



Lake
Christian
Ministries

Heart&Hope

2023 SML Walk to End Poverty Will Assist Growing Number of Local Families in Need

The annual SML Walk to End Poverty will be held Saturday, September 16, at Smith Mountain Lake State Park. Organized by Lake Christian Ministries, Walk proceeds support programs and services that assist the growing number of local residents struggling with poverty during this inflationary year.

"Prolonged inflation and recent reductions to the governmental Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – known as SNAP – have created an extraordinary increase in the number of families facing financial crisis in our community," explains Jane Winters, LCM Executive Director. "Approximately one in ten Americans experience food insecurity. The prolonged pandemic followed by high inflation have had a devastating impact on families at the bottom of the economic ladder, with food banks and charities across the country seeing a dramatic increase in the number of food-insecure families."

The lake community is no exception. In the first six months of 2023, Lake Christian Ministries had a 32% increase in the number of people seeking food assistance and a 40% increase in the number of families requesting crisis financial aid to avoid eviction and keep utilities operating in homes with children and seniors. Both food and crisis aid programs are operating over budget and Lake Christian Ministries has been forced to use cash reserves to address expenses. At the same time, donations to Lake Christian Ministries are at a five-year low. Many charities across the nation are seeing similar situations as donors give less when the economy is unstable and inflation is high.

"Lake Christian Ministries is one of the few rural nonprofits that works in a comprehensive way to stabilize families with food, financial aid, job readiness and community connections. We hope our supporters will donate through the Walk to End Poverty so we can address the growing needs of local families struggling with poverty," Winters added.

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"This year, needs are at an all-time high. Our food pantry shelves are often bare at the end of the week from the high demand for food assistance, and we are having difficulty purchasing enough food from discounted sources to keep up with demand. When it comes to crisis financial aid support for housing and utilities, Lake Christian Ministries receives the lion's share of community referrals in our three-county service area. We need our supporters to help us make the most of the Walk to End Poverty Matching Challenge. We are working hard to prevent homelessness and hunger for local children and families struggling to make ends meet," comments Winters.

Donations can be made now through September 16 by visiting www.smlwalktoendpoverty.com and following the easy donation instructions. Individuals and teams may also register to participate in the 5K and 10K walk or run. Registration fees are \$5 for participants 17 and under and \$10 for ages 18 and up. Walkers and runners are encouraged to collect donations from neighbors, friends, family members and co-workers who will support their involvement in the event. The Walk's course is in one of the area's most beautiful settings – SML State Park – and features a 5K and 10K option for walkers and runners. On-site registration begins at 9:00 a.m., with the walk and run both beginning at 10 a.m., followed by lunch at 11 a.m. Participants are encouraged to stay for lunch and enjoy music, fellowship, and the awards presentation. All events occur rain or shine.

Walk Sponsors Offer \$25,000 Challenge Match!

The 2023 SML Walk to End Poverty Walk sponsors and two anonymous Lake Christian Ministries volunteers are stepping up to help in a very big way! Together they are offering a \$25,000 Challenge Match through the 2023 Walk to End Poverty to encourage donations.

Event Sponsors:



**Anonymous
LCM Volunteers**

Supporting Sponsors:



The \$1 for \$1 match will be applied to the first \$25,000 donated. Our goal is to generate \$50,000 or more to assist the growing number of vulnerable families who are struggling with unusually high costs. We need our supporters to help us make the most of the Walk to End Poverty Matching Challenge. Donate and register at smlwalktoendpoverty.com.

2022-2023 Lake Christian Ministries Business Partners

We appreciate the support received from our LCM Business Partners. Our generous partners provide annual donations – both monetary and in-kind.

