

# Specific Ways YOU Can Help

## Service

EMPOWERING VOLUNTEERS TO SERVE IN AREAS WHERE THEY HAVE A PASSION TO LEAD.

### GROUP OPPORTUNITIES

**Health Clinic:** Serve breakfast on Saturday mornings from 8:00am-noon

**Shepherd Buildings:** Deep cleaning needed at Shepherd's Main building and Jireh Sports Ministry building on a weekly basis

**Skilled Laborers:** Carpenters, plumbers, roofers, and electricians needed to complete miscellaneous projects. Contact Shepherd's Facility Manager, David Noe, directly for more information: davidn@shepherdcommunity.org or 317-375-0203

### INDIVIDUAL OPPORTUNITIES (some may require orientation)

**Mentoring:** One-on-one mentoring with a student, minimum of one hour per week

**After-School:** Tutor students in 1st through 12th grade

**After-School:** Lead a club that shares your hobby, experience and/or skills with grades 1st through 12th

**Kitchen:** Help staff prepare and serve meals

**Shepherd's Jireh Sports Ministry:** Coaches needed in gymnastics and wrestling

**Health Clinic:** Pharmacists, physicians, physician's assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses, pharmacy techs, bilingual interpreters, and administrators needed weekly

IN ADDITION TO VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES, THERE ARE MANY ITEMS NEEDED TO HELP OUR FAMILIES:

**FOOD PANTRY SUPPLIES:** Canned vegetables and fruits / Canned meat / Dry pastas / Instant potatoes / Rice (side dishes)

Shepherd believes in empowering its volunteers to serve in areas where they have a passion to lead. If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering in one of these areas or any other area at Shepherd, please contact Phil Merki at 317-375-0203 or philm@shepherdcommunity.org.



# COMMUNITY.

A publication of Shepherd Community Center



Shepherd is a faith-based, non-profit organization established in 1985 with a simple but staggering goal: to break the cycle of poverty on the near Eastside of Indianapolis. Located centrally within the community it serves, Shepherd offers programs for children, teens, adults, and families. Our primary tools? Education and love.

4107 E Washington Street Indianapolis, IN 46201 p. 317.375.0203 www.shepherdcommunity.org



## Healthy Choices for Healthy Families



One year ago, Shepherd launched a new initiative to better address one of the leading factors of poverty - healthy lifestyle choices. Because children from low-income households are two times more likely to become obese than children from higher income households, Shepherd knew this issue had to be addressed starting with the youngest recipients of Shepherd's services all the way to the oldest.

There are two obstacles for our families: education and access. Our families need not only a better understanding regarding what healthy food choices to make; they also need access to affordable, fresh, and healthy food options. But food is just the beginning of their challenges.

The lack of healthy food options leads to poor overall health, raising the need for access to physicians, preventative screenings, and nutritional education. (continued next page)

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YOU Can Help



## Healthy Choices for Healthy Families (continued)

All of these elements – from fresh, affordable food to health education and resources – collectively make Shepherd's *Healthy Choices for Healthy Families* initiative. This initiative is not simply about providing our youth with a healthy breakfast, lunch, and dinner every day; this initiative was developed to holistically help our families through the help of our community partners, volunteers, neighbors, and staff all working together, treating the whole person through multiple services.

One key service of the *Healthy Choices for Healthy Families* initiative is Shepherd's Food Co-op, which began nearly two years ago. When it first began, Shepherd passed out excess donated produce off the back of a box truck to families who happened to be there. But when Shepherd's Garden and Greenhouse Coordinator, Eleanor McReynolds, joined our staff in August 2011, the program quickly transformed into a full-fledged food cooperative. The food co-op currently provides 25 neighborhood families with nearly 30 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables every week.

To join Shepherd's Food Co-op, a family commits to contributing a certain number of hours to sort food at Shepherd every week. Members pay a small fee to be part of the Co-op, as a sign of commitment, and then work to hold each other accountable.

The food distributed in the Co-op comes from Shepherd's on-site garden, as well as other Indianapolis organizations like St. Matthew's Church, and the Indy Glean Team, but the bulk of fresh produce comes from various grocery suppliers. Surplus food is donated to other local non-profits, like Wheeler Mission, Good News Ministries, and Second Helpings. Partner churches and local volunteers have also gotten involved with the effort. Bruce Mathias, from Indian Creek Christian Church, volunteers regularly with Shepherd's Garden and Food Co-op and has recently started a similar program at Indian Creek for families on Indy's south side.

In addition to Shepherd's Food Co-op, a group of third-year nursing students from the University of Indianapolis found a different way to help with Shepherd's *Healthy Choices for Healthy Families* initiative. As part of their semester-long outreach project, these nursing students decided to build a chicken coop for Shepherd. The coop will operate similarly to the Food Co-op, allowing families to participate in the solution, learn about caring for chickens, and volunteer in the chicken coop in exchange for approximately a dozen eggs each week.

