

# Sharing & Caring

Serving The Midlands for 40 years

## In 2022, The Cooperative Ministry celebrates 40 years of service to the Midlands community

In 1981, unemployment was in double digits. A faltering economy from the 1970s resulted in grants for state Medicaid programs being cut. Interest rates within a tight housing market reached 21 percent.

People were hurting.

In response, five downtown Columbia churches (First Baptist, First Presbyterian, Main Street United Methodist, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, and Washington Street United Methodist) began discussions with the interfaith organization Community Care to

address the needs of the impoverished, homeless, and transients in the downtown area. A Downtown Ministry Action Study was started.

By 1982, the study established a Project Advisory Committee under Community Care. The Advisory Committee created a coordinated program of services - the Downtown Cooperative Ministry Program. Rev. Marvin Lare, executive director of Community Care, hired Milton Hines as the part-time coordinator of the new organization. Jack Banks was the first president of the board of directors. On Monday, September 20, 1982, 'The Ministry' first began offering services.

On Monday, April 15, 1985, the original Project Advisory Committee voted for The Cooperative Ministry to leave Community Care and secure full-time staffing.



### BE A FRIEND

#### AND HELP US CELEBRATE 40 YEARS

Be a friend of The Cooperative Ministry with your monthly, recurring gift of any amount. Recurring donors can spread a larger gift over 12 months. A \$50 monthly gift will help as many as two families with basic needs and can prevent homelessness. As a friend, we will ensure you are at the center of our Anniversary plans. Snap a photo of the Flow Code to reach our Donor page or visit [coopmin.org](http://coopmin.org).



On Tuesday, February 11, 1986, The Cooperative Ministry was incorporated by the State of South Carolina and began its operations from Bethel AME Church on Sumter Street. Jan Hines was hired as the first Executive Director. The Cooperative Ministry moved to its own Taylor Street location in 1995 with satellites in Bythewood and Eastover.

With support from the Jewish community, in 1992, The Cooperative Ministry moved to become an interfaith organization.

Today, The Cooperative

Ministry is located at 3821 W. Beltline Blvd., Columbia, where it moved in 2006. The building was repurposed from a car dealership, and the mortgage was paid off in 2017 through a capital campaign.

More than 50 churches and Beth Shalom Synagogue annual support The Cooperative Ministry with donations and volunteerism. In the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2021, 90 percent of all expenses went to direct program services.

Services continue to expand. Ten services benefit clients today, providing short-term crisis assistance and long-term sustainability help. More than 15,000 people received help in 2021.

For more information about The Cooperative Ministry's work in 2022, please visit [www.coopmin.org](http://www.coopmin.org) and at [www.facebook.com/TheCooperativeMinistry](https://www.facebook.com/TheCooperativeMinistry).

## More than 15,000 people were served in 2021

In 2021, as COVID-19 gave way to the Delta and Omicron variants, The Cooperative Ministry served 15,373 people - an increase of 13.25 percent over Calendar Year 2020.

That number, 15,373, reflects 963 payments for rent or utility assistance - important payments that often prevent evictions and keep men, women, and children in their homes. The average home that we serve includes almost three individuals.

That number reflects 1,042 food boxes and food vouchers distributed to hungry people. Keep in mind that we don't have a food pantry. We maintain a small emergency food closet and partner with area church-based food banks. Your donations of food have directly benefitted others through our clothing and furniture bank.

That number reflects 15,040 free clothing items distributed to clients for work and school. We also provide free clothing to other non-profits and government agencies like the University of South Carolina Supportive Housing, Sober Living Transitional Housing, Lexington Richland Alcohol and Drug Abuse Center (LRADAC), Lexington and Columbia Mental Health, Richland One and Richland Two school districts, Restoring Promise, and Transitions.

That number reflects a record 10,667 free tax



returns, generating \$11.6 million in refunds. The annual tax refund is the largest single check many clients receive all year. Let me venture to say that most, if not all, that money remains in our local economy.

That number represents as many as 350 families served through our Car Program. Cars donated to The Cooperative

Ministry are sold at a local auction, maximizing the proceeds to serve more client households.

Beyond those we serve, The Cooperative Ministry was benefitted in 2021 by 492 volunteers serving 14,194 hours. Those hours equal 27 percent of our workforce. Volunteers serve in front-end client reception, as crisis counselors, in our clothing and furniture bank, and providing landscaping in the spring and fall. Volunteers come as individuals, but they also come as work and church volunteer groups serving for a few hours or a full day.

Despite COVID-19, you have been faithful with your donations and volunteerism to meet the needs of those who are hurting and in crisis.

Thank you so much for believing in our mission, and we hope you will continue to join with us during this Anniversary year.

