

Brighter Connections

The Compassionate Connections Center

LOOK AT HOW FAR WE'VE COME

In so little time



From a start-up dedicated to helping to alleviate the stresses of Clintonville's residents to a full-fledged non-profit with an ever-growing group of volunteers, staff, and—of course—cats, helping to fulfill that dream. Within this, we were also excited to welcome Leah Wojnowiak, who had already been doing so much for The C.C.C., as our Executive Director this year. Our combined programs have been utilized an estimated (and staggering) 13,440 times. We knew we would help fill some gaps but didn't know how quickly our programs would take off.

NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

LOOK AT HOW FAR WE'VE COME

WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU

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Follow us on social



TOGETHER WE CAN DO SO MUCH!

Our Partners

We've all heard the expression a rising tide raises all boats, but what can people do if they don't have even a boat? Community partnerships are the boards that come together to build lifeboats for everyone in need.

We knew our success would only be possible if we created a partner's safety net. We stopped in to talk to Dave at The Clintonville Area Food Pantry about our plans for opening The C.C.C and cannot overstate what the relationship and geography of being in the same building as The Clintonville Area Food Pantry has done to building that net. Both organizations are able to identify and serve people in our community that are in need. We knew we needed them, what we didn't know was just how much! By working so closely with Dave, Mary, and the rest of the team, we have been able to not only find additional food sources for our Nutrition Mission bags but find additional networking opportunities for services including the Badger Boxes via the Hunger Task Force, Shawano Area Food Center, funding sources such as Otto Bremer and so much more. Looking for Food Pantry donation ideas? Stop in or follow on Facebook for the most needed item suggestions.



WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU

Why Volunteers Matter

If you follow us on social media or even just stopped in, you have inevitably heard us talk about all of the amazing things that happen because of the time, dedication, and talents of our Volunteers. We are a literal staff of THREE and there is no possible way for any of this to happen without the tremendous help we get from our volunteer army! Volunteers come to us from all walks of life and show up because they want to help and see a need! One volunteer started as a donor and ended up staying for two hours and realized her superpower of organization could be used to keep The Nutrition Mission inventory in perfect order, another team of volunteers pointed out that we may need seasoned volunteers to train new volunteers and have been coming week after week since we first started. Another saw our cry for help on social media and literally took things home to mend or wash and keeps coming back week after week, year after year.

These are just some of the stories we have on not only how they came to help out but why they stay and share and give which really makes this work so beautiful. Our Volunteers range in age from 3-87 years old! If you are interested in volunteering visit our website (compassionateconnect.com or follow us on Facebook!



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the end of the year approaches, I find myself thankful for my first year serving as the Executive Director for the Compassionate Connections Center. Whether it has been collaborating with the board, staff, partners, or supporters, I am fortunate to be in the company of such compassionate and knowledgeable leaders. I could not be more grateful for the exponential growth of our programs and services and ultimately the impact it has had on those we serve. This is only possible due to the warm embrace of our entire community, partnerships, volunteers, and dedicated staff. The time has approached for many of us to pause and reconnect with family, friends, and most importantly... ourselves...My enthusiasm is bolstered by all of the possibilities that lie ahead in the new year~Leah



PROGRAM SHOWCASE:

A New Day Clothing Resource

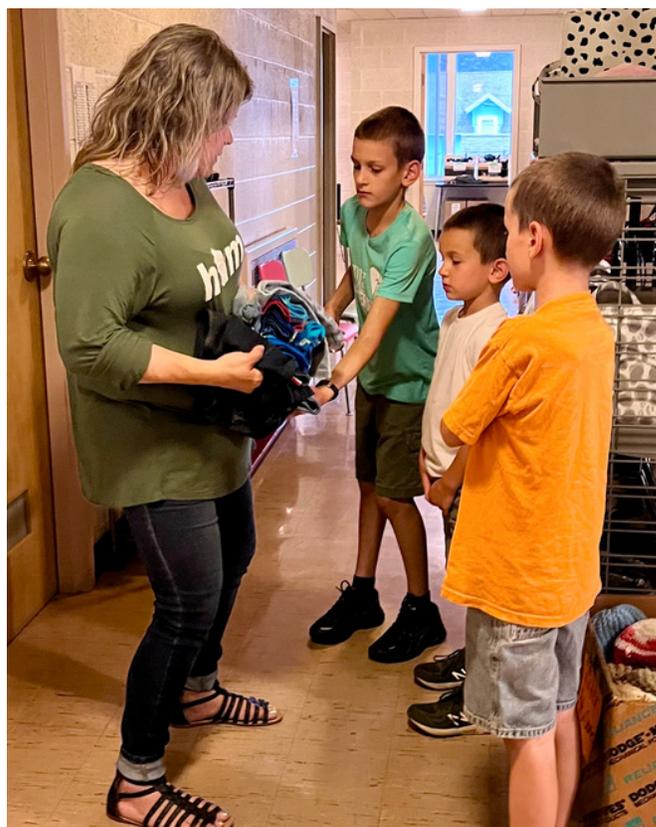
Lesson number one is when opening a clothing resource for students going back to school; we probably don't really need a semi-full of clothes to pull this off!



