



BACN

BENZIE AREA CHRISTIAN NEIGHBORS
A CARING COMMUNITY OF NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

SEASON OF SURVIVAL

SURVIVAL | Endurance, continuance, durability

DEAR FRIENDS

As BACN's Board President, I'm excited to extend my first newsletter greeting. In this issue, we share personal stories about surviving in a season of uncertainty. Over time, we have learned how difficult it is for Neighbors to ask for help. Two thirds of households who come to BACN, visit six times or less each year. But in times of uncertainty, they know that BACN will be there for them. With generous support from the community, we are blessed to be able to offer our Neighbors dignity, respect, and support during uncertain times.



The number of struggling working families in our area is growing. Even as tourism continues to grow and demand a larger workforce, our local economy will become increasingly fragile if our working families—the potential workforce—are forced to leave this area. We are

still feeling the effects of the exodus of construction workers ten years ago. Support for working families is a significant factor in our local economy.

BACN embraces this challenge. We strive to continuously improve programs for Neighbors, both those who currently receive services and the emerging needs of working families. We need a facility that can support these programs. We seek a larger donor base for both annual operations and our capital project. The initial response to these needs has been tremendous, with over \$1.2 million dollars pledged in less than six months.

BACN Builds is our coordinated effort to build our community, our capacity, and our sustainability. We invite you inside these pages to share what we've learned, and to hear first-hand from those who struggle to survive during the winter months.

With warm wishes,

Gwen Van Dorp,
President, BACN Board of Directors





A MILLENNIAL'S EFFORT TO STAY

BETWEEN 2001 AND 2015, BENZIE COUNTY LOST ALMOST 25% OF RESIDENTS BETWEEN AGES 30 AND 49.

For the past two years, “Amber” and “Joe” worked summer jobs while staying in the cottage of a family friend. When Amber was offered a year-round job at a local grocery store, the couple decided to stay through the winter. They rented an apartment and Joe found a full-time job with benefits.

Despite both working full-time, they have been unable to save. Joe’s commute is 70 miles each day, and his car is on its last legs. A used car along with snow tires will be an added expense. At the end of the summer season, Amber’s hours were cut. She’s looking for a second job but will have to work around her part-time schedule.

Amber and Joe love the area, but unless they can start saving—for an emergency fund and eventually their own home—they will be forced to leave. Amber says, “We’d love to buy a house and start our family. But if we can’t get ahead financially, we’ll have to move.”

BACN needs to be there for our area’s Ambers and Joes—those who are part of the workforce driving our local economy. Amber and Joe may not need BACN for very long if at all...but knowing BACN is there as a safety net could make the difference in their ability to stay.



LOCAL BUSINESSES NEED BACN

“Over the years we’ve definitely needed BACN’s assistance for some of our employees. We pay well, but these are only 5-month jobs and no one can get through the winter on what they try to save during those months. Once the jobs stop for the season, people have to figure out how to make ends meet until late spring. I remember a young mother with two children who cleaned rooms for us. BACN provided much needed help with food, clothing, and utilities over the winter so she could return the following season. In many cases, BACN is the resource that helps keep us in business.”



LUANN ELWELL AND HER HUSBAND MICHAEL OWN FRANKFORT’S BAY PORT LODGING AND PORT CITY SMOKEHOUSE.

THE SURVIVAL GAP

What exactly is a survival budget? The Michigan Association of United Ways has researched what a family of four—two adults, one preschooler and one infant—need to survive. They factored in the expenses for housing, child-care, food, transportation, health care, technology, taxes and a 10% contingency for expenses like clothing and utilities.



While the federal poverty rate for this family is \$25,100, the survival budget in Michigan for this same family is \$55,501. These working families do not qualify for public assistance yet are unable to meet their basic needs. Something as simple as an unplanned car repair can throw them into financial crisis. Being able to assist Neighbors living in this gap—up to 7,000 additional individuals in our service area - is a driving force behind the need to build BACN’s capacity.



HELP WANTED!

With a booming economy and help wanted signs everywhere, some folks question why charitable assistance is needed. In Benzie County, 25% percent of residents are sixty-five and older. Less than half (44%) of residents live here year around. Many local jobs are seasonal, part-time and offer no benefits. Working families are already juggling multiple jobs and still can’t make ends meet. There are simply not enough people of working age to fill all the available openings, a trend that shows no sign of slowing.

WINTER IN NORTHERN MICHIGAN IS A TIME OF SURVIVAL. BACN NEIGHBORS...FROM THE MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN TO SENIORS TO WORKING FAMILIES... NEED US TO SURVIVE RIGHT ALONG WITH THEM. A TWO-YEAR STUDY OF COMMUNITY NEEDS AND OUR CAPACITY TO MEET THEM HAS DETERMINED THE BEST WAY FOR BACN TO SURVIVE AND SUSTAIN IS TO BUILD A NEW FACILITY ON LAND IN FRONT OF OUR EXISTING BUILDING.”



