



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

COMMUNITY, FAITH, & RESPECT HAPPEN HERE

Your support makes it possible!



COMMUNITY

In spirit and action, UCOM embraces diversity and inclusion, equality, and interdependence.

FAITH

Our faith prayerfully provides hope that our efforts in common with our neighbors' will bring a brighter life.

RESPECT

We respect and appreciate differences and similarities in all people, and work to empower each person to attain their God-given potential.

UCOM CORE VALUES

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
UCOMGR.ORG



MISSION

United Church Outreach Ministry (UCOM) builds relationships and fosters community leadership by offering essential resources and providing educational opportunities to enhance health and well-being.



ADAPTING TO COVID-19

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, UCOM has had to change how food services were administered in order to keep our neighbors, our volunteers, and our community safe. Throughout 2020 we were able to provide safe, uninterrupted services by offering curbside pickups to limit contact and exposure. In the fall of 2021, we were able to resume in-person services and maintain safety by implementing an appointment system, limiting the number of neighbors in the building, and practicing rigorous cleaning and sanitization between shoppers. UCOM wants the very best for our community and we are tremendously proud of the fact that we have had 0 closures to our essential services due to COVID-19.

A PLACE FOR COMMUNITY

The background of the page is a faded, grayscale photograph of a community center. In the foreground, several people are seated at a long table, looking at laptops. In the background, more people are standing near computer monitors and other equipment. The overall atmosphere is one of a busy, communal space.

**COMMUNITY EDUCATION OFFERINGS CONTINUED
IN 2021 IN SPITE OF COVID-19 CHALLENGES.**

10-30 NEIGHBORS MET WEEKLY FOR OUTDOOR,
SOCIALLY DISTANCED WALKS TO PROVIDE
EXERCISE AND RELIEVE ISOLATION.

SEVERAL COOKING CLASSES AND FINANCIAL
LITERACY WORKSHOPS WERE CONDUCTED
VIRTUALLY.

THE GROWING GREEN NEIGHBORS GARDENING
CLUB MAINTAINED ITS MOMENTUM AND HELD
MONTHLY OUTDOOR MEETINGS DURING THE
GROWING SEASON WITH 10-15 NEIGHBORS.
TENDING THEIR GARDEN BEDS TOGETHER IN A
SOCIALLY DISTANCED SETTING PROVED
ESPECIALLY THERAPEUTIC FOR OUR NEIGHBORS.

A PLACE FOR COMMUNITY

"WHEN YOU SUPPORT UCOM, YOU'RE SUPPORTING AN OUTSTANDING CAUSE THAT PROVIDES VALUE TO YOUR NEIGHBORS. IT'S NOT JUST FOOD BASKETS OR TOYS FOR TOTS SIGN UPS AT THE HOLIDAYS. IT'S YEAR-ROUND WITH THE FOOD BANK, CLOTHING CLOSET, NUTRITIONAL EDUCATION, TEACHING PEOPLE TO BUDGET, AND JUST SO MANY THINGS THAT PEOPLE AREN'T AWARE OF."



DAVID HAS BEEN VOLUNTEERING AT UCOM FOR OVER 15 YEARS. BEING A PART OF THE COMMUNITY MEANS A LOT TO HIM.

"THIS IS ONE WAY I CAN STILL KEEP ACTIVE AND DO SOME GOOD. I GET TO BE HELPFUL WITH SPANISH-SPEAKING NEIGHBORS WHEN THEY COME IN. IT'S GOOD PRACTICE FOR ME AND HELPS KEEP ME CURRENT ON MY SPANISH SKILLS."

AROUND 50% OF THOSE WE SERVE ARE HISPANIC. HAVING VOLUNTEERS WHO CAN SPEAK SPANISH IS IMPORTANT AND IS ANOTHER WAY UCOM RESPECTS THE COMMUNITY AROUND US.

The Journey of UCOM Volunteers

11,991+ hours of love, kindness, and compassion were poured into the community in 2021

1



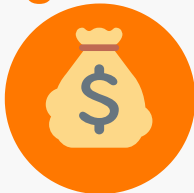
22 Key Volunteers answered the call and provided 5332+ hours of service

2



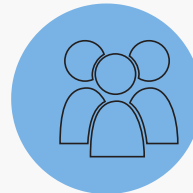
9 Board Members governed UCOM with 200+ hours of meetings and leadership

3



11 Tax Prep Workers spent 600+ hours helping neighbors get \$569k in returns

4



3 community groups with disabilities spent 260+ hours learning skills and making the community brighter

5



97 Court Services workers served 3951+ hours giving back to the community

6



5 AARP or ReEmployability Workers trained for new skills giving 2198+ hours

According to the 2021 Michigan valuation of volunteer time of \$28.35/hour, UCOM volunteers made a total in kind donation of their time equal to \$339,944!

