



**Friends of
South End Community Outreach Ministries (SECOM)
Newsletter**

September 27, 2010

Dear Friends,

As we head into autumn a number of annual items occur that benefit SECOM. Considering the balance in our checking account they couldn't begin soon enough. Summer is always a challenging time for us and this year was a difficult as ever in terms of keeping our financial house in order.

Here's a couple of campaigns coming up that you can participate in and help the community and SECOM.

On October 9, ACCESS of West Michigan is having its County Wide Food Drive. This yearly early event restocks the shelves of ACCESS's eleven key pantries (of which SECOM is one) after of a summer of being depleted. Each of the pantries is dependent on the food drive to prepare for the coming holiday season. See the attached flyer or go to <http://accessofwestmichigan.org> for more information.

On September 10, Heart of West Michigan United Way kicked off its annual campaign. As a partner agency SECOM benefits in more ways than financially.

Being a partner with United Way makes us a partner with over fifty other agencies in Kent County that provide services beyond our abilities or resources. Understanding that there is an interconnection in social problems. Our focus on hunger, health and education has less value without agencies that provide shelter, counseling and services to those with specific disabilities. The benefit of this to us and to the community it is invaluable.

The financial benefits we receive from United are substantial as well. Almost 10% of our annual budget comes from that one source. That we are able to use to operate the pantry as needed is extremely important. While receiving food is always appreciated there is a need to receive the food, store it and distribute it. All of those things take money. The electric bill and upkeep on our walk-in freezer and refrigerator alone amount to many thousands of dollars each month. Without those pieces of equipment our ability to distribute food efficiently would be greatly diminished.

This year United Way is focusing on education, financial independence and health. These are all areas that SECOM agrees are priorities for a vibrant Kent County.

Finally, in early November we will be doing our year end appeal for assistance. It isn't news to anyone that things during this economic downturn are deeper and longer that we have seen since the Great Depression. Your ability to respond generously will be appreciated by so many in the community.

Giving a hint of alarm is not something we do lightly, but the need is so prevalent at this time. I hope that you will be able to help the community and SECOM by supporting us directly or through one of these campaigns.

If you would prefer to donate your time, there are opportunities for that as well.

One big need is for volunteers to help our neighborhood improve their English skills. According to a survey done for us recently, 65% of the families in Burton Heights speak Spanish at home as their primary language. A little informal instruction would make obtaining employment or getting a better job much easier.

The other big need is to spend time with pre-school children. It's amazing how much a child can absorb just from being read to or engaged in a game.

Finally, the Holiday Basket sign-ups are beginning next week. We are in need of individuals on Tuesday afternoons and Thursday mornings starting October 5.

If you or an organization you know would be interested in any of these volunteer opportunities, please call Mildred about the Holiday Baskets or me concerning educational volunteering at 616.452.7684.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards,

Robert Heys
Development Director

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

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Mildred Rodriguez
Jonaton Palomino
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Robert Heys

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