



## Tools for success:

# SHIM sends nearly 1,100 kids back to school ready to learn

Feeling confident can change a kid's entire outlook on school. That's why equipping South Hills students with the tools they need to head back to school is so important to us at SHIM.

"New backpacks and school supplies help a child feel ready and confident for a new school year, but there are families in our community who might not be able to afford these items as the cost of preparing kids for school rises each year," Jim Guffey, SHIM's executive director, says.

Thanks to support from the community, SHIM's 2017 back-to-school drive was a huge success. In fact, it was our biggest community-wide distribution ever of new backpacks, generously donated by CentiMark Corporation, and school supplies.

Nearly 1,100 kids received the tools they needed to head back to school ready for success. Families from every school district in our service area — Baldwin-Whitehall, Bethel Park, Keystone Oaks, Mt. Lebanon, South Park and

Upper St. Clair — came to the August celebrations. Kids chose their own supplies and backpack, enjoyed educational activities with WQED through its Ready to Learn program, and worked on crafts, played games and read books with staff from the Whitehall and Bethel Park Libraries.

"You have no idea what a help this is to me," one mom said to us as her kids excitedly looked

through the new school supplies in their backpacks. "This is such a wonderful program — thank you," another woman told us as she was leaving with happy children.

This year, we reached 40% more children than last year; more than 670 kids were brand new to SHIM and 421 were previously registered at one of our food pantries.

We couldn't have had this record-breaking year without your help. "We have an extremely generous and giving community. From local families and groups to churches and businesses, our neighbors really stepped up this year," Guffey says. "With a larger turnout than ever before, it goes to show the need is growing here in our community."

The many moms, dads, grandmothers and grandfathers thank YOU, our South Hills neighbors, for making this event possible. Though need in the South Hills continues to grow, so does critical support from our community, thanks to you.



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# Caring couple spreads joy as SHIM volunteers

For the last 48 years, Rich and Kathy Smith have been sharing life and making each other laugh. This Bethel Park couple now brings their palpable joy to guests of SHIM's Baldwin food pantry.

Both retirees, Rich and Kathy volunteer in SHIM's Baldwin food pantry and deliver bread donations from local stores to SHIM Center in Bethel Park every other week. They got involved through Christ United Methodist Church two years ago, but their passion for feeding the hungry goes back many years.

Kathy recounts their similar upbringings among middle class, working families. "We always had food on the table. Upon volunteering at SHIM, we were flabbergasted at how many families are hungry," Kathy says. "The need is hidden, and it's mind-boggling. We really want to be hands-on, and the food



Rich and Kathy Smith volunteer in SHIM's Baldwin food pantry

pantry lets us do that."

Even though they've lived in the South Hills for nearly 50 years, and were familiar with SHIM, they were astonished to see the need firsthand and how many different types of people are coming to the pantry, from young families, to refugees, to senior citizens. "Who else will care for these people? You have to give them opportunities. One bad turn

of the card, and any one of us could be there," Rich says.

In addition to the food pantry and bread runs, the couple helps transport and sort the monthly food pantry donations from Christ United, often totaling about 1,000 lbs. Rich also helped lay a new floor at SHIM's Prospect Park Family Center early childhood classroom.

Their favorite memory was at a holiday party for SHIM food pantry families last year. As they chatted with friends, three young children waited patiently for a break in the conversation. "We just wanted

to say thank you," they said. Rich fondly recalls, "That moment makes it all worth it. If you want to feel good about what you're doing, this is it."

*To learn more about volunteering with SHIM, visit [shimcares.org/volunteer](http://shimcares.org/volunteer) or contact Debi Dempsey, SHIM's volunteer manager, at 412-854-9120 x106 or [ddempsey@shimcares.org](mailto:ddempsey@shimcares.org).*

Food pantry usage this summer

344 people came to SHIM for emergency food



More than 500 households and 1,600 individuals used SHIM's food pantries each month



15 community gardens have provided 5,051 pounds of produce so far.



## Meet your neighbors: the refugee experience web series

Dil faced death as a young girl living in terrible conditions at a refugee camp in Nepal. After surviving disease, bullying and hardship, Dil finished her education and made her way to Pittsburgh several years ago. When faced with even more difficult times as a young, pregnant refugee woman in the U.S., she found South Hills Interfaith Movement. We've been happy to see her journey unfold here in the U.S. and are humbled by her story of strength.

Read Dil's full story, our second edition of our 'Meet Your Neighbors' series, on our website at [shimcares.org/meet-your-neighbors](http://shimcares.org/meet-your-neighbors).

# Help spread joy during the holidays

## Magical moments transpire at SHIM's holiday celebrations

It was one of the most exciting moments of the year for one little girl - the chance to wear her special party dress! She played, made crafts and ate dinner with her parents and siblings. It was such a great gift for this young girl and her family – a chance to leave behind the overwhelming stress of everyday life, the financial burdens, the separation, and just enjoy one another's company at SHIM's holiday celebration. And her mom left with gift cards to ensure her children would have gifts on Christmas morning. Thanks to your support, this young family was able to share in a bit of holiday magic.

SAVE THE DATE

**Angel Day**

Wednesday,  
November 8

We need your support to make more moments like this possible. On November 8, give to SHIM's Angel Day. Your financial contribution will help us host three holiday celebrations and provide gift cards for the families who use our food pantries so they can shop for holiday presents for their children.

Help spread warmth, peace and joy this holiday season. Together, we can make the holidays brighter for families in need.

Learn more at [shimcares.org/give/angel-day](http://shimcares.org/give/angel-day).

## Wrap a neighbor in warmth



Thanks to your generosity last year, hundreds of individuals and families received vouchers to shop for winter coats and accessories at Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania through an innovative partnership program with SHIM.

Once again, we need your new and gently used winter coats, boots and accessories. Your donations will be gathered and given to Goodwill. Based on the amount of SHIM's donations to Goodwill, we receive a credit, which turns into Goodwill gift cards for food pantry

guests. Every person or family registered for the pantry will receive a gift card to shop at any Goodwill store in the area, allowing them to purchase the coats, hats, boots and/or gloves of their choice in the best size and fit.

SHIM is collecting winter coats, boots and accessories now. Donations can be dropped off now through the end of December at SHIM Center in Bethel Park, Monday - Wednesday from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. and Thursday and Friday by appointment.



## SHIM'S MISSION

SHIM mobilizes community resources and implements sustainable programs that compassionately help our neighbors meet basic needs, achieve self-sufficiency, and build community.

## SHIM'S VISION

An inclusive community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

## JOIN THE MOVEMENT: VOLUNTEER WITH KIDS

### Mentoring Electronics Assistant

**Tuesdays, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.**

Assist with hands-on STEM activities. No formal electronic experience necessary.

*SHIM's Prospect Park Family Center*

### Homework Helper

**Monday through Thursday, 3 p.m. – 6 p.m.**

Volunteer one or multiple days a week

Help middle and high school students with math, English, science and history

### Youth Mentoring Program

**Two-hour weekly commitment**

Need four male mentors and two female mentors

Mentor middle and high school

students in a group setting and plan weekly activities and off-site field trips.

Mentors must be 18 or older and complete mandated reporter training.

### Early Childhood Program Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Volunteer one or multiple days a week

Help 3 and 4 year olds with arts projects, snack preparations and more

### After School Program Monday through Thursday, 4 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Volunteer one or multiple days a week





Support students in grades K-5, provide homework help, assist with daily programs.

For more information or to sign up, visit [shimcares.org/volunteer](http://shimcares.org/volunteer).



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