West Side Community House celebrated 130 years of service on the west side of Cleveland in 2020. As we reflect on 130 years, steadfast in our mission of transforming lives in the community, we find ourselves thinking a lot about what has been constant in our work for all these years—the commitment and resilience to meet the changing needs around us. This year we have leaned hard into these lessons of the past. Faced with a pandemic that changed the needs of our community overnight, we flexed, we listened, we pivoted, and we served.

The Healthy Aging Center distributed to-go, served, or delivered 59,042 Meals
Each meal was provided to an older adult by our staff along with calls, visits, activities, and resources.

The following organizations donated $2,000 or more to West Side Community House in 2020.

Gifts $20,000 and over

Anisfield-Wolf Fund at the Cleveland Foundation
Cleveland Foundation
Community West Foundation
Cuyahoga Arts & Culture
East Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church
The McGregor Foundation
Saint Luke's Foundation
United Way of Greater Cleveland

Gifts $10,000 to $19,999

Eva L. and Joseph M. Bruening Foundation
United Methodist Women
Thomas H. White Foundation

Gifts $5,000 to $9,999

Alfred Schulz Fund (Millie Bellamy) †
Baldwin Wallace University
The Callahan Foundation
Florence Crittendon Services Fund at the Cleveland Foundation
Claire Marie Langkau
Leonard Krieger Fund of the Cleveland Foundation
Pilgrim St. Paul Agency Fund
Schubert Center for Child Studies at Case Western Reserve University
Edward R. & Jean Geis Stell Foundation
The Takeyama Fund at the Cleveland Foundation
Westlake United Methodist Church

Gifts $1,000 to $2,499

Thomas and Rose Marie Alsip
Mark Bregar and Nancy N. Lowery-Bregar **
United Methodist Women of Chagrin Falls
Children’s Defense Fund
Warren P. Coleman **

Gifts $1,000 to $2,499 (cont.)

Richard and Barbara Goudreau *
Jason and Julie Lady
John D. Moran
Network for Good
Mr. and Mrs. William R. Oatley Fund at Community West Foundation
Reminger Foundation
Robert and Carolyn Remington *
Church of the Saviour United Methodist
Liloiise M. Talley **
University Circle United Methodist Women
Gay E. Whieldon

Gifts $500 to $999

Brecksville United Methodist Women
Celebration United Methodist Women
Dawn Kolograf and Joe Narkin
Lakewood United Methodist Women
Alice A. Lang
Nancy N. Lowery-Bregar **
Walter R. Mallarnee
John and Linda Mattingly
Winsome E. McIntosh
Robert Moran, Jr. *
Edward Pfahl *
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Sanders
George Smith
Linda Stahl **
United Way of West Central Connecticut

* Board Member during 2020, ** Former Board Member, †Deceased
Delivering Meals and Kindness

For all of Mike Rush’s adult life, he worked in child welfare, including 29 years running Options for Families and Youth. Options was a part of the west side collaborative we lead, and Mike developed a warm spot in his heart for WSCH, especially the vulnerable older folks and adults with mental health challenges we serve. So, when he retired several years ago, he approached us about opportunities to volunteer and decided to become a Jumper for our home-delivered meals program.

Every Friday he joined staff member, Kim Delargy (with whom he hit it off right away), on our catering truck to traverse the neighborhoods surrounding WSCH to deliver hot meals and kind words to our most vulnerable neighbors. As he got to know them and all their delightful quirks, he came to love the work and look forward to seeing everyone.

A man of deep Christian faith, Mike describes serving as the way he most connects with God. Well-practiced in seeing the needs around him, he also noticed that WSCH was struggling to manage our landscaping, and he began to return on Saturdays to pull weeds for hours at a time. Once the transformation was complete and he had mulched the beds, Mike continued to return week after week to pull any weeds and pick up trash. During the pandemic, Mike has not been able to deliver meals, but he has continued to help us maintain our landscaping. With the promise of vaccination in 2021, he looks forward to being able to return to “Jumping” once again.

“IT’S ALWAYS BEEN A DEEP BELIEF OF MINE THAT WE HAVE TO REACH OUT AND LOVE OTHER PEOPLE.”

MIKE RUSH, VOLUNTEER

A Note From Our Director

Twenty-twenty posed great challenges for many including being physically separated from each other. As each month went by, all that we could do was revert to the muscle memory of pressing hard through each challenge. This year the very essence of resilience showed its face and we were able to rise to the occasion. Being an organization that is 130 years old speaks to the fact that we possess the “stick-to-itiveness” that is necessary to remain in existence for so long. 2020 gave us an opportunity to exhibit this strength and toughness that was necessary to survive a pandemic. Despite the challenges, we saw the community come together on all levels—including funders, staff, our neighbors and participants—in a way that we never could have imagined. I would like to take this time to thank everyone who stood with us through the test and donated your time, talents and resources to ensure that we could keep transforming lives. We know that it’s not totally over, but we thrive together to make the magic of West Side Community House work in the midst of it!

Yours in Service,

Rachelle Milner

Delivering Meals and Kindness

“I DON’T KNOW WHERE I’D BE WITHOUT SISTERHOOD. IT HELPED ME SO MUCH.”

RONNEA WORLEY, SISTERHOOD PARTICIPANT

Filled with Hope and Determination

High school senior and Sisterhood program participant, Ronnea Worley, says that 2020 was her best year, even with everything going on. She credits her “second family” at Sisterhood with motivating her and helping her through hard times. “I don’t know where I’d be without Sisterhood. It’s helped me so much,” she says.

The program made her more open, allowed her to discover new talents like writing music and poetry, and helped her to be herself. Sisterhood gave her some amazing opportunities. She began 2020 by winning a poetry slam. She then helped create and was featured on the big screen in the documentary, “Where Love Lives: The Story of Summer of Sisterhood.” As she heads off to college next year, she is filled with hope and determination to use her new found talents to her advantage.

Purpose During Pandemic

WSCH Board member, Emily Muttillo, knew the pandemic was going to be a big deal because her boss, at the Center for Community Solutions had been warning her. Even still, when her office shut down, followed soon after by the emergency order, it came as a shock. Knowing how many people rely on schools, senior centers, and other programs, her thoughts turned to food security. When she saw the WSCH request for help delivering meals, she knew her family had a car and no risk factors, and she and her husband quickly volunteered. They delivered meals for a month, allowing WSCH the time to reorganize all Healthy Aging programming and assume the capacity within our staff.

Delivering meals took them into their community (they live in Detroit Shoreway) to connect with the place they live outside of their normal travel routines. Emily says it felt good to help others who were at high risk access basic needs. It was also really important to have a purpose in a time of so much hopelessness and worry.

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