



2023

# Annual Report

People  
*Helping*  
People





# Letter from the *Director*

**In Acts 1:8, Jesus says to His disciples, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth," including Pullman!**

If Jesus were walking the earth today, I imagine Him being in Pullman. I envision Him sitting on the floor of the Linking Center playing and laughing with the children or walking up and down the aisles of our pantry helping a widow put food in her cart. I see Him serving in our warehouse with a homeless man who is waiting for his clothes to be washed, working outside in the snow helping a family without heat load firewood into a truck, and I imagine a Sunday morning in the Worship Center with Jesus sitting on a chair opening the Bible and saying to the others, "let Me tell you all about my Father." And then, I see the faces of those serving on Jesus' behalf; Jane, Kristi, Enedina, Charish, Lance, Lou, Tom, Nancy and so many others.

Reflecting on all that happened at PHP in 2023, the word "growth" comes to mind. We witnessed people growing in their relationship with Jesus. Seventeen people gave their life to Jesus for the first time or recommitted their life to Him and were baptized.

We experienced growth in children and families served, averaging over 90 children a day in our after-school program, 40 at our Sunday worship services, and more than 200 families each month coming through our food pantry. We also grew as a team, adding many new and wonderful volunteers and even a few staff! Additionally, we grew our facilities, creating more classrooms in the Linking Center for the children, updating and remodeling our 130-year-old Worship Center, and completing the build of our new food pantry and office space.

We have experienced God's blessings, and it fills me with great anticipation for what He will do in 2024. Our heart's desire is to go deeper with the families we serve, be grace-filled, and more intentional sharing Jesus' love. We've made plans to enhance and start new programs, but I've learned to hold "our plans" loosely, because God may have other plans, and they are always better!

I welcome you to page through this booklet and relive or discover all that God has done this past year. It is our attempt to celebrate and share what God is doing in Pullman and to give Him all praise and glory.

In closing, I must say thank you to all of you, whether near or far, that gave so generously of your time, talent, treasure and testimony to share Jesus' love in Pullman. We are grateful to serve this beautiful rural community and its neighbors called Pullman with you.

**May God be glorified!**

**Executive Director  
People Helping People of Pullman**



# Worship



The People Helping People worship service is an extension of our beginnings as an evening community bible study. Our 10am Sunday worship service is a place where the Pullman community is welcomed just as they are. It's a safe place to explore who Jesus is and how much He loves the community. Our Worship Center is also home to a Spanish speaking church, Inglesia Misionera, each Sunday afternoon.

This past year, our 130-year-old worship center received major renovations, including a new sound system, exterior siding, carpet, paint, new windows & doors and a lighted cross at the entrance of the church. We welcomed 17 new individuals to the church through baptism, and our Sunday worship attendance has risen to over 40 families.

## Meet Our Pastor

Mike Jones grew up in the Pullman community living what he describes as a "fairly messy life." It wasn't until many years after moving away that he felt called by God to move home with a mission of the Kingdom kind. Mike said, "During the time I moved back to Pullman, I was driving a semi-truck and volunteering with any spare time I had. I never had the thought of becoming a pastor, but it seems God has a sense of humor. It's amazing how he aligned everything in my life for this moment, for His glory."

Thank you to Pastor Mike and to our worship community for blessing us with a successful year. Let us continue to spread the love of God through our worship and our services.



"It's important that we have grace, just as Christ has grace for us, when helping people reach what their potential is and could be."

-Jeff K.  
Executive Director



# Food Pantry & Resource Center



**30.9% of families in Lee Township live below the poverty line** or are considered part of the ALICE population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This means that when unexpected expenses arise, many of the families in the Pullman area are forced to choose between filling a prescription or fixing their car.

In May of 2023, we opened a new food pantry and resource center to help families stretch their income. Our new food pantry is more than four times the size of our old food pantry and gives guests a grocery store-like experience.

Pantry guests choose the items that are best for their family and are able to receive fresh fruits and vegetables, meat, shelf stable items, cleaning supplies, diapers, infant formula, hygiene products and much more.



## Laundry & Shower Services

Inside of our new food pantry, we were able to include two shower rooms as well as a laundry facility that houses two washing machines and two dryers. This resource brings a level of dignity to those who occasionally lack running water, especially during the winter months.

### Impact

- 348 winter coats distributed to the community
- 429 local families & 253 migrant families assisted with food and personal hygiene
- 20 families provided with baby/diaper support
- 68 families (100 adults & 176 children) adopted for Christmas "Adopt-a-Family"
- 146 families (458 children) supported through Toys for Tots partnership
- 90 seniors received Christmas meals
- 295 community members received Thanksgiving dinners



"We have families in our community who wonder where their next meal will come from. When they walk into our food pantry and get to shop with dignity, picking out the foods that are right for their family, you can see the relief on their faces."

-Deanna O.  
Pantry Services & Volunteer Manager

# Youth Programming



Our youth programs, which began as a weekly bible study, have blossomed over the years into regular after school and summer programming. Children preschool through senior year of high school in Fennville, Bloomingdale, Innacademy and South Haven schools are welcomed at the Linking Center youth facility throughout the year.

We're proud of our safe, caring environment where children can experience the love of Christ, learn more about the world through activities like field trips and grow to meet their God-given potential.

## After School Program

During the school year, students come from school to our Linking Center to receive a meal, work with volunteers on homework and play in a safe, welcoming environment. Every child who attends the after school program receives dinner. Many of the children who attend our programming don't have access to the basic life resources needed to thrive. In order to fill the gap for these needs, PHP partners with local schools to provide extra support for children who might need more attention or practice in specific school subjects.

