



**2021 Staunton Helping Hands Center Newsletter**

**Vol. 7 First and Second Quarter 2021**

**A Little history ...** The Staunton Helping Hands Center (previously the Staunton Food Pantry) moved to 219 W. Main, from a 500 square foot location to the new 2,800 square foot location in 2017. This update and move was a game changer. In the four years since the move, there has been a triple in the amount of guests that are served each month. Typically, about 600 individuals are reached with food and resources, every month. The Helping Hands Center is much more than just food. A secondary site (next door at 217 W. Main) is a Christian Women's Job Corps and Christian Men's Job Corps site. You see, the SHHC is more than just food. Training and resources can be received, as well as a smile and hand UP, each week in Macoupin County. We made adjustments through the challenges of COVID-19 and we have stayed strong! Indoor business is now back open!

*Check out this recap of highlights from the first part of 2021 . . .*



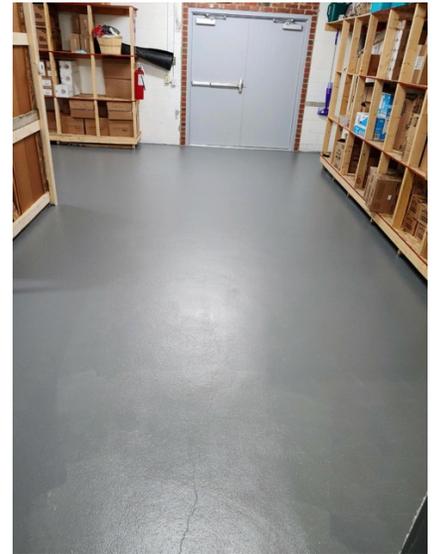
### **Federal and State Grants for Covid Relief bring weekly produce:**

Our partnership with the Central Illinois Food Bank has helped us to receive extra WEEKLY van deliveries of special fresh items. A new Covid related grant was able to purchase fresh dairy, produce and meats. Each weekly delivery provided so much, that we were able to offer "fresh pack" drive-thru giveaways, every week, to anyone! Our drive-thru lane was busy, every week! In conjunction with the grant, we received a new triple cooler to help with the extra weekly deliveries. In general, pantry traffic has been lower this first half of the year, but we did drive a lot of momentum with our fresh pack giveaways.



## Our Volunteers are the backbone of our success.

The Helping Hands Center has remained OPEN while making many modifications for service during the past year. Whether it's cold or hot or wet or a global pandemic...our volunteers are here! This spring and summer also brought many updates for our building. Volunteers tore out a wall in our stockroom (eliminating an office and expanding the storage space). Extra shelves were built and the floor was freshly painted. After receiving a special donation for construction, we were able to expand the back of our building from a single door to a double door. We hired professionals for that big job and the result is perfect. This is HUGE for us (now a pallet can fit inside the door!). These enhancements allow us to make the most of our space.



## Saying goodbye to Josh Thorn.

We lost a dear long time friend, volunteer, team leader and Board Member in January this year. Josh left an impact all throughout our community and especially at the Helping Hands Center. Countless donations were made in memory of his selfless life. Pictured below, SHHC volunteers stand with the special plaque that was sent from his HS Graduating Class of 1988 in Salam, Arkansas. They also sent a large donation in his name. We are forever touched by Josh and miss him every week.



**ALL Local schools support us!** Even with remote school and “upside down” routines, our schools found ways to support us...and they did it WELL! Staunton Elementary, Junior High, Highschool and Zion Lutheran school ALL helped to do food drives for us earlier this year. We are so thankful.



Staunton High School Student Council unloaded their food drive on February 9<sup>th</sup>.



Staunton Junior High Student Council unloaded and stocked all of their donations on February 23<sup>rd</sup>.



Staunton Junior High also had treats for our guests!



Zion Lutheran students load up donations.

## Community Support

The Community has been amazing with their support! Local churches, civic organizations and businesses help us regularly!



Volunteer Donna Thorn  
Stocks soup from St. Paul UCC



Vicki Renner of Pearl  
Essence Studio.



Brownie Troop 6390 loaded us up with donations



Macoupin County Farm Bureau donates \$500



## A unique partnership with Amazon and Russell Furniture...

We got a neat call from Matt Gamper (a nearby resident that works for Amazon). They had multiple pallets of slightly damaged items that needed to be donated. The items were in perfect shape for us! Diapers, wipes, dishwasher pods and other consumables were in the warehouse in Edwardsville and needed to be picked up. Our friends at Russell's Furniture jumped at the chance to go and pick up the items in their box truck for us. After unloading the items on their dock, they used their forklift to deliver the pallets to us, one by one. We were able to utilize 4 pallets of valuable items for our guests!



Storm 8U and 9U Teams collected items for the food pantry during an early Summer tournament. The boys proudly delivered and carried in all of the items for us! We are thankful for the coaches and parents that help to guide these young lives to play hard and serve others!

**Bank of Springfield support:**

January 13: Bank of Springfield leaders presented us with a check from their "dress down days". Even employees working from home contributed to the cause!

May 6<sup>th</sup>: BOS provided us with special hygiene kits for our guests.