## Thank you!

The Cooperative Ministry wants to thank Mr. Jim Hudson, President & Founder of Jim Hudson Automotive Group, for his generosity in matching the first 20 cars donated to our Car Program, October to December 2021.

We are equally thrilled to announce that we received 34 car donations during **The Jim Hudson Challenge** - exceeding our goal by 14 cars. Thank you! All donated cars are sold at auction, and the end result of **The Jim Hudson Challenge** is that we will be able to help as many as 250 families with basic needs, and in many cases prevent homelessness in our community.

*Jim Hudson*  
AUTOMOTIVE GROUP



## Volunteers needed; individuals and groups welcome

Retirees, college students, stay-at-home parents, and groups from churches, corporations, and neighborhoods - everyone can find a place to serve at The Cooperative Ministry.

We provide a safe and secure environment for service.

In 2021, 492 volunteers served 14,194 volunteer hours, assisting with front-end reception, tax preparation, sorting clothes in the clothing bank, and providing much-needed seasonal

landscaping.

Volunteerism is easy. Email Rhemie Gantz at [rgantz@coopmin.org](mailto:rgantz@coopmin.org) or call her direct at (803) 799-0932. Tax volunteers can email Maggie Fant at [mfant@coopmin.org](mailto:mfant@coopmin.org).

Tours can be combined with service. Ask about tours when calling.

Help is always needed and appreciated at The Cooperative Ministry.

### Front-End Reception -

Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. or 1-5 p.m.

### Clothing Bank or Seasonal

Landscaping - Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturdays by appointment.

Tax Preparation - January to mid-April each year.

## Thousands receive free tax help through mid- April

In 2021, The Cooperative Ministry's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) volunteers prepared 10,667 free tax returns for Midlands taxpayers. Those returns generated an estimated \$11.6 million in area refunds.

On Monday, Jan. 29, more than 100 VITA volunteers were back at work with free tax preparation services available to any taxpayer earning \$58,000 or less annually.

The Cooperative Ministry has provided volunteers and management of the Midlands VITA program since 2013. Nationally, VITA has operated for more than 50 years.

All VITA volunteers who prepare returns must take and pass tax law training that meets or exceeds IRS standards. This training includes mandates regarding the privacy and confidentiality of all taxpayer information. In addition to requiring volunteers to certify their knowledge of the tax laws, the IRS requires a quality review check for every return prepared at a VITA site before filing.

The VITA program allows eligible taxpayers to take advantage of all available tax



credits, including the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Child Tax Credit (CTC), and education credits.

Basic eligibility requirements include Household income less than \$58,000; if self-employed, business expenses should be less than \$25,000; and no income from rental property. Taxpayers have three options for tax preparation services:

(1) In-person. Taxpayers can visit a VITA location and meet with a certified volunteer. The return is completed with the taxpayer and filed.

(2) Drop-off. Taxpayers bring documents to a participating VITA site, where documents are scanned and completed by a VITA volunteer. Once returns are completed, they will be available for pickup. Taxpayers may need to wait on returns to be prepared at some locations.

(3) On-Line. Use [www.GetYourRefund.org/](http://www.GetYourRefund.org/) [TheCooperativeMinistry.org/](http://TheCooperativeMinistry.org/) and upload tax documents to a virtual VITA site. Taxpayers answer simple questions about their household situation, securely upload tax documents, and get connected to a certified VITA volunteer. The VITA team remotely prepares the tax return, speaks with the taxpayer to review their return, and files it with taxpayer consent.

The VITA program is available through mid-April. For information, please visit [www.coopmin.org/vita](http://www.coopmin.org/vita).

**THE COOPERATIVE MINISTRY**  
**3821 WEST BELTLINE BLVD.**  
**COLUMBIA, SC 29204**

## THE COOPERATIVE MINISTRY

3821 W. Beltline Blvd.  
Columbia, SC 29204  
(803) 799-3853  
FAX: (803) 252-8621  
Email: [info@coopmin.org](mailto:info@coopmin.org)  
Website: [www.coopmin.org](http://www.coopmin.org)  
Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/  
thecooperativeministry](http://www.facebook.com/thecooperativeministry)

Beth H. Irick, Chief Executive Officer  
Scott Vaughan, Director,  
Community Awareness

Serving the Midlands for 40 Years

## THE COOPERATIVE MINISTRY

Serving the Midlands for 39 Years



To Donate • 803-799-2428 • [coopmin.org](http://coopmin.org)

**ONE** car, sold at auction, can help  
up to **FIVE** people with basic needs

- Free Towing - Weekday pickup within 24 hours or as scheduled.
- Knowledgeable guidance with Title Transfer.
- Letter of Receipt and Disposal for Tax Purposes.