



UMCS AUTUMN Newsletter

UNITED METHODIST CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF WI, INC.

United in Service to our Washington Park Community

NOVEMBER 2022

Opening of UMCS Community Food Center!

The opening of the **UMCS Community Food Center** in October was the realization of a vision and of plans that first took shape prior to the pandemic. The transformation of our traditional food pantry into a choice-based, shopping-style community food center, and the welcoming of folks back indoors to our physical space, has been a cause for great joy and celebration, one that allows us to re-center and strengthen relationships with individuals and families from our neighborhood in an environment that is truly welcoming and that uplifts the dignity and shared humanity of all those who enter. This would not have been possible without the amazing support that we have received from our friends at Hunger Task Force, several long-time, dedicated partners throughout our United Methodist Church family, and many individuals who generously give their time, talent and treasure to advance the mission of the agency. Thank you all!

We were so proud to hang a memorial plaque in this space to recognize the beautiful life and immeasurable contributions to UMCS of our dear friend, Perry Huyck, and to serve as a constant reminder of our duty to love our neighbors, each and every one of them, especially on the difficult days, and to treat everyone with whom we interact



at UMCS with the dignity, respect, care and compassion that they deserve. Please come check out our new Community Food Center if you've not been able to already, it will be sure to brighten your day!

How Can I Engage? So many ways, we need your help!

In just the few weeks since it has opened, we have seen a considerable increase in families visiting the Community Food Center, which is exactly what we expected and hoped for. As such, we are in even greater need of your food donations. Staple foods and non-perishables are always welcome, and we are also placing a major emphasis on fresh produce and other healthy options. In addition to the food, we also keep a supply of much-needed hygiene items that you can help us maintain. Lastly, as the Wisconsin winter prepares to bear down upon us, we gratefully welcome your contributions of new or clean, gently-used hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, coats, fleeces and hoodies and new socks and underwear. Reach out with any questions and we'll gladly coordinate with you on a donation drive!



Scan this QR code to support the work and mission of UMCS



3rd Annual UMCS Chili Fest and Community Resource Fair

Wow, what a great party it was once again this year! There's not enough time or space to thank everyone involved in making this annual event another smashing success, but just know that we loved having you here with us for some great food and fellowship. We would also like to take this opportunity to report that, after a series of independent investigations and audits, it has been definitively determined that Bill's Mom won this year's meat division title purely on the merits of her delicious creamy chicken chili recipe (a fresh new pot of which was recently dropped off for staff to devour) and not as a result of nepotism or any other shady, underhanded dealings 😊



UMCS Supportive Housing Program CoC Landlord of the Year

Have you heard the wonderful news that UMCS was honored this fall with a “**Landlord of the Year**” award from **Milwaukee’s Continuum of Care** for the agency’s contributions as both a landlord and social service provider in the fight against homelessness? You have now! This is truly a team award, and one that wouldn’t be possible without all of us working together in collaboration on a day-to-day basis with our many community partners. This is incredibly difficult work, but we love it, even on the tough days.

We also acknowledge the constant support that has come from the UMCS Board of Directors and, in particular, the diligent work of the Housing Task Force over the past several years to stabilize the housing program and position us for continued success, improvement and growth as we seek to live out the mission of the agency to care for those in need and to do so in ways that uplift the dignity and value of all those with whom we work.



What’s Good Washington Park?

UMCS’s **Neighborhood Engagement Team** continues to knock it out of the park at a pace reminiscent of the 2018 version of Christian Yelich. There’s no way to capture it all here, but come on down to learn more about the great work that is happening to build community and walk alongside our friends and neighbors in Milwaukee’s beautiful Washington Park neighborhood. Some of the recent highlights include: the completion of the nearly 2,300 parcel neighborhood housing survey with the outstanding support of 22 residents, leading the way on several community clean ups, the formation of a new resident-led safety task force, a wildly successful Halloween Trunk or Treat event, and so much more!



◀ Smiling faces everywhere you looked at Halloween Trunk or Treat!



▲ Great times with great friends at the UMCS Annual Community Block Party

repairs in Washington Park.....

107
Are also **tax delinquent**. This includes **33** properties that are owner occupied, and **74** that are investor-owned.

Adrian Spencer, UMCS Director of Neighborhood Engagement, is speaking at a podium during a keynote presentation. A screen behind her displays data related to the Reclaiming Our Neighborhoods (RON) Coalition. The podium has the text 'DATA YOU CAN USE' on it.

◀ Adrian Spencer, UMCS Director of Neighborhood Engagement, highlights the great work of the Reclaiming Our Neighborhoods (RON) Coalition during the keynote presentation at Data Day 2022