



*helping today, building hope for tomorrow*

**Friends of  
South End Community Outreach Ministries (SECOM)  
Newsletter  
April 5, 2010**

Dear Friends,

Recently I heard a congresswoman from Ohio addressing her colleagues in Congress. Her lament was that some regions of Ohio were experiencing 15% unemployment. While that is certainly painful, it is no where near the level of unemployment that parts of Michigan have been suffering for many years now. But that wasn't the striking part of what she said. The more striking statement was that food banks and pantries in Ohio were turning away people because they were unable to cope with the demand.

It's unimaginable to me that such a thing could happen here. Granted the unemployment rate in Kent County is one of the lowest in the State, but still the Department of Human Services reported a 2% increase in Food Assistance Program cases for February in our county. That makes the total caseload 47,603, up from 46,636 in January. The total number of recipients is 98,934. That's a lot of mouths to feed in just one county for a state that is struggling economically.

If you have been following SECOM for any period of time you know that the way we are able keep the doors open and not turn any one way is through the generosity of the community. Running on a tight budget helps, but it's no substitute for people that are always willing to do something to help the next person.

One of the recent instances of generosity came from the employees at L-3 Avionics Systems. As part of a competition with two of their competitors, the employees recently donated 3,441 pounds of food and almost \$600 to SECOM. As I mentioned last time, this is typically a slow time of year for us and this donation will fill a big need.

The second instance of generosity that happened recently didn't involve feeding the body. Instead it fed the mind and soul by educating and bringing a little joy to the lives of two families that are currently having financial difficulties. SECOM's own Cher Blattner arranged to get the Public Museum of Grand Rapids to donate admission and parking for the families at the museum. In addition she purchased tickets so that the families could see the Big Bugs exhibit. An act like this is one that will bring rewards to our community in the years to come.

If you've ever wondered what we mean when we say "*helping today, building hope for tomorrow*"; I think that these two acts of kindness combine to make a perfect illustration. Families are being fed today by L-3 Avionics Systems and stimulated to learn and prepare for tomorrow by the Public Museum. Together the community becomes a better place for all of us.

Thanks to all of you for helping us keep the doors open and delivering meaningful programs.

Best Regards,



John R. Smith  
Executive Director

Visit SECOM online at: [secomministries.org](http://secomministries.org) or  
follow us on Twitter at: [twitter.com/secomministries](https://twitter.com/secomministries)

Please feel free to forward this email to anyone you think might be interested.

Staff:

John R. Smith  
Marcia Thompson (Koens-Miles)  
Cher Blattner  
Mildred Rodriguez  
Jonaton Palomino  
Sherry Storie  
Robert Heys

Board:

Barbara Brechting  
Al Dieterman  
Iracema Garcia  
Susan Hansen  
Sheryl Marie Jones  
Nancy Kitchen  
Dr. Norman Kohns  
David Luna  
Christine T. McClain  
Gil Segovia

If you would like to be removed from this email list please contact us at [development@secomministries.org](mailto:development@secomministries.org).