski
- Judy Williams | **SECRETARY**
- Geri VanAntwerp | **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

WELCOMED IN 2019:

- Sally Dutton
- Molly Harrison
- Rev. Patty Higgins
- Julie Tebo
- Gwen VanDorp | **PRESIDENT**

DEPARTING IN 2019

- With Thanks for Their Service:
- Bill Dundon
 - Rev. Anne Hébert
 - Nancy Meek
 - Judy Welch
 - Stephanie Williams



HAVE YOU HEARD? BACN IS BUILDING!

In January, 2019, BACN's Board of Directors voted unanimously to embark upon a three-year capital drive to raise \$3.5 million in support of a new 10,600 square-foot building at BACN's current location. We are in the silent phase of this exciting fundraising effort and are in the process of securing lead gifts. For those who have not yet heard about the project, here are answers to some of our most frequently-asked questions:

WHY DOES BACN NEED MORE SPACE?

In a nutshell, we are "maxed out" on our ability to provide services in this current building. There are community-identified services we're already unable to provide, and most importantly, the facility is limiting our ability to offer help to our working family sector—in both on-site and off-site outreach.

WHY NOT AN ADD-ON/RE-MODEL INSTEAD OF NEW CONSTRUCTION?

Several different options were studied at length, including purchasing an empty existing building, purchasing land in a different location, remodeling or new construction on our current property. The first two options were immediately taken off the table due to cost. In the end, the cost difference between new construction and a re-model was so small that the option offering most sustainability and fiscal responsibility was new construction.

HOW WILL NEIGHBORS BE SERVED DURING THE TIME OF CONSTRUCTION?

The new building will be built to the east of the existing facility, closer to US-31. Services to Neighbors will continue in their present location during the anticipated 8-10-month construction period, followed by a brief window for moving operations.



231.882.9544

2804 Benzie Highway • P.O. Box 93
benziebacn.org • Follow us on Facebook