

## this issue's highlights

In 2021 Valley will set its sites on a new vision, one that addresses current needs while reaching out to different communities with an end goal of breaking the poverty cycle and lifting up those who need it most. With a year of upheaval behind us, Valley is positioned to have significantly more impact in the future.



### Our Mission

Partnering with the community to provide necessary resources and build self-sustainability.

### upgrading where we can

VICRC will be embarking on a task to begin collection of client emails. One of the most difficult tasks we face is effective communication that reaches those we serve.

Building a database of emails will allow us to communicate directly with clients on hours, services, service opportunities, and partnership connections.

This is a project that has been needed for many years, and we hope to begin the process in July.



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WHAT IS INSIDE:



Valley is busy making upgrades and providing new programs and services to better position itself for the future.

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Your support is more important now than ever. Learn about the numerous ways you can support the VICRC mission.

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VICRC's new mobile food mart will provide fresh produce and groceries to those who have a difficult time getting to Valley in person.

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Creating a sustainable tomorrow

# THE mission IN ACTION

SUMMER  
2021

**“You will never achieve a bold vision if you are content to be a caretaker of the status quo.”**



Vision! Since the beginning of my tenure in 2017 as the Executive Director, one thing was always clear with me . . . we needed to have a VISION for our future of Valley.

For over 50 years Valley provided the fail safe for those experiencing poverty so they could come as often as they needed to help obtain assistance to make it through the next days or month. We needed a bolder vision—one that didn't feed the hamster wheel of ongoing poverty cycles, rather a vision that was bold and began to chart a course that enabled our clients to transition from needing us on a regular basis. Essentially, the goal was to end a client's need for us. Sounds counterintuitive, but isn't it the goal of every nonprofit to work itself out of existence because the need they were solving was eventually solved?

Organizationally we operated similarly to those we served. Do what we can to barely get by. Rob Peter to pay Paul and we will figure it out once we get there. How could we help those we serve disrupt their poverty cycles if we operated in a similar management model? Through the support of a great board treasurer, a finance committee, the addition of an accounting firm, and frugal yet mindful leadership, we began to rebuild our organizational foundation so that our house, VICRC, was not built on sand but on a strong foundation.

Thanks to two very disciplined years, we were able to change our fiscal management to operate within a budget and not at a loss. We increased transparency in services and operations, which earned us the BBB Accreditation Standard in 2019, a first for our agency. When COVID hit, we were able to survive with minimal impact.

We still face challenges, but we now have a plan for the future. We face uncertain revenue struggles and need to look outside our traditional donor base, but because of (cont. on pg. 2)

### BY THE NUMBERS YEAR-TO-DATE

- 842 households were served with 2,824 total individuals
- 2,108 total number of visits for all households
- 2.5 was the average number of times each household visited
- Approximately 98% of clients were from households that were identified as extremely low income (at or below 30% AMI\*) or very low income (at or below 50% AMI\*)
- 501 of the 842 households served had a female head of household
- Over 25% of clients identified as special needs, including veterans and the elderly
- Thirty-eight percent of those served were under the age of 18, and 12% were over the age of 60

\*Area Medium Income

### Board of Trustees

- Skip Koesterman, President
- Ed Maynard, Treasurer
- Leslie Joseph, Secretary
- Stephen Leugers, Member
- Jan Harper-Jackson, Member
- Kurt A. Marty, Member
- Rob Shank, Member
- Noel Beyer, Member

### VICRC Team

- John Keuffer**  
Executive Director
- Glenn Howie**  
Pantry Coordinator
- Alicia Stollenwerk**  
Volunteer Coordinator
- Kim Eppens**  
Seasonal Programs Consultant
- Maria Lanzillotta**  
Crisis Victim Advocate
- Dr. Ron Arundell**  
Therapeutic Consultant
- Emma Wooten**  
Bookkeeper



# CREATING A BETTER TOMORROW!

Valley Interfaith Community Resource Center has been hard at work to position our organization to be more efficient and effective. Our goal is to make a deeper impact in our community and create a better tomorrow for those we serve.

In the past year, we have made changes/upgrades in four areas that we believe will allow us to have significantly more impact in the future:

- 1. Food Pantry:** We have purchased 3 new Commercial Grade Refrigerators and Freezer Units to replace older/inefficient Residential Units. Arriving in August will be a Mobile Food Cart, which will allow us to go out in the community and offer cooked food items. In addition, coming soon will be another Commercial Grade Freezer that will allow us to replace a 20-year-old unit.
- 2. Agency Wide:** We have upgraded our old server to avoid a major crash and loss of our electrical information. We also redesigned our electrical systems to support our Food Pantry Equipment. Our phone system has been updated and a new website will be coming soon.
- 3. Finances:** We have invested in upgrading our accounting services for better transparency and higher-level

information. We are proud to be a BBB Accredited Charity and awarded the Guidestar Platinum Seal of Transparency.