Lesson number two; be prepared to work harder than you ever have in your life but doing it through tears of joy because nothing feels as amazing as the excitement a child has to model their new clothes. What we must recognize when telling the story of the “New Day” clothing resource is our absolutely incredible group of volunteers that made this entire opportunity possible. Without them, just the sorting would’ve been done by November, if we’re thinking optimistically. They worked tirelessly, doing whatever we asked of them with a smile on their face, and ignoring the sweat dripping down their brow. Our average volunteer profile was the retired women of our community, but their personal drive was the physical personification of “age is just a number.” There were constant conversations along the lines of, “Sit down. Please sit down. I’m eighteen and I’m exhausted. Please just drink some water.” Nevertheless, their endless efforts made it possible for us to open on the correct date. The day we had been anticipating with mixed emotions of excitement and worry was rung in by the doors opening to a line about 100 feet long. The patrons were welcomed by a few families at a time and encouraged to pick out their fill of pants, shirts, shoes, underwear, accessories, dresses, and more. In all of our preparation, nothing could’ve prepared us for the absolute pandemonium as we flitted around, helping families pick out items, packing their bags at the checkout table, or just making sure items stayed on the shelves and on their hangers. Karlie and her son Lukas came not expecting to find or take much.

They had mainly come because Karlie volunteers with the center and we had convinced them a few days prior that they just had to come. Lukas followed his mother around as they picked out a few items, attempting to seem indifferent about the whole event like teenage boys do. He suddenly gasped and lurched forward, snatching a pair of shoes into his hands, before quickly turning to his mother, bouncing up and down with his arms wrapped tightly around a brand-new pair of Nike High Tops. They just so happened to be his size. He jittered around behind his mother as they walked up to the check-out table with all of his clothing, still gripping tightly to his new shoes. That was when Stephanie McGregor(a regular volunteer) inquired if they had utilized the dressing rooms. As he tried on his first set of new clothing, Stephanie talked with Karlie. “His older brother worked for months to be able to afford shoes just like these a year or two ago,” she confided,

“Lukas wanted a pair just like them so badly, but I had to keep telling him they were way too expensive.” So when he saw the shoes, she said, he couldn’t quite believe it was true. “How are these just here? Can I really just take these?” He questioned over and over, “They’re free? They’re really mine?” When he came out in his first outfit, he happily posed for a picture sporting his new shoes.



DONATION ITEMS OF THE MONTH

With our inaugural issue, we thought we should kick things off by collecting the items we seem to never have enough of
December - Size 5, 6, and 7 diapers!



EACH MONTH WE WILL BE COLLECTING ITEMS TO STOCK OUR PANTRY!

- January- Chapstick & Disposable Razors
- February- Toilet Paper & Kleenex
- March- Body wash & Hand Soap
- April- Baby Wipes & Deodorant
- May- Shampoo & Conditioner
- June- Sunscreen & Swim Diapers
- July- Feminine Hygiene Products
- August- Q-Tips & Band-aids
- September- Toothbrush & Toothpaste
- October- Laundry Detergent & Dish Soap
- November- Diapers & Pull-ups

BRIDGING THE GAP WITH JOLYNE

Wow! Let me say that again, wow! Let me say that backwards... Wow! What an incredible year or year and a half it has been. My vision for bridging language barriers to provide interpreting and translating services and resources for our ever growing Spanish community has grown into much more than a vision. here we find we are doing life with the people of our community.



I am so grateful for the relationship with The Clintonville Area Food Pantry, volunteering our Spanish interpreting services to 30-40 Hispanics of our community on a monthly basis. B.L.B. has sustained a longtime relationship with Theda care Rural Health Initiative and has been able to help so many in our area with preventative health needs. the strong partnership we've made with The C.C.C. team has allowed us to reach more Spanish speakers with many needs, including housing and transportation. all of the services that The C.C.C provides, B.L.B. has only paralleled them through the translating and interpreting Spanish language...but together we do so much more. thank you for supporting your Spanish community! #latincommunity.