

UCOM
COMMUNICATOR
Winter 2020



Volunteers make it happen

What Makes Volunteers Tick?

“Volunteering at UCOM saved my life,” Marcelle says. “Volunteering brings me joy,” says Jessica. Carol calls volunteering at UCOM “an experience that warms [my] heart and touches the lives of thousands of people in need.” Harvey expresses his faith, in part, by volunteering time to help others.

In 2019 more than 400 volunteers logged 21,000 hours of service on behalf of our neighbors.

Not only is volunteering beneficial to people who turn to UCOM for options that help them to lead healthier, happier, more economically stable lives. It also brings smiles to the faces of those who give of their time and skills to make a difference. There is no way that UCOM could offer the many services and educational opportunities that it does without the passionate efforts of people who care enough to give of themselves, as you do.

One of our newer key volunteers, Carol, interviewed a number of UCOM volunteers to find out why they choose to donate their time to UCOM. These are their stories.

Harvey

Harvey started volunteering at UCOM in 2000 helping register neighbors for holiday food baskets and doing whatever else was needed.



He feels called to help others because of his faith and because others helped his family when he was a young child. “I grew up on a small farm in northern Michigan and there was a time when my dad was injured. Even though we raised a lot of our own food,

we still had to rely on help from others. We got through it because people helped us.”

He enjoys the feeling of helping neighbors

and also appreciates the fellowship of working with other volunteers. “There’s a feeling of happiness working with the volunteers. It brings joy to my life and when I walk out of the building, I feel like my life has been enriched.”

He encourages anyone thinking about volunteering to give it a try. “The rewards are there when you know you’re helping to make life a little better for other people.”

Marcelle

Marcelle says she struggles with depression but then adds, “When I’m volunteering at UCOM, I don’t feel depressed. It’s changed and saved my



life. They helped me gain back my confidence and they trust me.”

She’s been donating her time and talent for approximately 18 years. “My daughter is disabled so I’m not able to work a 40-hr-per-week job. Volunteering helps me feel useful. I

cook for luncheons, teach classes, work as a translator, help with holiday food baskets, work in the clothes pantry and help with whatever else they need. I’m so blessed to do what I do for UCOM. It gives me a glowing feeling,” she says.

She adds that volunteering has opened her eyes to the tremendous need there is in the community and she “loves” helping UCOM meet that need.

Jessica

As a volunteer at UCOM, Jessica wears many hats. Whether it’s stocking shelves, working at the check-out counter, making phone calls to neighbors or doing data entry, she does it all. “I like the variety,” she says. “Each day is different. I really enjoy helping neighbors shop for food that will go on their holiday food table. Their faces light up when I help them find what they’ve been looking for.”



When asked how volunteering makes her feel, she pauses and becomes thoughtful. “I was in sort of a dark place when I started working here, but volunteering brings me joy. Working here has given me a greater appreciation for all that I have. I’m so thankful.”

She looks forward to taking classes at UCOM so she can brush up on her Spanish and better assist Spanish-speaking neighbors.

Carol

When Carol retired, she needed a way to fill her days. She wanted to find volunteer work where there was a strong need and where she would make a difference. “As a follower of Christ, I feel like I’m fulfilling the mission that I’m called to by volunteering at UCOM. It’s my honor to serve, whether it’s assisting in the food or clothing pantry, or greeting people when they walk in the door. She says smiles abound at UCOM. “I find myself smiling a lot when I’m here—grinning back at a young child or listening to neighbors express their gratitude after receiving food. And, it’s not unusual to see some neighbors greet staff members with a big hug like friends.”

Before volunteering, Carol didn’t know that UCOM offers classes in several areas including healthy cooking and personal finance. “Staff members even try to help neighbors find a job. I witnessed one staff person helping a woman construct her resume. With its various services UCOM strives to help neighbors reach long-term stability and get them on the road to success in life.”

Carol encourages others to volunteer if they want an experience that warms their heart and touches the lives of thousands of people in need.



What’s Happening 2020

Picture This Art Display and Fundraiser

What: Gallery from local nature photographer Judy Myers-Nelson. Light refreshments. Photographs for sale. Proceeds go directly to UCOM.

When: Monday, January 27
6:00pm - 7:30pm

Where: UCOM
1311 Chicago Dr SW
Free Event

Friends of UCOM Benefit Concert

What: Posh 4 and Gwenneth Bean 17th Annual Benefit Concert Silent Auction and Reception

When: Sunday, April 19
6:00pm - 9:00pm

Where: Plymouth UCC
4010 Kalamazoo Ave SE
Tickets Available Now!

UCOM 35th Anniversary Coral Gala

What: Gala celebrating 35 years of UCOM service to the community

When: Wednesday, September 30
6:00pm - 9:00pm

Where: Thousand Oaks Golf Club
4100 Thousand Oaks Dr NE

More info to come!



YOU CAN HELP!

Save The Date!

17th Annual Friends of UCOM
Benefit Concert and Silent Auction
Sunday, April 19, 2020, 6:00 pm
Plymouth United Church of Christ

Featuring:

Posh 4

**4 Pianos, 8 hands
and**

**Gwenneth Bean
Contralto**

1. Become U are UCOM Club Member by signing up for automatic giving.
2. Volunteer to drive and pickup food donations on Sundays
3. Register neighbors during pantry hours
4. Volunteer as a day time checkout person in the pantry
5. Thursday night Volunteer receptionist during tax season
6. Share this newsletter with a friend!



Resources for living. Hope for life.

1311 Chicago Dr. SW
Wyoming, MI 49509

616.241.4006
www.UCOMgr.org