

# UCOM COMMUNICATOR

Spring 2019



What do your gifts do at the Farmstand?  
Stop by for a tour!



## Learning and Leading Together

Thank you for listening to our neighbors...

▶ “I never thought I liked brussel sprouts until I ate the ones Marcelle cooked.” Marcelle is one of our neighbors who receives a small stipend to teach people how to cook healthful foods in our weekly classes. Suddenly students are ready to eat and to feed their families super foods that they would never have tried.

▶ People in feedback groups tell us if what we are doing with our Healthy Choice Pantry is being effective. “My kids really profit from the new shelf arrangement with the healthiest foods at eye-level. They are choosing fruit and vegetable snacks instead of cookies and pastries.”

▶ We were concerned that as

we incrementally reduced the amount of sugar and sodium-laden products that our neighbors would feel deprived, but when we asked they expressed an overwhelming approval of these healthier options. “In the past I might have eaten a dozen donuts; now I choose to eat a couple of apples or a banana. I’m just as satisfied and a lot healthier.”

▶ Our neighbors’ input doesn’t stop there. Neighbors help with the look of the pantry and with special projects like making sure we have some recipes available with the produce. Neighbors are becoming astute shoppers as they learn nutrition facts and practice reading labels. Consumers are realizing that their input matters, and they are taking more ownership of their eating choices.

▶ Neighborhood volunteers also serve on our board of directors to shape UCOM policies; volunteers oversee other less experienced volunteers to keep your ministry moving forward smoothly.

▶ With our neighbors’ help and your support UCOM continues in our mission to be the best person-centered agency we can be. Your giving assures our neighbors of the importance of their contributions to the work we do together.

▶ Thank you for ensuring that all of us are equally valued and heard.



## Cooking up Something New

UCOM's neighbors teach each other the joy of healthful cooking.

Marcelle looked out at the room of eager students and asked if anyone had ever used celery root before. No one in the class had, but several had heard of it. "It has a very mild flavor," she told the group, "and it works well when you pair it with other stronger vegetables." Today she was adding it to a root vegetable soup.

This exchange took place at our Healthy Cooking class, a new addition to UCOM's health education programs. In these weekly classes, UCOM neighbors like Marcelle take turns developing

healthful recipes while using ingredients mostly available in UCOM's pantry or our farmstand.

Marcelle is one of three neighbors to have taught classes so far, and several others have also expressed interest in doing so.

Each class provides an incredible benefit to the community. Our neighbors learn a new, healthful recipe often involving ingredients with which they aren't familiar; our chefs receive a stipend for sharing their time and knowledge; and UCOM helps build a stronger and more connected community.

## Thank You!

Many thanks to everyone that joined us at the Friends of UCOM Benefit Concert and Silent Auction! Your support and generosity made the event a smashing success!

## Special Needs:

Did you know each week UCOM picks up thousands of pounds in donations from local grocery stores?

UCOM's cargo vehicles allow us to manage these pickups relatively well, but age and the rigors of years of Michigan winters have taken their toll.

We are in need of replacement vehicles for both our box truck and our smaller pickup vehicle.

If you or someone you know is looking to donate a cargo van or a box truck please let us know!



# YOU CAN HELP!

1. Become a sustaining member of UCOM's programs with monthly donations.

2. Walk with UCOM at the Walk for Good Food!

3. Help register clients during pantry hours.

4. Volunteer as a driver and help with pick ups and deliveries.

5. Donate gently used or new sheets and towels.

6. Share this newsletter with a friend!

## Walk With UCOM!

Access of West Michigan  
Walk for Good Food

### May 5

Park Church, 10 East Park Place NE

Registration: 1:30pm

Kick-off: 2:15pm

Join us and walk, or Donate to team UCOM

Help support Healthy, Green, Affordable,  
and Fair food in our communities



Resources for living. Hope for life.

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