LIFE PARTNER

Capps Home Building Center

PLATINUM PARTNERS

American National Bank & Trust
Bayside Marina & Yacht Club
Bob Riddick Roofing, Inc.
Body Shoppe Fitness
Centra
Craft Collision Center
Deborah Beran ReMax Lakefront Realty
Food Lion
Gilbert Law
Jo & Co. Jewelers
Kroger
Phil Hager Insurance Agency

Innovative Wireless Technologies

Jake's Place
Moneta Farm & Home Center
Ringmaster Services
Savvy Promos
Seven Oaks Landscape & Hardscape
Southside Electric Cooperative
Wal-Mart
Westlake Automotive Service

GOLD & SILVER PARTNERS

Coley Law
Dollar General Stores
Dugwell Pest Control
Foster Fuels
Harvest Moon

FOUNDATION PARTNERS

Bedford Community Health Foundation
Community Foundation Serving Western VA
Food Lion Feeds Charitable Foundation
Greater Lynchburg Community Foundation
Patsy & John Smart Family Foundation
Presbytery of the Peaks
United Way Central Virginia
United Way Roanoke Valley
United Way Emergency Food & Shelter Program
L. B. Lane Family Foundation
The Minnie and Bernard Lane Foundation

Building Hope for Tomorrow



Facility Expansion Update

Our architects and contractor have continued to work with Bedford County Community Development Office on the much longer than expected site review process. Three of the four needed site permits are approved. The final permit should be approved by the end of August. Price Buildings will then submit the building plan for county approval. We are hopeful that construction will start in the fall of this year. The new building will address the growing need for service space by housing a warehouse, clothing area and classrooms. Moving the warehouse and clothing area to the new facility will free space in the existing building to add additional meeting rooms. This new space is badly needed because demand for LCM's services has grown by 40% in the first half of this year.

Capital Campaign Update

We are happy to report that the **Building Hope for Tomorrow Capital Campaign** has received \$937,000 to date. The campaign goal was increased to \$950,000 as building costs significantly increased due to inflation.

"We are hopeful that the community will help us generate the remaining \$13,000 needed by fall so the new facility can be completed by mid-year 2024," said Jane Winters, LCM Executive Director. "With growing needs from our neighbors, more space is required to accommodate a much larger number of families seeking LCM services. This expansion project will also enable us to provide space for our community partners that want to be on site to help us coordinate crisis assistance."

How Can You Help?

Donors can give online through LCM's website, lakechristianministries.org, by clicking the Donate tab at the top of the homepage and following the easy instructions to direct donations to facility expansion. Donors can also give through the upcoming SML Walk to End Poverty that will be held on September 16. The first \$25,000 donated through the Walk will be doubled with a \$1 for \$1 challenge match provided by the 2023 SML Walk sponsors. Go to smlwalktoendpoverty.com to give. Checks may also be mailed to Lake Christian Ministries, P.O. Box 695, Moneta, VA 24121 with a memo designation for SML Walk -facility expansion.

Service Impact January – June 2023

During the first half of 2023, LCM continued to see a record number of service requests. Prolonged inflation and reductions in SNAP benefits led to a 40% increase in the number of financial aid requests to prevent homelessness and keep the utilities on in homes where resources are stretched to capacity. 35% more families are seeking food assistance from LCM. A growing number of individuals and families are utilizing our New Tomorrows Program services as our staff and volunteers work to help neighbors overcome barriers toward building more secure lives.

From January - June 2023, LCM Fulfilled:

5,955 service requests

41% increase over the first six months of 2022

Food Assistance for

2,190 individuals

35% increase over this time last year

Financial Aid in the amount of

**\$161,074 to assist 383 families
with 1,073 family members**

40% increase over this time last year

New Tomorrows Program Services

**Helped 143 Families Build
More Secure Lives**

3% increase over this time last year

Neighbor Stories

As economic conditions continue to squeeze those hanging on to the lowest rung of the economic ladder, more local residents turned to Lake Christian Ministries this year for increasing amounts of assistance. Some of the most prevalent concerns in 2023 have been a sharp increase in the cost to rent a home, rising utility and food costs, and the uptick in neighbors struggling with mental health concerns.

