



Hungry for Help: South Hills Community Sacks Hunger

Parents of teenage boys have long known the ‘bottomless pit’ that accompanies the need for constant calories to fuel their growth. But what happens when the cupboard is bare?

A local woman, with two teenage sons, faced just such uncertainty one recent Friday. Knowing the weekend would be tough for her growing boys, she came to SHIM, where she received emergency food to feed her family over the weekend.

This was just one person among 81 families that came to SHIM for emergency food during the last three months of 2016. In fact, December saw record numbers of food pantry visits, serving 526 families and 1,687 individuals.

“January is when we see some of the highest need for food as many workers with outdoor jobs are laid off,” explained Molly Patterson, Operations Coordinator at SHIM. She noted that December brought 36 first-time families to SHIM’s food pantries, and 110 individuals. “More than half of SHIM’s households have at least one member who is employed. And more than half are families with children.”

February kicks off SHIM’s annual Sack Hunger, Pack Hope campaign to raise awareness, dollars and much-needed food for local families in need. Last year’s record-shattering effort saw community groups, congregations, troops, schools and workplaces



coming together to make sure no neighbors go hungry.

“Sack Hunger is the quintessential example of neighbors helping neighbors,” said Jim Guffey, SHIM’s Executive Director. “When we all come together, there’s nothing we can’t do.”

Sack Hunger, Pack Hope

Based on community response in 2016, the goals for the 2017 are ambitious: Raising \$100,000 and 36,000 pounds of food. Thanks to the Casey Family Foundation matching funds, cash donations will be doubled.

“The food the community brings in during drives is fantastic,” Jim added. “But the added dollars are critical, since we can leverage the buying power of the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank which, in most cases, has five times the impact.”

Get involved

Join the South Hills to Sack Hunger and Pack Hope for our local families in need.

- Host a Drive** Learn more at shimcares.org/sackhunger or contact Seth Dubin, sdubin@shimcares.org.
- Make a Gift** Visit shimcares.org/sackhunger.
- Spread the word** Join us on social media, hang a poster in your community, and tell your friends and family that when we all come together, we can make a difference.

Spreading Goodness: Dynamic SHIM volunteer touches many lives

A Baldwin native who spent the majority of her career in Washington D.C. working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Germaine Hofbauer returned home after retiring in 2013 to be closer to family. As a result, Germaine found herself with a lot of time on her hands.

She approached the staff at her parish, St. Germaine in Bethel Park, to ask about volunteer work. They encouraged her to reach out to SHIM. Soon after, Germaine started volunteering in the Bethel Park food pantry.

"I was shocked to find out the tremendous area the SHIM food pantries covered," she reflected. "Such a broad number of cultures are represented, and everyone is so pleasant and grateful."

Not long after starting at the food pantry, she began helping two days a week in SHIM's afterschool program and at SHIM's Prospect Park and Baldwin food pantries. She also drives the SHIM van to bring clients to the SHIM Community Closet two times a month.

"I was raised that it's not the receiving, it's the giving," she remarked.



Germaine particularly enjoys working with elementary students in SHIM's afterschool program, a position she's held since 2014. Seventy-five students from Paynter Elementary in Whitehall attend four days a week.

"These kids have the potential to be the first in their families to go to college," Germaine said. "If you show people they have what it takes and give them an example, they can be successful."

This year, Germaine shares her time with 15 fifth graders, most of whom need help with homework. She loves helping with math and creates fun games to

help reinforce important concepts. "English is not their first language," Germaine said. "These families have given up everything and have waited so long to come here. This is one of the hurdles we can help overcome. We're moving them one step closer to success, and giving them confidence."

Germaine has a closeness with the kids she cherishes, and has seen first-hand how the program is changing kids' lives. "When you are working with the kids, and the light bulb goes off, and you connect with them, it's priceless."

One of the things Germaine loves best about SHIM is how welcoming the other volunteers and staff have been to her. "We work together as a team. It's a wonderful feeling of inclusion and community."

Germaine encourages those who have time to share to "take the first step. You are needed."

To learn more about how you can join the movement and support SHIM's work, contact Becca Cornell, volunteer manager, at bcornell@shimcares.org or 412-854-9120, ext. 106.

Stories of Hope

A grateful mom, an enlightened donor

After escaping a dangerous situation, a young mother and her children came to SHIM. She received a Smart Investments grant to secure safe housing and registered for the food pantry. That same December day, a man came with an in-kind donation we knew this mom could use. After hearing her story, the man dropped off the donation, along with a decorated Christmas tree to brighten her new home. Today, the family is successfully rebuilding their life thanks to caring neighbors like this man who went the extra mile to help.

