



“Our Mission: Based on the founding belief that each of us is created in God’s image, we offer help, hope and compassion to anyone with essential needs.”



Dear Neighbors,

It’s no secret that families across Northern Michigan are feeling the impact of inflation. Over the summer we met hundreds of people who have never before been in a position to have to ask for help. The majority shared with us that their

Father Fred News

budgets are so tight, they’ve had to make tough decisions about what to pay now, and what to skip for a later time. Unexpected car repairs or medical bills are enough to send a household into a financial tailspin.

One gentleman shared with us that he was getting by working full time as a machine operator and living in a mobile home. Once his lease expired, his landlord nearly doubled his rent. The spike forced him out of his home, and without affordable housing options, he’s now living with a family member. “I’m a grown man and I’m sleeping on my sister’s sofa”, he shared. While he’s able to stay with family, he recognizes the strain the situation is adding to his sister and her spouse, who are also barely getting by with two children under the age of four. “Sometimes it feels like there’s no end in sight”, he said.

We are a grassroots charity assisting our neighbors in need with a wide variety of resources such as free food, clothing, and financial aid. Funded by community donations.

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Our 2021-22 strategic plan focused on greater impact and expanded outreach. Timing couldn't have been more perfect, as the story above isn't unique. People are grasping on to any bit of hope they can find, and our job at the Foundation is to make finding relief a bit easier. This summer we've distributed nearly three times the amount of financial assistance over last year, and our food pantry visits have increased 85%. The pandemic and post-environment has lingered far too long, and it's more important than ever to provide resources and a source of hope for struggling households.

Our Back to School Shoes program expanded again this year to ease the burden of added expenses that young families face, reaching more than 1,200 children, 60% over last year's total. We took the program on the road to serve families where they live, across all five counties of our NW Michigan region: a first in Father Fred history. You can learn more about this program and our collaborative partners later in this newsletter.

Our Pantry to Preschool program, which distributes fresh produce, frozen meats, dairy, and other food items to families of young children, continues to grow. Thanks to a partnership with MSU Extension, each package includes a colorful recipe with ingredients right inside. This program now distributes to 150 families in 8 schools. When families arrive to pick up their children from preschool, their package is ready to go home with them.

These programs are provided with generous community donations and dedicated volunteers. Every donation we receive goes directly back into the community to help our neighbors. Our volunteers do everything from stocking shelves, sorting incoming donations, driving our food truck, and talking with guests.

We are blessed to live and serve in a community that cares for one another, and are deeply grateful for your ongoing support, so we can serve our neighbors during difficult times.

Warmly,

Candice Hamel

Candice Hamel
Executive Director



Excerpt from The Heart of a Priest

By Paul LaPorte

One of the most memorable Fr. Fred's sayings of all time is "Listen, Care and Share." While he was working in the office of the State Hospital or later at The Foundation, everyone was impressed with his ability and capacity for [to] listening.

His writings provide some definition and articulation of this concept and can be traced to some training he received while working at the State Hospital. He talked and wrote about a Polish doctor, Dr. P., to whom he was very close. He could tell when Fr. Fred was under stress just by the tone of his voice. Likewise, Dr. P. was highly recharged by his friend, the chaplain. Fr. Fred's own words describe a piece of advice Dr. P gave him:

When you're listening to someone and you think you have the answer, listen some more; and then when you think you have the problem arranged in your mind, listen some more, and then when you think you have a solution, listen some more!

I have never forgotten that advice to this day because I get impetuous sometimes and feel that I have all the answers. But thru my mistakes, I have learned. This Dr. P. was the first one of whom I know that referred to the brain as a computer years before Apple and the rest of them came on the market. "Put that in your computer and see what you come up with," he would advise. And I always did. I still do.

Back to School Shoes

Look Sharp, Feel Sharp, Be Sharp



Outreach and Program Manager Kristin Lindell organizes shoes at our BTSS event in Kalkaska

Father Fred always said, “If you look sharp, you feel sharp, if you feel sharp, you are sharp.” What better way for kids to start the school year - looking sharp and feeling sharp - it’s a recipe for success. The Father Fred Back to School Shoes program has recently increased in scope and quantity to offer new shoes, socks, vision screening, dental exams, and school supplies.

The program originated in Grand Traverse County and in 2021 expanded to serve Antrim and Kalkaska Counties. This year the program added Leelanau and Benzie Counties, making stops in all five of the

The 2022 BTSS event successfully served more than **1200 kids** with new shoes and socks



The Back to School Shoes program is much more than providing new shoes. It’s about meeting people where they are and getting to know the families we serve. It’s about giving kids a boost in confidence when they have new shoes to start school with and making sure kids who need prescription glasses get them.

This year’s support and partnerships expanded to Benzie Area Christian Neighbors, Vision to Learn, North Michigan Health Services, Newton’s Road, the Department of Health and Human Services, and more. With the help from generous volunteer groups, the event was a success. Volunteers came from all directions including Centennial Wealth, Help in Heels, Hagerty, First Congregational church, teachers and staff from public schools, and some of our very own volunteers from Father Fred. For events like this one, volunteers become the face of help, hope and compassion for everyone we serve.

Those on the receiving end of the program expressed their thanks in many ways; they shared how helpful the shoes are for them due to the current cost of living. One little boy at first did not understand that the shoes were his to keep and was delighted that he could take them home.

Over **120 kids** received a pair of prescription eyeglasses at no charge through the Vision to Learn Program



Volunteer Spotlight



25 years

Alan and Sharon Buell

Alan and Sharon Buell became interested in volunteering after one of Alan's former classmates Kathy Belovich, recommended the foundation. Sharon already knew Father Fred (the man) from working as a nurse at the State Hospital, where Father Fred served as Chaplain. One day the Buells stopped in at the foundation and talked to Father Fred himself. The rest is history.

