

# UCOM COMMUNICATOR

Fall 2024



**GIVING THANKS FOR  
OUR BLESSINGS**

# A Message of Gratitude for the Thanksgiving Season

## -Erik Keener, Executive Director

As the fall season settles in, it's time to reflect on all we have to be thankful for. At UCOM, we are blessed with many assets that aid our mission of providing for our neighbors in need. Chief among these is you. **It is because of your unwavering belief in that mission that we are able to continue offering essential services.** Whether through financial donations, volunteering your time, offering food and clothing, or simply spreading the word about UCOM, **your support has a profound and lasting impact on the lives of the families we serve.** Your generosity enables us to not only meet immediate needs but also empowers individuals to flourish, providing opportunities for health, security, and growth. Together, we are building a stronger, healthier community—one that is happier, more resilient, and better equipped for future success.



*Volunteers from Meijer help sort clothes at UCOM*

Jessica came to UCOM seeking clothing assistance, but while she was here, she decided to take advantage of the free blood pressure check provided by visiting Calvin University nursing students. The results were concerning—her blood pressure was dangerously high. Thanks to this timely screening, Jessica was referred to a local clinic for follow-up care. By taking swift action, she was able to address the issue before it led to more serious complications.

At nearly 80 years old, Eduardo had struggled with mobility issues for some time, making staying active particularly difficult.



*Nursing students provide a much needed service checking blood pressure and blood sugar for UCOM neighbors*

## The Difference You Make

Your impact is evident in the many lives you've touched. Every day, **your selflessness makes it possible for us to provide more than just immediate relief; it equips our community with the tools and resources they need to thrive.** You are helping neighbors not only meet their basic needs but also build a brighter future.



*Senior exercise class helps create connections*



When he joined our recent senior exercise class, he was unsure whether he could keep up, especially with the language barrier. But our bilingual instructor from Senior Neighbors was there to help. Not only did Eduardo regain some strength, but he also reinforced his sense of belonging in the community, building meaningful friendships with others facing similar challenges.



*Farm stand participants taking a field trip to one of UCOM's partner farms at New City Neighbors*

In the Williams family, **the Farm Stand has become an essential part of the daily routine**, offering fresh, locally grown produce that's both affordable and nutritious. Dan, who often stops by after work, told us, "I just love it. I'm glad it's here. It's very fresh, and it's cheap." The Farm Stand has made healthy eating more accessible and exciting for the Williams family. "I have the opportunity to eat more healthily and manage my money at the same time," Dan shared. You are the ones that make the Farm Stand possible, allowing families like the Williams' to make healthier food choices while sticking to their budgets.

For so many in our community, **UCOM serves as a lifeline during times of turmoil and uncertainty**. This was true for Tamara, a single mother of two, who came to UCOM last year after losing her job. Without a steady income, she wasn't sure how she would provide for her boys until she found another job. The help she received from UCOM was invaluable—providing her not only with nourishing food, but also the connections, resources, and guidance she needed to focus on rebuilding. Tamara

shared, "It wasn't just the food—it was knowing that there were people who cared and were there for us." Thanks to your help, she was able to stabilize her family's situation and start over with confidence.

## Looking Ahead with Gratitude and Hope

As we look toward the future, we are filled with excitement for the opportunities to expand our reach, strengthen our programs, and continue making a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve. Your ongoing support is vital in helping us build on the progress we've made, ensuring that we can continue meeting the needs of our neighbors while treating them with respect and dignity.

**Through you, UCOM not only provides food but also hope, compassion, and care to all who need it.** Every donation, every volunteer hour, and every word of encouragement is helping us grow and evolve, enabling us to offer critical resources and care to families in need. We are deeply grateful for your trust and for the important role you play in making UCOM a safe, welcoming, and empowering place for everyone. Together, we are building a stronger, healthier community, and we look forward to all we will continue to accomplish in the year ahead.

**Thank you for being part of this journey. You are the foundation of everything we do, and we are excited to continue making a lasting impact, side by side.**



*Healthy cooking classes help neighbors eat right*

# Volunteer Spotlight



Amanda has been a vital part of the UCOM community since 2011. Her dedication to helping with client intake ensures that every neighbor feels welcomed and supported from the moment they walk through our doors. Even after 13 years, Amanda still volunteers twice a week, giving 4-5 hours of her time each day to make a difference.

We are deeply grateful for Amanda's unwavering commitment and the warmth she brings to her work. Volunteers like her embody the heart of UCOM, making it possible to serve our neighbors with dignity and care. Thank you, Amanda, for your incredible service!

AMANDA

## YOU CAN HELP!

1. Join our Community Champions by making a recurring gift!
2. Share this newsletter with a friend and spread the word about UCOM!
3. Donate your skills. We are in need of a contractor to help with a renovation project.
4. Help stock the Pantry with culturally relevant foods for your neighbors.
5. Become a weekly volunteer! Call Shawn for more info.  
616-241-4006



resources for living | hope for life

United Church Outreach Ministry  
1311 Chicago Dr SW  
Wyoming, MI 49509

Phone: 616.241.4006  
Fax: 616.241.3343  
[www.UCOMgr.org](http://www.UCOMgr.org)