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*Claridon Community Helps is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization*

## 2024 Year in Review

### *January*

- We served 114 meals at our Community Dinner. Dinners are free, but donations are welcome. We are blessed to say there have always been enough donations to cover the cost of the meal. This meal is for EVERYONE! It does not matter if you do not want to cook or don't have anything to cook, you are invited to join us.
- Claridon Congregational Church held a dedication of the church sanctuary. We prepared, provided, and served the luncheon after the service.
- We provided the purchase of a birth certificate needed for a person to start a new job. This cost may be small to many, but more than this person had to move forward in life.

### *February*

- We served 114 meals again this month at our Community Dinner.
- We had a request for assistance with a car repair. The guess was \$375 which the person did not have but needed the vehicle to continue working. The actual cost was much more as the vehicle needed a whole new engine. The applicant did not proceed with the repair.

### *March*

- We served 102 meals at our Community Dinner
- Berkshire, Cardinal, Chardon, St. Mary and West Geauga Schools held a food drive for "Now That's What I'm Talking About!" – Summer Lunch program.

### *April*

- We served 92 meals at our Community Dinner.
- Geauga County Public Library held a food drive for the lunch program.

### *May*

- We served 109 meals at our Community Dinner.
- We purchased a commercial convection oven, which allowed us to increase the number of meals we were able to make each day during the summer.

### *June*

- We served 110 meals at our Community Dinner.
- Chagrin Valley Rotary donated a much-needed commercial refrigerator to “Now That’s What I’m Talking About!” Summer Lunch program.
- We prepared and served a funeral luncheon.
- Participated in the Geauga County Public Library summer reading kick-off at the fairgrounds.
- Children being home during the summer not only adds an extra grocery expense, but it also adds additional daycare expenses compared to the school year. We provided a car payment. The owner of the vehicle obtained less expensive day care and worked out the bump in the road.

### *July*

- We served 158 meals at our Community Dinner.
- This person got a job, but did not have the money to purchase the required clothing/uniform for work. We purchased the proper color shirt.
- It is hard to get the call back for a job when you have not paid your phone bill. We paid the cell phone bill and a small portion of their month’s rent. And the person got the job!
- Again, this year we were honored to be invited to join the Maple Splash. The Burton/Middlefield Rotary holds this fundraiser each year. The money raised from the event is given to local non-profits including us!

### *August*

- We served 104 meals at our Community Dinner.
- A hospital stay can change a person’s income dramatically. We worked together with Catholic Charities to get this person caught up on rent so not to be evicted.
- School supplies are expensive even with the back-to-school bargains. Jobs & Family Services gives away school supplies to families that qualify. We had 15 families who needed assistance with back-to-school supplies for their children that didn’t qualify for the JFS program. We provided the children with the supplies they needed for a great start to the school year.
- Between the last week of May and the middle of August, “Now That’s What I’m Talking About!” Summer lunch program provided 14,099 meals for children in Geauga County. There were 389 children registered for the program representing 137 families. On an average day we prepared lunch for 270 children. The cost for the summer was \$31,437.

- This year we were invited to participate in Cardinal's Back to School Bash. A terrific opportunity to raise awareness about Claridon Community Helps.
- When the storm in August took out the power for days, we were contacted by Chardon Fire Department to ask if we could provide 24-hours of meals for the 150 residents of Murray Manor and Harrison House. The power was back on at Claridon Congregational Church. Collaborating with Geauga Hunger Task Force's Burton and Chardon Food Pantry, we were able to provide a hot meal for dinner and a brown bag for breakfast and lunch the next day.
- Participated in Claridon's "Get Down with the Town" event.

### *September*

- We served 103 meals at our Community Dinner.
- This family was using the community and government resources available. Unfortunately, they earned just over the limit to receive many of the government resources that are available. We provided gift cards to purchase food in addition to the food they received from the food pantry.
- Represented Claridon Community Helps at the Chardon Fire Department Open House.
- Took part in Montville Community Days by taking our turn sitting on the dunk tank. Donations were accepted for those wishing to try and dunk the person sitting. All donations collected were donated to Claridon Community Helps.
- A senior family with multiple health issues needed assistance with their electric bill. We paid that month's electric bill.

### *October*

- We served 135 meals at our Community Dinner.
- Both parents are working, but one needs surgery and will be out of work for 6 weeks. They are just making ends meet before the time off to recover. We purchased a gift card so that they could purchase groceries.
- We purchased the ingredients and had a fun day making 200 dozen cookies for a prison ministry.
- Together with Claridon Congregational Church, we held a Basket Raffle fundraiser. The proceeds were divided between us.
- We had a request for rent assistance. We declined as we had already helped them this year.
- We passed out many treats at the Trick or Treating event held at Century Village.
- Another family was in a bind, we provided gift cards for groceries to them.
- Chardon Rotary purchased three chickens at the Great Geauga County Fair. We were asked if we knew of a family that needed whole chickens. We did. We were the liaison between Chardon Rotary and the family.

### *November*

- We served 110 meals at our Community Dinner.
- We held a "History Mystery Scavenger Hunt" fundraiser. A fun time was had by all, and enough money was raised to provide 663 in the summer of 2025.
- We were asked to assist with propane and groceries. We had already assisted this family this year, therefore we said no. But we did share other organizations contact information that we were knowledgeable of.
- It doesn't matter how inexpensive turkeys are advertised; the cost of Thanksgiving meal is expensive. In addition to the cost, there are the physical and health abilities to consider. Together with the administrative staff at Berkshire Schools we cooked and delivered meals for 18 families. They only needed to reheat them to enjoy Thanksgiving Day.

### *December*

- We served 110 meals again this month at our Community Dinner.
- Those medical appointments and bills can certainly throw off the family budget. Again, we provided gift cards to purchase groceries.
- We were contacted by one family to ask for Christmas assistance for their children. We were the liaison between them and a family that asked us if we knew a family they could "adopt" for Christmas.
- The Claridon Congregational Church asked us if there were a family or two that we thought could use assistance this Christmas season. Again, we were the liaison between the two.
- Pattie Group again this year reached out to ask if we knew any families that would like a fresh cut Christmas tree. After contacting families, we shared 12 families with them.
- What happens when an organization orders too much milk? They ask us if we can find the milk a home. Geauga Faith Rescue Mission, Solid Rock and 27 families received milk over Christmas break.

Many, many times throughout the year we are contacted about receiving donations, mostly food. When we receive the donation, it is "in one door and out the other." We also try to rotate the donations to a variety of families.

There are many important pieces to the puzzle that make all of the above happen. First, without your support of Claridon Community Helps, we could not make the above happen. Second, whenever we provided a community dinner or a summer lunch, it would not have happened without Claridon Congregational Church. To all of you... Thank you!