Currently, the nursing students have raised around \$3,500, enough to build the coop, buy 15 chickens, and pay for the chickens' feed for the next two years. They've also recruited friends and family members to help build the coop in the spring of 2014. Once completed, Shepherd's goal is to grow the chicken coop to 40 or more chickens, providing more than 40 families with fresh, healthy eggs every week.

The Food Co-op and chicken coop are only a few of the unique pieces that make up Shepherd's *Healthy Choices for Healthy Families* initiative. Other Shepherd services in this Initiative include: nutrition education, exercise and physical fitness, diabetes and heart health clinics, Shepherd's free weekly Health Clinic, an onsite garden and greenhouse, and a new hydroponics system, scheduled for installation in the summer of 2014. Most of these services allow community members the opportunity to meet their own needs alongside volunteer and staff involvement. By allowing families to invest in the groups and become involved on a weekly basis, they are able to take pride of ownership in tangibly breaking the cycle of poverty for their current and future family. ■

## STAFF PROFILES

### Eleanor McReynolds



Growing up in Indianapolis, Eleanor McReynolds was familiar with Shepherd's Jireh Sports Ministries, but it wasn't until her work with one of Shepherd's partner ministries, SpringHill Camps, that Eleanor learned how great an impact Shepherd Community made on Indianapolis' near Eastside. After a summer with SpringHill Camps and working with Shepherd's Summer EXCEL students, Eleanor learned about Shepherd's need for a gardener and someone to run the proposed Greenhouse. Eleanor's degree in Environmental Science from Ball State University brought her heart for service and knowledge of growing and developing plants together. Since she joined Shepherd's staff in August 2011 as Shepherd's Garden Manager, Eleanor has developed the Garden, Greenhouse, and Food Co-op Programs into sustainable and strong resources for Shepherd's families.

Eleanor's favorite moments come in seeing "light bulb moments" for both children and adults. Light bulb moments like children learning where the food they eat comes from, or helping a mother learn how to use a new vegetable in a meal. "The Lord said, 'If you love me, love your neighbor,'" said Eleanor. "I think my spiritual gift is service, so this [teaching others about healthy living] is the best way I know how to do that."

In the future, Eleanor would like to see the number of families involved in Shepherd's Food Co-op double or even triple. Ultimately, though, Eleanor is passionate about growing the Garden and Greenhouse Programs into sustainable, community-run projects, where community members work together to help themselves and each other.

## Did You Know?

**30 students participated** in Shepherd's After-School Cooking Club in the fall of 2013

**Every Shepherd meal includes** one carbohydrate, protein, fruit, vegetable, and a non-sugar drink as directed by the USDA My Plate Program

**14 varieties of fruits and vegetables** are grown in Shepherd's Garden and Greenhouse

**30 pounds of fresh produce** are given to each family in Shepherd's Food Co-Op Program every week

**10 diabetes and heart health clinics** are hosted by Shepherd's Health Clinic every year

## Other Ways to Give

### Summer programming is on its way and we need your help!

Shepherd's Summer EXCEL Program, a six-week day camp, serves over 200 kids grades 1st through 12th and provides a stable environment for them to grow physically, spiritually, and academically. You can get involved by sponsoring a child for a single day of Summer EXCEL for \$20, or for the whole summer for \$835. The summer is the most expensive time of year at Shepherd and your support makes a big difference.

**Contact Shepherd's Development Director, Rex Fisher, if you have any questions: 317.375.0203 or [ref@shepherdcommunity.org](mailto:ref@shepherdcommunity.org).**

### Save the Date

The 6th Annual Shepherd Community Golf Outing will be held on Monday, September 22, 2014 at the Bridgewater Club in Carmel, Indiana. If you are interested in sponsoring or attending the outing, **contact Jeff Boxell at [jefb@shepherdcommunity.org](mailto:jefb@shepherdcommunity.org) or call 317-375-0203.**



## FOOD FOR THOUGHT.



According to the USDA, **8 out of 10 kids** in Shepherd's neighborhoods only **eat two meals a day** if they are in school. Sadly, hunger is a serious issue here in Indianapolis for so many children and their families.

For this reason, Shepherd continually invests in a strong food program. Shepherd's professionally trained chef and his staff serves approximately **2,500 meals** to children and teens and families each week.

We are working hard on growing our food co-op, garden, and greenhouse, and continue to distribute groceries through our food pantry. Yet these activities are just temporary. Shepherd's *Healthy Choices for Healthy Families* initiative, highlighted in this newsletter, is our long-term plan **to help those we serve become self-sufficient**. We stabilize our students and their families by making sure they eat today, so we can educate them to feed themselves in the future.

*Focused today for a brighter future.*

**Jay Height**  
Executive Director