



The Newsletter of Monroe County United Ministries

Working Together

September 2017



Downtown Update!

This month, we're excited to announce even more growth in our enrollment at MCUM's Compass locations. Including the families we now serve at Compass - Downtown, MCUM is currently providing care to nearly **110** children - and counting!

Enrollment at Compass - Downtown is still ongoing, so if you or someone you know is seeking high-quality, affordable childcare in Monroe County, contact Compass - Downtown's Education Coordinator Tina Burress at **(812) 727-3737** or **tburress@mcum.org** to schedule a site tour and program overview.

Volunteer Positions Open!

Did you know that MCUM now hosts volunteers at *both* of our Compass Early Learning Center locations? If you love working with children and wish to donate your time in our classrooms alongside our teachers, please contact Tyrian at **trobertson@mcum.org** or at (812) 339-3429 x24 to receive a volunteer application and find out more about MCUM's current and upcoming volunteer opportunities.

Your Brain on Poverty:

How poverty impacts decision-making - and how MCUM helps to lift the fog

We all know the expression, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste." But every day, the stresses of poverty are laying waste to the minds of thousands of people in our community.

Ready for some science? The pre-frontal cortex of our brains (just behind our foreheads) handles complex tasks like problem-solving and goal-setting. It works in concert with our "limbic system," which regulates emotions and emotional responses. Brain scans show that when we are distressed, our limbic system overloads our pre-frontal cortex with desire, fear, and/or stress messages, which then drown out clear focus and judgment.

We've all experienced this before. Think of the last time you snapped at a loved one after a hard day at work or felt yourself in a fog in the midst of a family emergency. These are acute episodes of your limbic system overriding the reflective, analytical (and draining) mental processes of your pre-frontal cortex. The difference for those living in poverty is the frequency of these episodes, which are triggered by our environment and our circumstances.

People living in poverty must manage sporadic income, juggle expenses, and make costly and difficult trade-offs. Even when not making financial decisions, scarcity preoccupies the mind,



Research shows that the chronic stresses of poverty place a "cognitive tax" on our brains, which consumes our finite mental resources.

constantly activating stress hormones from the limbic system. Because our brains have limited cognitive capacity, this creates what experts call "bandwidth poverty." When someone is "bandwidth poor," they are thinking about how to pay for food and make rent *today* - and it's almost impossible to think about tomorrow.

Enter MCUM. Our programs are designed to not only ease the day-to-day stresses of poverty by providing immediate resources, but also to offer the supportive environment needed to reactivate the frontal cortex, solve problems, and set goals for future financial success.

For more information on how poverty affects our brains and how this science informs MCUM's approach, watch for our posts on Facebook at www.facebook.com/MCUMorg.

Current Needs

Food Pantry

- Canned vegetables
- Canned fruit (any/all)
- Canned pasta (Chef Boyardee, Spaghetti-Os, etc.)
- Crackers
- Soups (condensed or ready-to-eat)

Cleaning Closet

- All-purpose cleaner
- Body wash
- Dish soap (S/M bottles)
- Razors & Shaving cream
- Mouthwash
- Diapers (sizes 4, 5 & 6)
- Men's underwear (LG & 2XL)
- Women's underwear (5, 6 & 7)
- Travel size toiletries (any)

Childcare

- Art paper (drawing, construction, etc.)
- Markers (dry erase or washable)
- Stickers
- Water color paints
- Containers with lids (all sizes shoe box or larger)
- Food coloring (esp. red)

Office

- Pens
- Copy paper
- Bar stool w/back
- Projector (for computers)

Paper, Please! :)

MCUM is always in need of paper grocery bags for our pantry. When shopping, please ask for paper, then donate your bags to MCUM!

Canned Veggie Call-Out!

Calling all donors! If you are able to make a gift to MCUM's food pantry this month, please consider including **canned vegetables**, as we are currently in dire need of these products. We received fewer canned vegetables than usual during August's Each One, Feed One food drive, and we give out more canned vegetables to every client than any other product.

As **our food pantry continues to serve an average of 63% more families than just last year**, the families we serve need your support now more than ever.

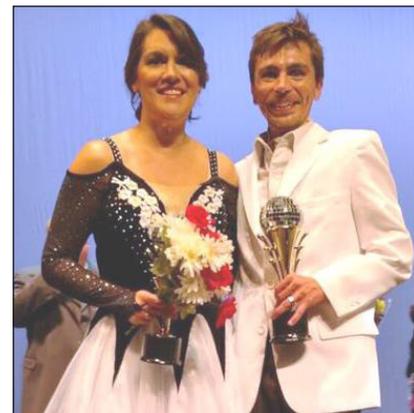
See the graphic below for our most dire needs and popular canned vegetable products, and thank you for your continued support!



MCUM Wins!

Erin Takes Home Judges' Trophy

After months of lessons and rehearsals, MCUM's Executive Director Erin Predmore showcased her dance moves in Bloomington's 11th-annual **Dancing with the Celebrities** event on September 25. Her hard work paid off, as Erin took home the Judges' Trophy for best dancer! Congratulations, Erin!