None of these concerns are new, but this year LCM has seen a significant increase in the number of single adults and families in a state of crisis. We are sharing stories of two Lake Christian Ministries neighbors and how LCM coordinated collaborative assistance with area churches and community partners to help them avoid or recover from homelessness and achieve a stable home-base from which they can move forward.

From a Hot Plate to a Hot Shower

Bridget came to Lake Christian Ministries in July to request emergency financial aid for an overdue propane gas bill of \$1,147. A single mother of four with one on the way, the family had not had hot water or use of a stove in over three months. Bridget shared that she longed for a hot shower, to give the kids an actual bath, and to make a better meal than what she could manage using just a hot plate.

Since they live in HUD-subsidized housing, Bridget was required to restore gas service or face eviction. With a court date set for two weeks away, she didn't know where to turn. The judge ordered Bridget to appear with evidence the gas was restored. She teared up at the thought of taking four young children to a regional homeless shelter, and she didn't have a way to get them there. Bridget is not receiving any child support, and is under care from a local mental-health agency after dropping out of college.



After paying a neighbor \$20 to drive her to LCM, she was granted aid to cover a portion of the overdue gas bill and LCM contacted three additional churches to cover the rest. An anonymous donor paid the connection fee. By 4:30 p.m. the day before court, all payments were made in time for Bridget to appear in court at 8:30 a.m. the next morning, show the judge she restored her gas service, and avoid eviction.

LCM's financial aid, with coordinated aid from four outside sources, helped keep four young children and a pregnant mom from losing their affordable housing. With the eviction crisis behind her, Bridget can now focus on caring for herself, her baby on the way, her children and the family's other needs, including transportation, healthcare, and income. Bridget will continue to work with her professional case manager to achieve long-term stability for herself and her children.

Working from the Shelter

Zoe first came to Lake Christian Ministries in March upon referral from a family member. She was new to the area, moving here to be near her parents. Zoe and her son endured a domestic situation that derailed her professional training program, disrupted her son's last year of high school, and cost them their housing when her estranged husband went to jail.

Although she was now homeless, Zoe was not to be deterred. Her parents offered to keep her son and dog, but didn't have enough room for her so she took a job at a local production facility, making just enough to cover a weekly hotel room. Their household belongings were in a storage unit. There was no money left for a rental deposit or first-plus-last month's rent, a combined payment of at least \$2,400 that's typically now charged by landlords. The production facility let her go when she needed time off for a physician's appointment, but within days she secured work through a temp agency. Still, she needed a strong employment record for a landlord to consider her a viable tenant.

Zoe told our New Tomorrows staff that she wanted to continue her career training program so she could enter the healthcare profession in a position that would allow her to help others. Lake Christian Ministries knew of a local healthcare agency urgently seeking someone for the position Zoe sought, and connected the two. The application took several months to get to the hiring manager, with LCM and the hiring manager following up every two weeks on her status.

Zoe patiently continued working as a temp but she couldn't get ahead of the hotel bill, so she opted to stay at a regional homeless shelter to save for housing. Only a few weeks passed when Zoe shared she'd scheduled an interview. Within another two weeks she was hired.

To help Zoe avoid the hour-long drive from the shelter to her new job, Zoe's parents allowed her to also stay with them while she looks for housing. Zoe is now saving for housing for her family. Her employer reports that Zoe is doing well in her new job.

Welcome

Welcome to the new volunteers who recently joined LCM. The following volunteers are now part of the warm and generous LCM family!

Nancee Costello

John Firebaugh

Josh Johnson

Ann Davis

Lea Hasting

School Supplies Help Kids Get Off to a Good Start

Each year, Lake Christian Ministries provides school supplies for children in families who are not able to afford the expense. This year as the cost of school supplies nearly doubled, many more families requested school supplies. LCM's School Supply Volunteer Team works hard each year to provide local children with the school supplies their families can't afford.