A PLACE FOR GIVING BACK



"I'VE BEEN VERY BLESSED IN MY LIFE. WHEN I RETIRED I DECIDED I WOULD GIVE BACK AND I'VE CHOSEN TO DO THAT BY VOLUNTEERING AT UCOM. THEY ALWAYS SAY YOU GET MORE OUT OF GIVING THAN YOU THINK. AND YOU DO!"

SANDY CAN BE FOUND ON MONDAYS TALKING TO NEIGHBORS IN THE INTAKE OFFICE. SHE LISTENS TO NEIGHBORS' NEEDS AND HELPS THEM LEARN ABOUT THINGS GOING ON AT UCOM THAT MIGHT HELP THEM.

"I HAVEN'T HAD A LOT OF FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES," SHE TOLD US. BUT HER COMPASSION FOR OTHERS WHO ARE FACING CHALLENGES IS BOUNDLESS. SHE FITS IN WELL WITH OTHERS WHO SHE SAYS ARE "COMMITTED AND CARING." VOLUNTEERING AT UCOM FOR SANDY "HAS BEEN A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE ALL AROUND."

Support & Love



FAITH AND COMMUNITY

Engaged Neighbors

In 1969 a group of concerned congregation members at Smith Memorial Congregational began serving hot lunch to the local elementary school students. As the years went by and the needs of the community changed, many churches combined their passion and commitment to service, and UCOM was born. Today, numerous congregations support the mission through food drives, financial support, prayers, volunteerism, and more.

In 2021

- 3: churches made 256 food deliveries to 95 individual neighbors with transportation and health barriers
- 2: churches partnered with UCOM to provide personal hygiene products to 842 neighbors
- 1: additional church worked with UCOM to distribute diapers, wipes, and other baby care items to 353 children.

Best Foot Forward



RESPECT

Empowered Neighbors Becoming Employed Neighbors

Through career exploration, job coaching, skill mining, goal setting, and access to training scholarships, neighbors overcome barriers leading to higher-wage positions. They practice interviews and professional communication skills, build their resume, receive interview clothes, and move up the ladder toward financial stability.

**33 INDIVIDUALS CONNECTED WITH
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES IN
2021 FOR 274 SERVICE ENCOUNTERS.**

A PLACE OF RESPECT

"PEOPLE LEAVE HERE REALLY HAPPY BECAUSE THEY SHOP FOR WHAT THEY NEED INSTEAD OF HAVING PEOPLE JUST PROVIDE THEM WITH RANDOM THINGS LIKE I'VE SEEN OTHER PLACES.

THANK YOU TO EVERYBODY AT UCOM. YOU'VE BEEN GRACIOUS AND I APPRECIATE IT!"



DEREK CAME TO UCOM AS A PATH VOLUNTEER, NOT BELIEVING HE WOULD BE TREATED WITH A LOT OF RESPECT. "I THOUGHT I WOULD COME HERE AND WORK, WORK, WORK," HE SAID.

HE WAS SURPRISED BY WHAT HE FOUND. DEREK QUICKLY LEARNED THAT STAFF AND OTHER VOLUNTEERS CARED ABOUT HIM AND HIS FAMILY. "THE STAFF HAS BEEN GENEROUS AND HELPFUL WITH MY CHILDREN. I APPRECIATE EVERYTHING THEY ARE DOING HERE."

HE APPRECIATED HOW PEOPLE TOOK TIME TO LEARN WHAT HELP HE NEEDED AND TREATED HIM WITH KINDNESS. UCOM VALUES MEAN EVERYONE IS SEEN AS A UNIQUE INDIVIDUAL WHO DESERVES RESPECT, KINDNESS AND CARING.

Preparing for your Future

Financial Literacy Education

RESPECT

Educated Neighbors Building Financial Skills

Financial literacy students range from high school students planning their open house at a one-time workshop to community members attending a ten-hour comprehensive class. They learn about budgeting, smart use of credit and spending, saving, banking, and more. They invest their time in themselves to improve their futures.

In 2021 UCOM was able to offer financial literacy classes virtually via zoom helping our neighbors continue to grow and prosper.

Eat Healthy Live Healthy

RESPECT

Through a variety of services, the Eat Healthy Live Healthy program at UCOM supports better health through diet and fitness, with a focus on nutritious, fresh, and local foods.

Because of our neighbors' increased need, UCOM expanded access to the Healthy Choice Food Pantry during COVID-19, allowing twice-monthly visits for no-cost, healthy foods. All told, 986 households combined for 13393 visits to the food pantry in 2021. The average household visited just under 4 times a year and UCOM provided enough groceries for 281,253 meals.

The Farm Stand provides low-cost locally-grown produce to our neighbors and other community members. In 2021, 1634 transactions were processed at the Farm Stand with 411 of those using EBT funds.

During the summer, 30 families received fresh produce through our community-supported agriculture partnership with a local farm.

Many people also joined the Growing Green Neighbors community gardening group and had backyard plots or shared gardening space at Marquette park.

Additionally, with the support of Kent County Community Action, UCOM provided 725 low-income seniors with Commodity Supplemental Food Program boxes in 2021.