Sharon began volunteering in the clothing department, and Alan helped out with furniture donations. "We had quite a bit of fun," Alan said. "It was our social life."

One of their favorite memories was when they posed in front of the Father Fred truck in their bathing suits during the foundation's annual Frostbite Food Drive. The couple shared that they, along with their fellow volunteers, dressed up in bathing suits, and posed for a photo outside in front of the Father Fred truck. It was freezing, but it was a great publicity stunt with lots of laughs. Another memory shared was when Sharon found herself "dumpster diving". Alan had thrown away some old canning jars that were donated. Sharon, who had the reputation of salvaging nearly anything to make available to those in need, jumped in the dumpster when no one was looking to retrieve the jars! The stories go on and on about the special moments the Buells experienced while volunteering.

The Buells agreed that Father Fred's legacy is still alive and well today at the Foundation. "One thing that's stayed the same is that Father Fred attracts really wonderful volunteers," Alan said.

The Buells are relocating to Phoenix, Arizona full time and will continue volunteering at a food bank there.



25 years

Mary Ellen Crusoe Byrne

Twenty-five years ago after moving to the area from Royal Oak, MI, Mary Ellen became a Father Fred volunteer. She started out working with the Tuesday food pantry crew and spent 15 years in that department. She then went on to volunteer in the business office, where she continues to support the foundation today with data entry and filing needs. She's seen a lot of changes over the years while volunteering. She shared that when she first began helping in the business office, everything was done on paper. Mary Ellen has worked as an attorney for 59 years and continues to practice law today. "I enjoy volunteering at Father Fred. It's a great place to volunteer," stated Mary Ellen.

"Always friendly, always reliable, you can count on Mary Ellen to get the job done," said Gail Partee, former Director of Finance. "I am grateful for her many years of service."



30+ years
Paula Prusick

Paula met Father Fred when she received her Catholic instruction upon marrying her husband, Vince. Father Fred married the couple and baptized their children. Father Fred became a friend to the Prusick family and even lived with them after he had surgery. Father Fred would say Mass at their kitchen table on Sunday mornings. These became very special memories for Paula and her family. She began volunteering as a substitute in the intake department in 1991 and became a regular intake volunteer in 1992. She has been a board member since 1997. Father Fred had a phrase for Paula. He would say, "Never fear, Paula is here."

Paula fondly remembers Father Fred's calming wisdom that he had when speaking with guests. "He had a calming aura no matter the situation," Paula said. "He was always peaceful and engaging." Paula also believes that Father Fred's legacy is still alive and well at the Foundation. "We have these unbelievable Father Fred moments. You think 'no way,' and then it somehow happens!" Paula stated.

Paula believes that the Father Fred Foundation has maintained its

uniqueness over the years. Because the Foundation is privately funded, it can give more freely with fewer obstacles.

**“Never fear,
Paula is here.”**

- Father Fred

*Thank You
Volunteers for your
heartfelt dedication*



Volunteer Workshop

On August 22nd 33 volunteers, staff, and board members came together to explore implicit bias with Esther Triggs, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for Interlochen Center for the Arts.

- This workshop was based on Father Fred's legacy of listening.
- The workshop explored how implicit bias can affect our ability to listen to our guests and each other.

Garden Blessings

The Father Fred gardens are a place of beauty and peace for our guests, staff, and volunteers. They also provide freshly grown produce for our pantry, which provides more variety to our guests. Alison Collins volunteers at both the Father Fred Giving Garden located in the “Seeds of Love; Giving Garden and the flower beds and the Father Fred Foundation. “I love seeing the beauty of the vegetables and flowers. For example, the contrast of the purple peppers against their green leaves is amazing. It’s a sign from Father Fred,” Alison said.



Alison Collins and Marion Coltman stand in front of the sunflowers at The Foundation flower garden. Not pictured is Joanne Johnsen who also helped with the plot at the Seeds Garden.

“Where flowers bloom so does hope.”

—Lady Bird Johnson



Living our Mission



Olivia Dombrowski stands proudly next to the mailbox she painted at the Grand Traverse Area Children’s Garden.

The Father Fred Foundation is committed to integrating our mission into all of our work. One example of doing so is to offer a warm welcome to our guests. The Father Fred flower garden located at the Foundation does just that. Flowers are grown, cut and given to our guests. One guest said, “I don’t think I’ve ever been given flowers before.” The Father Fred Foundation also has a plot at the Grand Traverse Area Children’s Garden. Peppers and tomatoes were harvested there for our pantry.

Upcoming Events



FALL FOOD DRIVE
October 1 - 9

THANKSGIVING TURKEYS
November 15-18, 22-23

CHRISTMAS TURKEYS
December 13-16, 20 - 23

TOYS FOR TOTS REGISTRATION
Starts November 22

FROSTBITE FOOD DRIVE
January 28 - February 5

GARAGE SALE
May 13

For information on upcoming events or to learn about volunteer opportunities call The Father Fred Foundation at 231-947-2055, fatherfred.org or info@fatherfred.org



Visit our Facebook or Instagram page for updated information.

If you would like to receive our email newsletter, please sign up on our website fatherfred.org on the top of the navigation bar.



Volunteer Picnic

We celebrated our volunteers at the annual volunteer picnic on August 29th. Volunteers spent the afternoon laughing, sharing stories, and doing Father Fred trivia.

Thank you!

JOIN US!