- 4. Teen Employment:** In conjunction with Hamilton County Job and Family Services and Talbert House, we have 5 teens working at VICRC. This is a mutually beneficial relationship where the teens are gaining great experience and we are able to utilize their skills to help improve our organization.

**What's next?** We are hoping to raise sufficient funds to purchase a refrigerated van. This will help us minimize food waste, increase capacity, and reduce the potential issues with the food that we pick up from various organizations.

As you can see from the items outlined above, we are putting the infrastructure in place that will allow this organization to make a deeper impact in our community and create a better tomorrow for those we serve!

Thank you for your support, it is greatly appreciated!

*Skip Koesterman, Board Chair, VICRC*

## achieving a bolder vision cont. from pg. 1

good stewardship we are able to ride this storm temporarily, with minimal service interruption.

In 2021 we are realizing that we need bold vision and that the status quo is the enemy of our growth and ability to truly and effectively serve our community. Therefore, we have embarked on a study to gather data from our stakeholders in the community we serve. We are reaching out intentionally to our community members to ensure we are addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion. With this information, we hope to develop a bolder long-term strategic plan that reflects the needs and wants of those we serve.

None of this will be effective without our supporters. You play a vital part in our efforts to help our neighbors in need, and your role is more important now than ever. We thank you for your continued trust and support and we ask you to continue to show faith in our efforts as we build the new vision to help our clients live self-sustaining lives that ends their generational "cycles of poverty."

*John Keuffer, Executive Director*



# Fresh Food, Free Mobile

There is nothing better than biting into a delicious fresh strawberry in the heat of summer. We want to make sure all our clients get that opportunity, not just those who can easily shop through our pantry.

Throughout the pandemic, VICRC was blessed with an abundance of food donations, and in particular, plenty of fresh produce! Now that our 30-day restriction has been lifted, our active clients have enjoyed attending our drive-thru and indoor services as often as they need to replenish their supply. We have even found ourselves with enough extra produce to frequently donate to other meal distributors. Yet, as E.D. John recognized, there are many in our own service area who have trouble accessing this abundant supply of food at Valley. The communities we serve include many families with no transportation. A lot of our clients have to walk or carpool to VICRC or even pay to get a ride. Some are homebound and have no way of getting here at all. These are often the folks who need food the most yet are least able to access the resources we have to offer.



Sheila is one of our VICRC volunteers who will be enthusiastically carrying out the mobile market.

To address the changing landscape, John proposed a couple of innovative solutions, a mobile fresh food market and a hot dog cart! We are making both a reality. While the cart has been ordered and planning is still in the works, we have been able to move (literally) on the mobile market. Staff have developed a plan to deliver produce safely to local spots where more clients can access it while

limiting the deliveries to short periods to ensure freshness. We recently began this new program with one low-income housing development called Friendship Plaza, where over 30 of our client/households reside. The vast majority in this housing complex are older, live alone, and have no vehicle. Staff at the complex are wonderful partners with VICRC and do whatever they can to assist in getting their residents served. This was a perfect place to start! So, on June 22 we brought the van over to Friendship Plaza and set up shop for an hour and a half. It was a great success!

We are excited to have introduced this new service and cannot wait to expand to additional housing communities that will benefit. Our goal is to keep it going at least until the fall cool weather hits, and hopefully make it an annual summer program. Especially with changes due to Covid, many have tough new schedules, work nights, or work from home. Many cannot afford to keep a car or insurance. Yet all will now be able to receive the food they need for their families. By simply driving our van to select locations and offering a road-side free market, we will be able to provide delicious healthy produce to the disabled, the elderly, the single parents, even the shut-ins. On top of being accessible, the food is healthy, fresh, and above all, free! With this innovative program, we are truly meeting our clients where they are, bringing folks together, and continuing to better address the needs of our local community.

To find out more about supporting the mission at Valley Interfaith Community Resource Center, please contact John Keuffer at **513.821.3233** or visit our website at **www.vicrc.org**

# 5 ways to support Our Mission

## 1 Give Financially

Invest in your community through a financial gift to our organization. Your gift will provide critical resources and create new opportunities for local families struggling to make ends meet.

## 2 Leave A Legacy

By making a planned gift, you can ensure we can provide for future generations. Make a long-lasting impact through a bequest in a will or trust, a life insurance policy, retirement plan, or charitable remainder trust.

## 3 Get Involved

Volunteers are the most precious resource for our agency. We have several types of volunteer opportunities for anyone interested in joining a team of committed people working to end the cycle of poverty.

## 4 Make Connections

You can support our mission through networking by hosting a donation drive, sharing our volunteer opportunities with your social network, or asking a VICRC staff member to speak at your faith community or membership club.

## 5 Use Your Voice

Positive word of mouth remains the best marketing tool. We invite you to share our mission, our good works, and our needs whenever & wherever possible!

Corporate Partner Spotlight