## Summer Program

During the summer months, elementary school students are welcomed at People Helping People for lunch, summer playtime and field trips. Middle and high school students participate in this program in leadership roles, regularly receiving larger responsibilities for set-up, program organization and more.

## Bible Study

Every Thursday night, 70+ children of every age come for Bible Study at People Helping People's Linking Center. After a free community dinner, youth and adults participate in learning about the love of God through videos, worship and a short lesson.

### Impact

- 90 children come to PHP for after school and summer programs every day
- 25 teenage students grew in their leadership skills by volunteering as mentors for the Summer Program
- 280 students supported with back-to-school supplies and clothing

"People Helping People has shaped me into the leader I am now. I didn't know that I could be a leader or that I had a voice until I began volunteering and eventually working in the youth programs."

-Joseline M.  
Former Youth Coordinator



# Volunteer Programming

People Helping People relies on our generous network of volunteers to serve our community every year. In 2023, over 100 volunteers contributed about 12,000 hours to People Helping People's youth program and 3,200 hours to the food pantry and family resource center, providing the equivalent service of over **\$200,000**, or the work of **four and a half full-time employees!**



## The Teams that Make it Happen

### Youth

Our largest program, youth volunteers play a vital role in providing transportation, supervision, food preparation and special events coordination for our youth programming. Our dedicated volunteers allow children to experience the value of consistency through regular presence during drop-in after school care.

### Marketing & Fundraising

People Helping People holds two fundraising events each year that require a team of gifted volunteers to plan and successfully run. This team also serves through social media and annual fund development.

### Pantry & Family Service

To keep our pantry running smoothly, our volunteers assist with guest intake, pick up food donations from community organizations, pack food and coordinate our coat drive.

### Worship & Ministry

While some of our volunteers are responsible for setting up, greeting and caring for visual arts or tech needs during Sunday worship services, many more individuals directly serve the community through outreach events, physical needs coordination, or Bible study leadership.

### Maintenance & Facilities

With three program buildings and three rental homes on 15 acres, there's always work to be done for our maintenance and facilities volunteers! Whether it's providing snow removal, lawn care, cleaning or other small maintenance tasks, these volunteers keep us going in every season.



# Housing



People Helping People has three rental homes in the community used to help families in need of safe and affordable housing. PHP journeys closely with each of these three families. Some receive food pantry or youth program services, others attend PHP worship services and Bible studies, and some even volunteer or are employed through PHP.

This past year we had a family donate a mobile home. We placed that home on a piece of PHP property in Pullman. We then found a hard-working family receiving services from PHP that were in need of a safe and affordable place to live. Friends of PHP committed to journeying with this family and helped walk them through purchasing the home. This is the first house they've owned. Their daughters were so excited to share a bedroom with a closet!

## Meet Our Leadership Team



**Jeff Kruithof,**  
Executive Director

Jeff began serving People Helping People as a consultant and joined the team as Executive Director in 2018. Jeff has spent his entire career in the nonprofit sector and enjoys serving the Pullman community through PHP. Jeff and his wife, Lisa, have three daughters and one son-in-law. He enjoys vacationing in Florida with his family, spending summers on the water and his falls hunting.



**Mike Jones,**  
Community Pastor

Mike joined the People Helping People team as Community Pastor in 2021 after volunteering with us for many years. He graduated from the Fearless Family of Churches' church ministry training program. Mike leads Sunday worship services, outreach initiatives and works with all of our programs to build relationships with the community and show the love of Christ.



**Melinda Jones,**  
Youth Director

Melinda joined People Helping People in 2018 to serve Pullman's youth. Originally from Texas, Melinda has lived in Michigan for half of her life and has been blessed to serve the people of Pullman for many years now. She and her husband, Mike, have five children and two grandchildren.



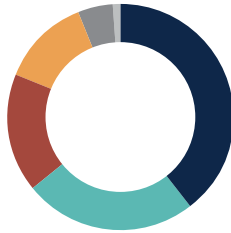
**Deanna Oonk,**  
Pantry Services &  
Volunteer Manager

Deanna joined People Helping People as our Pantry Services and Volunteer Manager after working in the legal field for several years. She and her husband live in the Hamilton area where they have two sons and a daughter-in-law.

# By The Numbers

**Operational Costs: \$730,080**

- Youth: 40%
- Pantry: 25%
- Worship: 17%
- Administration: 13%
- Fundraising: 5%
- Housing: 1%



## Revenue

- Donations: \$644,077
- Churches: \$52,253
- Grants: \$19,872
- Fundraising Events: \$321,735
- Housing: \$27,699
- Misc. Revenue: \$88,131

## 6,600 New Sq. Ft.

Pantry store & warehouse space: 5,000 sq. ft., attached office space is 1,600 sq. ft.

## 429 Local Families

Served through food pantry

## 253 Migrant Families

Served through food pantry

## 21,000

Meals Served in 2023

## 12 Staff Positions

Team members employed by PHP

## 90 Youth

Served Through Youth Ministry Daily

# Support People Helping People

We rely on the generous support of our donors and volunteers to keep our programs running and to continue supporting our resilient community. There are many ways you can support our Christ-driven mission, including:



**Give a  
Financial Gift**



**Donate to Our  
Food Pantry**



**Volunteer  
With Us**



**Support  
Local Youth**



**Worship  
With Us**

*Support People Helping  
People Today*



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