

Sharing & Caring

Serving The Midlands for 40 years

Fiscal Year-End Luncheon celebrates 14,294 services provided

At its Year-End Celebration Luncheon in June, The Cooperative Ministry celebrated Fiscal Year 2022-2023 highlights alongside community and faith partners, volunteers, board members, and staff. The annual event was at First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, one of The Cooperative Ministry’s founding church partners.

Columbia Police Chief W.H. “Skip” Holbrook, a board member for The Cooperative Ministry,

brought special remarks about his board service.

“When I first became police chief, the mission of The Cooperative Ministry appealed to me—the focus on hard-working low-wage earners. We look for outcomes in our efforts. I saw people needing assistance and The Cooperative Ministry providing assistance to help others create a better, sustainable

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Columbia Police Chief Skip Holbrook addresses the audience.



Tax Volunteer Cindy Cox gives a testimonial about her service.

Our Fiscal Year Impact Numbers (July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023)

11,248 people served

14,294 services provided

2,821 people received free clothing

1,506 people received food assistance

\$319,354 paid for rent and utility assistance

6,177 free tax returns completed





Columbia Police Chief Skip Holbrook and Beth Irick, CEO of The Cooperative Ministry, at the year-end celebration luncheon. The Cooperative Ministry served 11,248 people in 2022-2023.

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future for people and their families.”

Cindy Cox, who volunteers each year through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program, gave a testimony about her years of service and why she serves. “We prepare taxes for people in our community. It’s rewarding and humbling when people come back and speak to me. People are often overwhelmed by refunds we help them receive because of the available tax credits. This service makes a difference in their annual income.”

The Cooperative Ministry’s CEO, Beth Irick, highlighted the newly renovated clothing bank warehouse, which is now a “store setting” for clients to choose the free clothes they need for work and school. Hundreds of volunteers have helped sort, tag, and rack clothing and assisted clients with “shopping” for clothes.

During the past Fiscal Year, The Cooperative Ministry celebrated its 40th Anniversary. Started in 1982 by five downtown Columbia churches, The Cooperative Ministry is supported today by more than 60 church partners.

Codell Tillman says of financial coaches ‘they changed my life; gave me hope’

Ms. Codell Tillman says she came to The Cooperative Ministry “down and out” and needed encouragement. Paired with a Financial Empowerment coach, she was encouraged to live forward and work on goals to help improve her day-to-day living.

“I know God brought me here,” she says, wearing stylish new clothes received through The Cooperative Ministry’s clothing bank. She met with coaches Al Counts and Michelle Blackman and said, “They have big hearts. They told me that we would work together, and my goals were insurance on my home, dentures, and some renovations on my house. I received financial help, counseling for my goals, free clothing, and food. I thank God for allowing The Cooperative Ministry to help me. You have to keep living, and The Cooperative Ministry has provided that encouragement for me. They won’t let me quit now.”



Edward Jones

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From Beth H. Irick, CEO Thank you, Junior League

Earlier this year, I was approached by Alexa Godwin of Godwin Motors—one of our neighbors on West Beltline Blvd. Alexa is a valuable member of our board of directors, serving as board secretary.



Alexa presented the idea of partnering with the Junior League of Columbia for volunteerism in our new clothing bank “store setting.” Telephone calls and emails were exchanged, and the Junior League began sending coordinated volunteers several days each week over several months. Alexa, a Junior League member, served every Tuesday. Those kind ladies sorted, labeled, and racked clothing, but they often had an opportunity to encourage and help our clients with clothing and accessory selections.

Through this partnership, we were invited to apply for a “Done In A Day” Gift, and our application was approved. That gift funded accessory and shoe racks for better organization, small shopping carts to help the client experience, better signage, and we will add decals to our new van. These decals will help strengthen our community awareness as our van makes its way around Columbia.

This work, over several months, with the Junior League of Columbia is indicative of partnerships we have with many of our church partners and community organizations. We are thankful for each one of them. Please call me if you would like to know more about our work and how your organization can get involved.

THE COOPERATIVE MINISTRY

Serving the Midlands for 40 Years



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Volunteers needed for annual tax return preparation

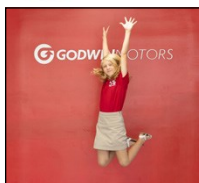
The Cooperative Ministry is recruiting volunteers for its Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program to serve during the 2024 tax season.

Volunteers receive training to provide free tax help for low-to-moderate-income families who need assistance preparing their tax returns. During 2023, dozens of volunteers prepared more than 6,000 returns at tax sites managed by The Cooperative Ministry.

To volunteer or for more information, please email Michelle Blackman at mblackman@coopmin.org. You may also visit www.coopmin.org/vita or use the QR Code above. Orientation and training will occur this fall, and volunteerism begins during the tax season (February-April 2024). Tax sites are generally open nights and weekends, and your volunteer hours are flexible.



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

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