The LCM Back to School Program began on a small scale in the 90's, according to Program Coordinator Lynda Imirie. The program has grown considerably to serve between 350 to 400 children from families in need. Each year, Imirie solicits student supply lists from area public schools and consolidates them into grade level lists -kindergarten through middle and high school. The needed items are then purchased in bulk orders through online vendors or from area stores. Once the crayons, pencils, notebooks, paper, protractors and other supplies arrive, they are moved to a location where 20 volunteers can sort them into bags, grade level by grade level, and prepare them for pick-up by parents at LCM during the month of August.



Unfortunately, school supplies often fall to the bottom of the 'must have' list for families who are struggling to keep food on the table, pay rent and utilities and deal with rising costs. "With our help," Imirie noted, "their kids can start the school year with the supplies they need and they'll be more confident and learn better as a result. We all know education is key to breaking the poverty cycle. That's what this program is about."

Added Imirie, "This program is made possible by donations from area churches, clubs, organizations and individuals that are earmarked for Children's Programs. Donations and our treasured volunteers are what enable this program to continue. We deeply appreciate the outstanding community support received for this effort."

LCM Volunteers Needed for SML Wine Festival

We would like to thank Tim Reith of Hook, Lines and Singers, Inc. for selecting Lake Christian Ministries as one of the local charities to benefit from the proceeds of the 2023 SML Wine Festival. As a benefiting charity, LCM needs to provide 8 to 10 volunteers to assist on Saturday, September 23 and Sunday, September 24. This year the wine festival will be held at Crazy Horse Marina.

Volunteers are needed for afternoon shifts of 2 - 6 p.m on Saturday or 1 - 5 p.m on Sunday. Our volunteers will work at the event entrances collecting money or Will Call tickets and checking ID's and bags/coolers. Volunteers will also be needed to sell merchandise, pick up trash, and arrange wine and ice transport. This is a great opportunity to volunteer for LCM and participate in a fun community event.

To Volunteer: Email: Jane Winters at lcmevdr@gmail.com by September 18. Provide your name, cell phone, email and which day and shift you are able to work.

Donation Wish List

We appreciate your donation support. Our neighbors need the following items and our supplies are low. We do not have the volunteer coverage to pick up donations at this time. We encourage donors to drop off donations at LCM from 9 a.m. until noon on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Mattresses & Box Springs (clean and gently used)

Sheets - Full, Queen and King Sheets

Diapers - Size 4, 5 and 6

Appliances

Crock Pots

Microwaves

Vacuum Cleaners

Dog & Cat Food

Canned Fruit

Canned Ravioli



Lake
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Nonprofit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #78
Roanoke, VA

13157 Old Moneta Road

PO Box 695

Moneta, VA 24121

Return Service Requested

Special Note: If you are away for a time and are planning a "Temporary Hold" on your USPS mail, please send your email address to lcmdonblanchard@gmail.com so we can send our newsletters to you electronically.

A Simple Gesture Program Makes a Big Impact for Families in Need & LCM

Donations from A Simple Gesture SML make a big impact for our neighbors in need and help to reduce LCM expenses during a time when food costs continue rising. This neighborhood donation pick-up program provides thousands of pounds of food, cleaning supplies and personal care items each year. The August 4 collection provided 3,088 pounds of canned vegetables from 211 donor households.

Due to the high demand for food assistance, we are conducting A Simple Gesture Emergency Collection for peanut butter and canned soup on Friday, September 8.

The fourth quarter collection day is Friday, November 3, with a wish list for liquid laundry detergent (40 oz. or less) and dishwashing liquid.

Those who wish to join the "A Simple Gesture" effort can do so by contacting Linda Strup at asimplegesturesml@gmail.com or by visiting asimplegesturesml.org and letting us know that you want to donate and/or serve as a neighborhood pick-up driver. Donations from A Simple Gesture help LCM address the high demand for food assistance and reduce our costs for food supplies. We appreciate the generous support from our A Simple Gesture SML supporters!