BACN ADDRESSES COMMUNITY GAPS

EXPANDED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The stories in this newsletter are real. Expanded services designed to meet these community gaps are “on-hold” due to facility constraints. Upon completion of a facility project, BACN will have the capacity to increase access to healthy food to a larger segment of our population, expand the Senior Supplemental Food Bag Program, offer supplemental food to children when school is not in session, accommodate growth in the GED and career assistance programs, provide outreach to working families, offer evening hours, and accept out-of-season clothing.

FACILITY NEEDS

BACN’s capacity to expand services for Neighbors has been severely limited by deficiencies in the current building. Each year, the safety of Neighbors and volunteers is of heightened concern. The cost of operations and major renovations is high. Space is limited, confidentiality compromised, and work and storage areas are overcrowded. Our facility is not adequately designed for people with disabilities or mobility challenges. BACN’s vision is to replace the current declining facility with one that is specifically tailored to the needs of BACN Neighbors and workers. In doing so, BACN will increase our capacity to serve more Neighbors.

RESOURCES FOR OPERATING AND CAPITAL COSTS

BACN has a \$1.7 million dollar impact on our community each year. Time valued at \$250,000 is donated by volunteers, food and clothing donations total \$1,000,000, and the remaining funds come from grants and financial contributions. BACN does not receive any direct government support. The BACN Board is committed to increasing operating funds to support new and expanded programs in addition to raising \$3.5 million for construction costs, building reserves and program start-up costs.

A MOM’S WINTER WORRY

BACN Neighbor “Brenda” shared how anxious she was last winter when schools were closed for days on end. “My teenage sons get free breakfast and lunch at school. We had little food in the house and due to winter weather BACN was also closed. It is a horrible feeling to worry about your children having enough food.”

This is a sad reality for families struggling to have enough food. Many of us are relieved when we don’t have to get out on the icy roads — but for Brenda and other Neighbors with school-age children, a school closing has difficult consequences.



HOMEBOUND SENIORS



“SENIORS ARE THE FASTEST GROWING POPULATION IN BENZIE COUNTY. WITH THE BABY BOOMER GENERATION RETIRING IN DROVES, WE EXPECT TO SEE AN INFLUX OF NEEDS IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. WE PARTNERED WITH BACN TO CREATE OUR SENIOR FOOD BAGS PROGRAM, WHICH HELPS US SERVE MANY OF OUR MOST VULNERABLE, HOMEBOUND CLIENTS. THIS VALUABLE PARTNERSHIP ENSURES THE DELIVERY OF EXTRA FOOD BI-WEEKLY GIVING PARTICIPANTS FOOD SECURITY, A MUCH-NEEDED TOOL FOR STAYING INDEPENDENT IN THEIR OWN HOMES.”



- DOUG DURAND,
BENZIE SENIOR RESOURCES
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Two years ago, BACN approached Doug Durand about forming a partnership to help address a serious community need – food insecurity among homebound seniors. Currently, supplemental food is delivered to 20 households twice a month. BACN is working to increase our capacity to expand this service. A new facility with a food bagging room will support needed growth in this and other supplemental food bag programs.

FACILITY FAQ'S

Q. BOARD DECISION

- A. BACN hired Environment Architects and Spence Brothers Construction to develop conceptual drawings and cost estimates for two options: a renovation/addition of the existing building and a new building at our current location. Not only was the cost of a new building only \$200,000 higher (including demolition), the renovation presented issues like service interruptions, multiple phasing, and possible discovery of hazardous materials. Construction consultant and volunteer David Oellerich noted, “The existing building is 35 years old and has bad bones. A new building will be much more efficient to operate and maintain over time.”

Q. BUILDING DESIGN

- A. BACN’ new facility will be modest in design and efficient to operate. 3,000 sq.’ of additional space will allow us to serve more Neighbors and expand existing services. The building will incorporate two wings: a warehouse style wing housing the pantry/food outreach services, the clothing center, and storage, and an office style wing housing the classroom and career center, coordinator and service offices, and Neighbor support services.

Q. CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

- A. BACN’s Board of Directors launched the silent phase of a capital campaign with over \$500,000 of pledges. After just six months, BACN has received \$1.2 million of pledges to be paid over a three-year period. In addition, two grant applications are pending with several more in the pipeline. BACN has also received generous pledges for funds to sustain annual operations. BACN is committed to being debt-free. The project will go out to bid when pledges match 100% of construction and owner’s costs.



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We thank the local residents for sharing their stories about surviving in a season of uncertainty. **"BACN BUILDS"** is our commitment to promote a whole and healthy community. It includes expanding services to existing Neighbors, providing outreach to working families, building a new facility, and increasing our base of financial support.

Barbra Streisand once famously sang:

**"NO MORE HUNGER AND THIRST
FIRST BE A PERSON WHO NEEDS PEOPLE
PEOPLE WHO NEED PEOPLE
ARE THE LUCKIEST PEOPLE IN THE WORLD."**



We gratefully recognize we all need each other and invite you to join us on this journey of helping each other survive and thrive!



COMMUNITY ■ CAPACITY ■ SUSTAINABILITY

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