

A pair of hands, likely belonging to an older person, are shown from the wrist down, cupping a large, vibrant red heart. The hands are positioned centrally, with the fingers slightly curled around the heart. The background is a soft, out-of-focus yellow and green bokeh, suggesting a bright, natural setting. The overall mood is warm, caring, and hopeful.

People Helping People

2014 ANNUAL REPORT





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Dear Friends:

Respectfulness. Compassion. Responsiveness. Confidentiality. Empowerment. Stewardship.

Words to live by, don't you think?

These are the core values at Community Resource Services (CRS). For more than a quarter of a century, these principles have served as the guide for everything we do to help the residents of Avon and Avon Lake that need a helping hand.

Respectfulness - reminiscent of the Golden Rule. We all deserve to be treated as we'd like to be treated ourselves.

Compassion – the underlying feeling that drives our desire to help those around us that are less fortunate.

Responsiveness – keeps us on our toes in making sure we adapt to the changing needs of our clients and community.

Confidentiality – making sure people know they can trust us with their situations. It's a small town; we understand.

Empowerment – providing opportunities to help our clients achieve greater self-sufficiency and financial independence.

Stewardship – the responsibility we owe to our supporters to make sure their donations are utilized in the most efficient and responsible manner possible.

On behalf of everyone at CRS, we are proud to be sharing our very first Annual Report with you. In spite of difficult economic times, we are fortunate to have a diverse family of dedicated and generous donors. It's thanks to the caring of others that we're able to sustain our on-going programs and put these core values into action each and every day.

Join me in taking a glimpse at some of our accomplishments from 2014, and learn more about how CRS serves our community. As our vision statement reads, "We believe in a community where every resident is free from poverty." Thanks to your help, we'll continue striving toward that ideal and providing basic needs assistance to our neighbors in need.

With sincere gratitude,

Susan H. Poole
Executive Director



David L. Stonecipher
Board President



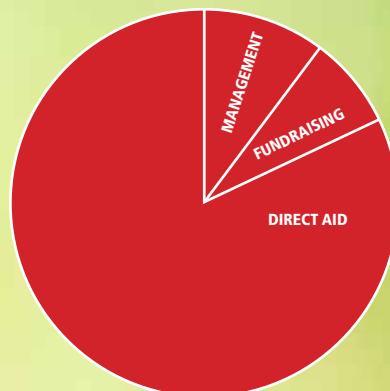
revenue

General Donations	\$58,341	11%
Corporate/Organization/Church Donations	\$28,491	5%
Fundraising Events	\$83,411	16%
Grants	\$213,427	40%
In-Kind Donations	\$143,090	27%
Other	\$2,456	1%
Total Revenue	\$529,216	100%



expenses

Management & General	\$47,632	10%
Fundraising	\$35,011	7%
Direct Aid	\$388,112	83%
Total Expenses	\$470,755	100%





"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change."

Charles Darwin

Responsiveness

CRS was founded in 1988, and began as a resource and referral agency. We've seen a lot of change during this time as we serve two of the fastest growing communities in Lorain County. Luckily, we've been able to respond to the changing needs of this community by adapting our programs to meet the growing demand for services.

Food assistance has become our largest on-going program. CRS provides food to the residents of Avon and Avon Lake in various ways. Our on-site food pantry is open weekdays from 10 am to 2 pm. Clients are able to choose from a list of available non-perishable items, as well as toiletries, diapers and other household goods. Bread that is generously donated by Giant Eagle and Pepperidge Farm is also available throughout the week, and a limited quantity of grocery gift cards are available for use at local retailers when perishable items need to be purchased. In 2014, we distributed approximately 96,000 pounds of food.

Our first priority is to provide a nutritional solution to meet the needs of residents facing food insecurity issues. Therefore, it's important to keep our pantry well-stocked with a variety of dietary options. Most of our pantry inventory comes from in-kind donations received from various community groups, churches, and local schools.

When we began to see a significant increase in demand for food in 2007, we became a member of the Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio. We are now able to fill any gaps in inventory through food grants received from Second Harvest. This partner-

ship also allows us to host Farmers' Markets during the summer months, where our clients can come on designated days to pick out fresh produce from local farmers. The addition of fresh fruits and vegetables to our distributions has become so popular, that we are always looking for new and innovative ways to encourage healthy eating habits. Thanks to the different local groups that manage our plots at Avon Lake's Community Garden, we've also benefitted from an



increase in fresh vegetables that are available on a more regular basis.