Erin and her dance partner and coach, Ryan Rud-Cloud, pose with the prestigious judges' trophy for best dancers.

MCUM was one of seven nonprofits who collectively raised more than \$220,000 in donations during the dancing campaign. Thank you to Arthur Murray Dance Center for putting on this incredible event!

If you missed the show, look for recordings of Erin's routines to grace MCUM's Facebook account in October and consider making a donation at mcum.org/donate to reward her efforts!

Sneak Peek: Holiday Opportunities



Although fall has just begun (and just last week it *felt* like summer), the holiday season is right around the corner. Here are just a few of the activities we are offering this year.

To learn more, visit our website:
www.mcum.org/holiday.

HOLD A FOOD DRIVE

The first step towards self-sufficiency for the clients we see is resolving immediate issues like food insecurity. Having served an average of 63.75% more families per month in 2017, we expect to see more than 1,700 unduplicated families by 2017's end – that's nearly 700 more families than in 2016! By hosting a food drive for MCUM, you will help us raise the additional **41,000 pounds** of food that our pantry needs this year to serve our clients and your neighbors.

SANTA BAGS

The North Pole's jolliest resident will be making his rounds to MCUM in the weeks before Christmas. During

his visit, he passes out cheer in the form of goodie bags to every child at our Compass Early Learning Center. Being a Santa Bags donor means you will purchase 115 "like" items for 2-5 year olds and/or 40 "like" items for our children under 2. Common items include: stickers, mittens, boxes of crayons, wash cloths, etc.

HOLIDAY FOOD BASKETS

Food Baskets are bagged contents from our Food Basket List that are then distributed to families from our Compass Early Learning Center and Self-Sufficiency Center. These "baskets" contain special food items generally needed to cook a full holiday meal for the family and guests, including a ham or turkey.

SPONSOR A FAMILY

Sponsoring a family involves purchasing and wrapping 3-5 gifts for each member of a family enrolled in our Compass Early Learning Center. We will match your request with a family size and send your family to you to share gift ideas. This is a great activity for offices or groups, who often share one or more families and then wrap the presents together to celebrate the power of giving. All items given must be new.

Thank You!

This month, we want to extend a special thank you to a number of our most faithful supporters:

- Thank you to our **returning student volunteers** in our food pantry! After taking their summers off, we are pleased to welcome more than a half-dozen IU students back to our pantry volunteer team!
- Thank you to **Duane & Jill Minch**, who have generously donated more than 200 loaves of bread to MCUM's food pantry in September, alone!
- Thank you to **Opportunity House** for continuing to financially support our programs every day for nearly 50 years!
- Thank you to **Don & Sharon Adams** for renewing their commitment as members of MCUM's Justice League!

You, too, can **join our Justice League** by scheduling monthly donations of any amount. Call Katie at (812) 339-3429 x 14 to learn more or sign up today!

**Want your organization to host a food drive this holiday season?
It's as easy as 1-2-3.**

- 1. Set a goal;**
- 2. Set a date; and**
- 3. Get the word out!**

Contact Steve at (812) 339-3429 x 24 or stthomas@mcum.org to express an interest in getting your group on-board. We'll give you all the tools you need and work together to follow the three steps and make your drive a success! Don't wait - reach out today and be the difference for families in your community!



Monroe County United Ministries

Non-Profit Organization
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Bloomington, IN 47404
Permit #186

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Member Agency

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Save a tree!

Sign up to receive our new eNewsletter.
Email kbroadfoot@mcum.org to make the switch!

Self Sufficiency Center

Monday, Thursday, & Friday

Appointment only: 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Food pantry only: 12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Walk-ins: 12:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Tuesday:

Appointment only: 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Food pantry only: 12:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Walk-ins: 12:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday: CLOSED

Childcare

Monday - Friday: 7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Main Office

Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Leadership Staff

Executive Director: Erin Predmore
Development Director: Katie Broadfoot
Office Manager: Shannon Hampton
Childcare Director: Traci Mehay
Education Coordinators: Jessica Mackie
(Compass - North) & Tina Burress (Compass -
Downtown)

Seasonal Decor On Display at Opp House

Looking to (pumpkin) spice up your home this fall? Celebrate the arrival of autumn at Opportunity House! Fall decorations are now on display and available for purchase on the sales floor. Our flannel clothing, leaf decor, and festive centerpieces will warm you right up!

If you'd rather feel chills, check out our collection of Halloween items, from spooky decorations to great costumes for all ages. Choose from our selection of off-the-rack costumes or create your own, all for the best prices in town! Don't wait 'til the last minute (like last year!); come and pick your costume today!

Volunteer with Opportunity House

Opportunity House is continuing to welcome new volunteers! Do you enjoy meeting new people, helping others, or getting lost in a world of organization? Join our volunteer team today!

You can fill out an application our new website, OpHouseThrift.org/Volunteer, or call us at (812) 336-2443 for more information.

The Opportunity House is a volunteer-run resale shop that raises funds to support MCUM's programs. We are open 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Contact us by calling (812) 336-2443, e-mailing ophouse68@gmail.com, or following us on Facebook!