

Summer 2019



Feeding Hope News

Race to End Hunger Celebrates 10 years!

Agency Spotlight: Central Christian Church

Meet the Board of Directors



Photo credit: Elliott Lengel, Lengel Farms

Dear Friends,

Happy *almost* summer! Spring rains have given way to beautiful flowers and soon to be harvested summer produce! We anticipate this time of year here at the CFWMC, when our partners, donors, farmers and gardeners give us the opportunity to distribute fresh local produce to our agencies and ultimately to those in need! We encourage you to bring in your fresh garden excess! Or if you “planted a row” for us, we are excited to share your generosity with our clients. Fresh produce is thankfully received by all!

We received a testimonial recently from a young single mom who lost her job due to a local store closing its doors. She came to us through a mutual friend who urged her to reach out to us. As we sat down with her face to face, tears streamed down her cheeks. She was now in a position that she never thought could happen. She had always worked and provided for herself and her son. Now the future was overwhelmingly bleak. She had a home to pay for, was going to lose her car, no food and no one or place to turn to. We were able to assist her and point her in the direction of those in the community who could also help her with her other needs. Today, she is once again employed – back on her feet and I might add, giving back! This, my friends, is why we are here. If you would like to read her story in her own words, please check out our Facebook page. Just think, you (and we as a community) were able to truly make a difference in this young lady’s life! Many more happy ending stories like this happen every day through your generosity! Thank you for sharing your time, talents and donations!

Have a safe and happy summer as we continue partnering together to **“Starve Hunger - Feed Hope”!**

Respectfully,

Lori Weston



Executive Director
Lori Weston

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10th Annual Race to End Hunger

5k/2 Mile Walk and Kid's Fun Run

Help us reach our goal of \$25,000! The CFWMC is celebrating 10 years of racing to end hunger, and we hope you'll help us celebrate by joining us as a runner, walker, or sponsor! [Click here to download a sponsorship application.](#)

The Tenth Annual Race to End Hunger 5k/2 Mile Walk & Kid's Fun Run will be held on Saturday, September 14 at LindenPointe, in Hermitage. Pre-registration is \$18, and includes a t-shirt, prior to September 1. [Click here to download the race application.](#)

All runners and walkers who cross the finish line will be entered to win \$1,000 and the winner will be drawn after race medals are awarded!

The Kid's Fun Run is free to all children under 5. Registration can be completed on RunSignUp.com, or by completing the paper race application (available on the last page of this newsletter, or on our website.) Packet pickup and day of registration will begin at 7 a.m., with the Kid's Fun Run beginning at 8:30 am, with the race to follow at 9.

We look forward to seeing you there!

THANK YOU TO OUR 2019 SPONSORS, SO FAR!

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Agency Spotlight: Central Christian Church

For this edition's agency spotlight, we talked to Central Christian Church's Team Leader of their feeding program, George Takash. Central Christian serves breakfast on the second and fourth Saturdays of the month, from 9 a.m.-11 a.m.

Along with being Team Leader of Central Christian's feeding program, George is the newly appointed Board President of Shenango Valley Meals on Wheels, and a valuable volunteer at the Community Food Warehouse. He can often be found helping in our sorting room.

Which services do you provide to your clients?

We serve a free breakfast to the community on the second and fourth Saturday of each month, providing pancakes, scrambled eggs, sausage, hash brown potatoes, pastries, grits, various juices and coffee. Although we are not a true food pantry, we also provide three eight-foot tables of assorted canned goods and other dry basic food staples for our guests to take home. When fresh fruits or vegetables are available, these are included.

At special times of the year, like Easter and Christmas, we prepare giftied food bags for our guests. We also acknowledge Mother's Day, Father's Day and Veterans Day.

Since December, we have become an emergency food pantry thru the CFWMC. So far, we have provided emergency food to thirty-one people.

How many families do you serve a month, on average?

On average, we serve breakfasts to between 120 and 140 guests, which include adults and children.

How is the leadership of your organization structured? Are there any particular groups or that constitute the bulk of your volunteers?

We have an all-volunteer staff of eighteen to twenty people who help with the breakfasts. Two of our many helpers are Frank Bonanno and Sister Emmagene Williams. Frank attends the Gentle Shepherd Church of the Nazarene but shows up each Saturday as our sausage guy. Sister Emmagene, who attends the Greater Mt Zion Church of God in Christ, leads us with a table blessing at the start of each breakfast.

How has being a member agency of the Community Food Warehouse helped you to provide better service to your clients?

The CFWMC is our primary source for the give away food tables. In talking to our guests, we've learned that a good number of them are at a level where they cannot receive federal or state food assistance. The breakfast and tables help supplement their food budget. With the implementation of the bonus USDA program, we are able to provide more product to the tables along with a wider variety, plus fresh produce.