Another change we brought to the food assistance program was Summer Snack Bags. More than 10% of the students enrolled in the Avon and Avon Lake school districts are income-eligible for free or reduced lunch during the academic year. We wanted to help those families when school is not in session as there is a need for more food in the home during the summer months. In 2014, we distributed 435 summer snack bags to 219 children from 92 families. Thanks to some very generous donors, kid-friendly items like granola bars, fruit cups and macaroni and cheese were available twice a month to supplement our clients' summer grocery distributions.

It's no coincidence that the word "responsive" is included in our mission statement. We are a "responsive, community-based organization whose mission is to diminish the effects of poverty in Avon and Avon Lake." We would not have had the ability to adapt as we have without the generous community support that we receive. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to making sure that no one goes hungry in our community.'



*"The purpose of human life is to serve,
and to show compassion and
the will to help others."*

Albert Schweitzer

Compassion

Our core values extend beyond the staff at CRS. Talk to any one of our volunteers, and you'll notice a commonality amongst them all. Not only are they dedicated to our mission, but they demonstrate a genuine compassion for helping others in their community.

CRS utilizes volunteers in many different ways. In 2014, a total of 254 volunteers dedicated approximately 3,900 hours of their time in one way or another. Some helped during food drives or fundraisers like the Charity Ball, Homeruns for Hunger and the SOUPerbowl Food Drive. Others serve more regularly throughout the year. We rely on a volunteer Board of Directors to keep us focused and well-prepared for the future. Our front desk is staffed by volunteers, and we could never keep up with the grocery orders placed throughout the week without our team of volunteer pantry packers.

Meet a few women from our Monday volunteer pantry team: Deb Stueber, Ricki Huron and Elizabeth Simpson. Mondays at CRS are especially busy, as many of our clients call in requesting food assistance for the week. As the calls come in, these ladies tirelessly pack grocery bags and get the food bins ready for pick-up. They also keep busy by sorting through cans, checking expiration dates and organizing the pantry shelves. Their job is physically demanding, but you never hear them complain.

So why volunteer at CRS? Deb, an Avon Lake resident and CRS volunteer since 2010, sums it up like this: "I see the need in our community, and it simply feels good to help others." Deb generously dedicates two days each week to volunteerism. In addition to Deb's



volunteering here once a week, she also helps out at her church and local hospital.

Ricki agrees that it's important to help others if you're fortunate enough to be able to do so. Although she too has other volunteer commitments, Ricki especially enjoys her time at CRS. A resident of Avon, she began as a Volunteer Ambassador for CRS, representing the agency at various events throughout the community to spread the word about our programs. She wanted to make a more regular commitment, and came to work at the pantry in August 2013. She quickly gained an appreciation for the number of people she was helping. "If it weren't for CRS," she said, "the people who come here might not have other means of putting enough food on their table."

Elizabeth also sees this as an important part of her volunteer experience. "People often think that everyone in Avon and Avon Lake is doing okay," she commented. "But there are plenty of people right here that need

help." Elizabeth, an Avon Lake resident, began volunteering at CRS in November 2014. She was always aware of our presence in the community, but it wasn't until she was looking for a place for her teenage sons to volunteer that Second Harvest Food Bank suggested she give us a call. Elizabeth pitches in at our front desk, as well as the food pantry, and finds her work here to be "extremely meaningful."

All three women play an integral role in the work we do at CRS, and we're extremely grateful for their hard work and dedication. In fact, the day we met for this interview, it was one of the coldest days of the winter. It would have been easy to look at those cold temperatures and below zero wind chills and just decide to stay home. But as Ricki pointed out, "We're a team. We don't want to let each other down, and if one of us doesn't come in, we know there's more work for the rest of the group."

This group also remarked about something else that they weren't aware of before volunteering at CRS. "It might not occur to everyone that things like toilet paper and cleaning supplies are not always readily available at the pantry," mentioned Elizabeth. "These items are expensive, and can't be purchased with food stamps. If you're living on a limited income, you might just go without laundry detergent or other household items. People need to know that so they'll keep making those donations."

There they go again...always thinking of others before themselves. What an amazing and compassionate group of volunteers we have at CRS!



People Helping People

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

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Karen Lanigan

Please let us know if your name is missing or listed improperly. We have made every attempt to create an accurate list, and want to correct any errors. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Community Resource Services
33501-L Lake Road
Avon Lake, Ohio 44012
440.933.5639
aalcrs.org
aalcrs@aalcrs.org



8,180x

we helped the residents of our community

96,000

lbs of food
distributed

232 kids

received gifts,
coats & boots
for Christmas

227 kids

were given
school supplies

120

senior citizens
utilized our
services

210x

we helped prevent
utility disconnection

SERVICES PROVIDED BY

1 full-time and 4 part-time staff 254 volunteers

300x

we helped with
auto repairs and
fuel cards

54x

we helped
prevent eviction