**How do we stay on top of rising food costs?** Frugal Purchasing through our Food Banks.

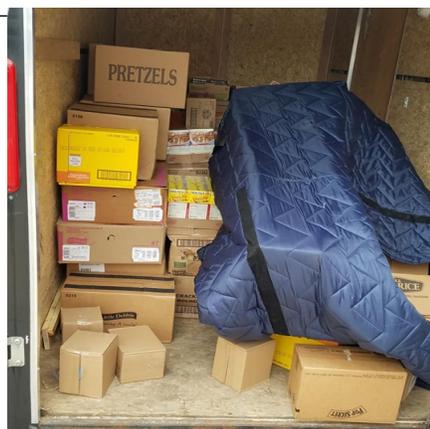
**Central Illinois Food Bank (CIFB):**

Shopping is done at the Central Illinois Food Bank every month with purchases averaging .19 cents a pound. Many items like breads, produce and government commodities can be received for free too. We make one trip a month and they also deliver once a month.

*Our volunteers give their time to travel and unload these orders.*

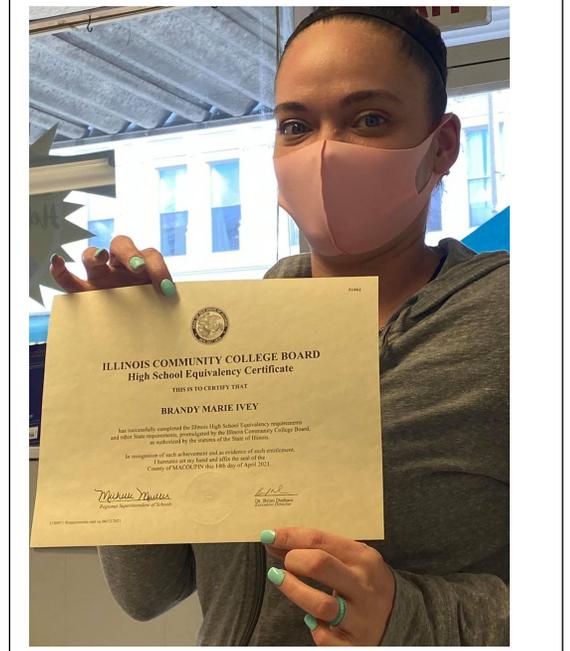
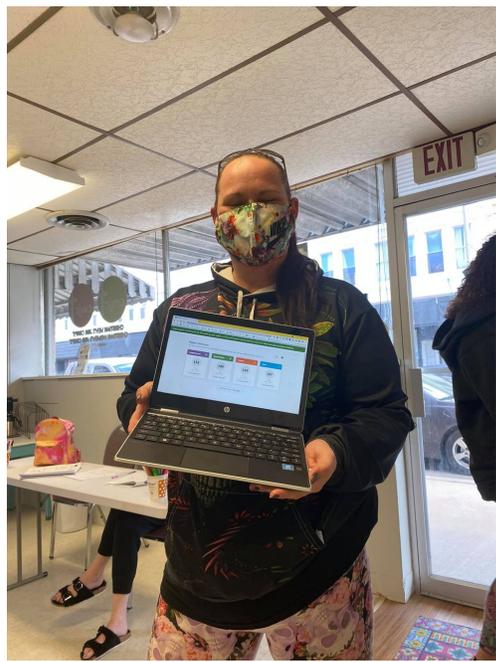
**Midwest Foodbank:**

Once a month, we have a team that travels to Morton, Illinois to stock up on FREE items from the Midwest Foodbank! thankful for a team that volunteers their time to make this possible! Lori, Robert, Tony and Don





## GED Program Continues Despite COVID Setbacks



**GRADUATES** are being produced by the GED partnership with the Regional Office of Education. We are so excited to celebrate with these students! New sessions will launch this fall on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 217 W. Main.

The Helping Hands Center is the home of GED classes that are funded through and staffed by the Regional Office of Education. The Christian Men and Women's Job Corps is funding the computers, calculators and other supplies to assist with these classes. Despite a slow down from COVID-19, classes have continued! **Pictured:** Dirk Muffler, ROE 40 Director of Adult and Alternative Education and Coleen McLaughlin-Moore, Adult Education Instructor.





**CHRISTIAN MEN'S JOB CORPS®**  
**CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S JOB CORPS®**  
a ministry of WMU®

[Christian Men's and Women's Job Corps:](#) We are a Nationally certified site for CMJC / CWJC. Our purpose is to provide a welcoming and well rounded environment in which men and women are equipped for life and employment. We are a strength's based ministry that offers free classes, free curriculum and free mentorships. **So far this year, we focused on the GED program in connection with the Regional Office of Education.** The CMJC/ CWJC budget purchased the computers, calculators and misc supplies for these sessions.

**We are excited to announce a NEW resource this September...**



# Celebrate Recovery

A CHRIST CENTERED Recovery Program

Celebrate Recovery is a Christ-centered recovery program for anyone struggling with hurt, pain or addiction of any kid. CR is a safe place to find community and freedom from issues that are controlling life. Weekly sessions begin in September, 2021 and will be located at 1255 S. Hackman. For questions, contact Robert Semanik at [robert@netcommunity.org](mailto:robert@netcommunity.org) For updates, check out the new facebook page: Celebrate Recovery SHHC

*The Helping Hands Center spends an average of \$3,000 per month in operation and food.  
We have zero payroll and minimal overhead. We function completely on donations and Grants.  
Can you sponsor us on a regular basis? Now on VENMO too!*

*Tax deductible donations can be sent to:*

**Staunton Helping Hands Center**  
**PO Box 111 Staunton, Il. 62088**

[www.stauntonhelpinghands.org](http://www.stauntonhelpinghands.org)

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