What does being a volunteer at the CFWMC mean to you?

I feel you can watch the promos on TV showing the racks filled with food boxes. Or you can see volunteers filling and weighing bags of potatoes. But, until you're at the warehouse volunteering or see the complexity of the warehouse operation, that is when you get a better idea of how much the people of this area need food. Until I spent time at the warehouse and saw the varied programs offered, I had no idea what it took for families to put a basic meal on the table. It's a real eye opener.

Have you had a particularly profound/uplifting moment with a client or volunteer you would share with us?

We are starting into our sixth year of serving free breakfasts to the community. Early records show eleven people signed in at the first Saturday. Today, we are six times that number.

Continued next page.



The outside of Central Christian Church



The food table- this where extra non-perishable goods are left for families to take at the conclusion of breakfast.



George, in front of the CFWMC sign.



George (on the far right) poses with fellow volunteers before breakfast starts

Over the years our volunteers have come to know our regular guests by name or face. Our guests share with us. We provide prayer cards on the tables for them to fill out as needed. We listen.

Two of our regular guests are Barbara and Chuck Fennell who attend Lebanon Presbyterian Church. A couple of years ago, they said that we would be receiving a check from their missions committee. That sounded OK to us. Well, a check for \$500.00 came. What a surprise! What a blessing! Each breakfast costs us about a hundred dollars so it sure helped out. Within the past three years, Lebanon has donated over \$4000.00 toward our breakfasts. With the help of Frank, Emmagene, Barbara and Chuck, and others who donate, we have become a true ecumenical gathering.

Is there anything you would like to share about your agency that people may not know?

Since we are a community of faith, all of our guests have the opportunity to fill out prayer request cards which are given to the church elders to be prayed over. The church also has a Prayer and Healing Service every other month which is open to the public. Our congregation may be small in number, but our spirit is strong. We look upon our Free Breakfast as a mission into the Community.



George and fellow Central Christian volunteers accept a check.



George sorts donated items at the CFWMC Warehouse, alongside David and Linda Peoples.

Meet the Board Members

As a small non-profit organization (we have 6 full-time employees and 1 part-time employee!), we depend heavily on our volunteers to get everything done. Some of our hardest working volunteers also just so happen to be our board members.

In our next few issues, you'll see this "Meet the Board" feature, which will introduce a few board members answering questions each time.

Gary Dalessandro, JFS Wealth

Board Member for 4.5 years, Finance Committee, Investment Committee, Empty Bowls volunteer

What inspired you to serve on the board of the CFWMC and what is your favorite part of serving on the board?

I liked the mission and the positive impact the organization had (has) on the community. George Gerhart, who was president of the board at the time, asked me to join the board. I knew George when he was the Director of the SV Chamber of Commerce and I was on the Board. My favorite part is helping the board understand the financial piece of the operation of the organization and seeing how the right decisions can impact people's lives in a positive way.

Why should someone who is considering volunteering and/or giving to the CFWMC, do so?

Based on personal observation and involvement, I love the way the CFWMC goes after grants to finance activities, effectively utilizes volunteer workers and their hours in a way that brings everything together to make sure that those who are hungry are fed. I'd like donors to know that their gifts will be effectively and efficiently used to help achieve the mission of the organization.



Left to right: Carole, Sue, Connie, Gwen, and Gary.

Sue Ferrence, Walmart

Board Member for 1.5 years, Development Committee, Anniversary Committee, volunteer at various community events and Race and Empty Bowls Volunteer

What inspired you to serve on the board of the CFWMC and what is your favorite part of serving on the board?

Because the CFWMC is a great organization and help so many people in the valley. I feel my serving on the board is making a true difference for people in need, and it is a great way to give back.

Why should someone who is considering volunteering and/or giving to the CFWMC, do so?

Because so many people are in need right now. No matter how much time or money you donate, you will make a difference, and will make a positive impact on those in need in our community.

Continued on following page.

Meet the Board Continued

Connie Gerba, Gilbert's Risk Solutions

Secretary of the Board, Executive Committee, HR Committee Chair, Strategic Planning Committee, member for 6 years, volunteer at various community events and Race and Empty Bowls Volunteer

What inspired you to serve on the board of the CFWMC?

I chose to become a Board member because of the quality of the staff and the mission of the agency. Having grown up in the County, I am very much aware of the concerns with food availability and the need to provide for those who have challenges. The Backpack program really drew my attention and I love the Military Share program having had a number of my family who served in every branch except the Coast Guard.

Why should someone who is considering volunteering and/or giving to the CFWMC, do so?