Once a client, now a donor

On a recent typical day at SHIM, a visitor arrived with a generous \$500 donation on a cashier's check. We thanked her and asked her name. "All you need to know," she said with smile, "is that I was once a client here." Your generosity powers financial stability.

A lift up is all they needed

A local family came to SHIM after a husband lost his job. We recently received a note from his wife explaining that, after nearly two years of searching, her husband found a job with regular pay; they can now afford groceries and no longer will be coming to the food pantry. She thanked us, but we thank YOU, for helping this family during a tough time.

Woman rebuilds life for herself and family

In 2014, SHIM began working with a mother facing abuse and helped her take the necessary steps toward safety. Over the next two years, she worked with SHIM staff to resolve everything while her husband continued to be difficult and threatening. Finally, after two years later, the divorce is final, and she and her family are safe. As all of her family still lives in Nepal, she did all of this with only the support of SHIM and friends.



2016 Food at a Glance



168,060

lbs. purchased

114,224

lbs. donated

12,600

lbs. produce grown
in the gardens

19,654

lbs. in senior boxes

Total 314,538 lbs. of food last year which provided **262,115** meals.



SHIM responds to change in administration

The United States represents freedom and opportunity to all people who seek it. Under the new administration, we expect these founding principles of our country to be upheld. We will continue to work every day to help people of ALL backgrounds who live in the South Hills to meet basic needs and work toward self-sufficiency, so they can realize their potential. We are grateful to be surrounded by neighbors who care about our community and the people in it. Together, we will remain steadfast in our work to build a strong, thriving community where everyone is welcome and people of all backgrounds can thrive.

SHIM offering free tax preparation

With tax season in full swing, SHIM has once again partnered with Just Harvest to provide free tax preparation services to community members at the Prospect Park Family Center. The service is offered to qualifying low-income working individuals and is available through March 4 with the help of local volunteers.

Last year, volunteer tax preparers completed 145 returns for refugee families at the Prospect Park site. Many individuals who utilize the service might be unsure of the tax process or unaware of the credits and refunds available to them. Volunteer tax preparers are able to help them through the process and ensure they're their taxes are filed correctly.

Often times, families come back year after year because they know and trust the service. But we are often pleased to find many individuals who return have higher incomes than the previous year and no longer qualify. While it might be difficult to turn them away, it is great to see families continuing to grow and thrive in our community and become self-sufficient.





Call 2-1-1 or visit swpafreetaxes.org to learn more about free tax preparation.





5301 Park Avenue
Bethel Park, PA 15102

412.854.9120

-  Follow/like us on
-  Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn
-  Visit shimcares.org
-  Give – shimcares.org/give



looking forward:
**save
the
dates**

**Sack Hunger, Pack Hope
Community Kickoff Rally
Saturday, February 11, 2017
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.**
SHIM Center, Bethel Park

**Community Closet Clothing Sort
Families Welcome— Great for
Community Service Hours!
Wednesday, March 15, 2017
5 p.m. – 7 p.m.**
SHIM Center, Bethel Park

**Celebrate the South Hills with SHIM
Wednesday, May 17, 2017
Hilton Garden Inn Southpointe**
Honoring our 2017 South Hills
Champions Suzy and Jim Broadhurst,
long-time South Hills residents, local
philanthropists and leaders of Eat'n
Park Hospitality Group.

Volunteers Needed!

Crush Hunger Distribution Driver

Be a HERO to South Hills neighbors by distributing food from SHIM's largest community donors. As needed basis, various pick up locations. Must be able to lift up to 50 pounds and have a valid driver's license.

Community Closet Associate

Sort, process and stock donated clothing, shoes, linen and soft household items. Assist clients with their shopping needs when necessary. Mon. 10am-1pm, Tues. 1-4pm and Fri. 9am – 12pm. Bethel Park location.

SHIM Ambassador

Act as a SHIM representative to provide valuable information for SHIM's programming and events. Must enjoy being in and working in a public setting. Various locations and hours, including evenings and weekends.

Does your family or community group want to join the movement?

Sign up now for family group volunteer nights! March 15 and April 20 from 5 -7 p.m. Great opportunity for community service hours.

Contact Becca Cornell at bcornell@shimcares.org or visit our website at shimcares.org/volunteer.