The Community Food Warehouse represents multiple agencies and providers of food in the County and provides support in working toward an end to a lack of food in multiple situations. It is a cooperative endeavor. We make a difference one life at a time and I think that is reason to support and volunteer with CFW.

Carole Giroski, Greenville Savings Bank

Board Member for 4.5 years, Building Committee, Race and Empty Bowls Volunteer

What inspired you to serve on the board of the CFWMC?

Being involved in the community as well as a life-long resident, I am aware of the struggles of many to put food on the table.

Over the years I became acquainted with CFW. In doing so, I saw first-hand how Lori Weston and Mimi Prada collaborated to make a difference in our community. Their commitment to help others garnered my respect and support.

Why should someone who is considering volunteering and/or giving to the CFWMC, do so?

No one could make a wiser decision to donate to CFW or volunteer their time to a more appreciative organization. Being a part of CFW is that "feel good," "I can make a difference in someone's life" feeling. Lori and Mimi have great energy and enthusiasm for CFW which is contagious. They give "life" to their programs and innovative ideas making you want to do more, be more involved. I leave board meetings and fundraising events with a great sense of pride and accomplishment.

Gwen Martino, Retired Teacher and Librarian

Board member for 6.5 years, Current Board member and former Vice President of the board and former Executive Committee member, member, Development Committee, Governance Committee, Empty Bowls Committee, Race Committee, regular volunteer

What inspired you to serve on the board of the CFWMC?

I started by participating in the race, then began sorting. Shortly after, I started doing volunteer computer work. The more time I spent observing the people and the operation, the more impressed I was and wanted to be a part of it. I began to serve on the board and got more involved in many aspects of the organization.

What is your favorite part of serving on the board? *My favorite part of being on the board is being an integral part of such a worthwhile group. I love all the activities, especially Empty Bowls, but I love sorting food. It is so mind clearing and good physical activity.*

Thank you and other news

We are so grateful for the recent grant from the Community Foundation to fund the purchase of food bank specific software that will manage the food distribution and accounting programs. This grant was funded/partially funded, by the Anderson Charitable Foundation, the Gurgovits Family Foundation, the Rose/Harnett Family Foundation, the Winner Foundation, and/or JP/5S Family Foundation. Thank you so much!

The Community Food Warehouse was awarded a grant for \$22,102 from the Pennsylvania Veterans' Trust Fund for the purpose of providing special food distributions to veterans and current military personnel and their families through our MilitaryShare program. The grant award is for two years.

Ken McEwen of GFC Strategic Lifestyle Advisors was our sponsor for the \$4,000 grant we received through the worldwide grant program, Million Dollar Round Table Foundation (MDRT), for our MilitaryShare Program. Thank you to Ken and to MDRT Foundation!

ADVOCACY ALERT – You can help!

State Food Purchase Program (SFPP)

The State Food Purchase Program (SFPP) remains one of the commonwealth's most important tools in the fight against hunger and a lifeline for food banks across Pennsylvania.

The program provides cash grants to help food banks and their member agencies acquire and distribute millions of pounds of food to hungry families, children, seniors, individuals with disabilities, the working poor and the unemployed who rely on food banks for essential nutritional assistance in all 67 counties.

Funding supports the purchase of foods and nutritional supplements, food provider transportation and infrastructure, and access to federal food commodities.

In FY 2018/2019, CFWMC received \$175,399 State Food dollars.

Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System (PASS)

The Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System (PASS), redirects millions of pounds of Pennsylvania-grown fruits and vegetables to nutritious family meals through the charitable food system.

With PASS, millions of pounds of Pennsylvania-grown agricultural products that would otherwise go to waste each year can instead help to provide nutritious meals, ensuring a virtuous cycle that benefits Pennsylvania's agriculture sector, farm communities, and Pennsylvanians in need of food assistance.

In FY 2018/2019, CFWMC received \$13,907 to purchase PA agricultural products.

In order to continue to receive these funds, we must continue to let our legislators know just how important they are, and also what funding levels would be adequate to serve the many food insecure households throughout the state. Won't you help us by taking action below. Just read the message and if you agree, please follow the prompt to show your support.

TAKE ACTION!

Support Pennsylvania's most important anti-hunger programs today by sending a message to your State Senator and State Representative.

It's quick and easy to help make certain every legislator in Harrisburg hears that the State Food Purchase Program (SFPP) and Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus (PASS) are vital to our community.

Just click on the link below to read and send the message. The message will be automatically forwarded to your own State Senator and State Representative.

You can read and send the email [here](#).

Thanks for being part of this important campaign.

Please share the message with friends, family and others in your individual networks. Your help is greatly appreciated.

