

Fall 2016

NETWorks Good Neighbor Newsletter

A Cooperative Christian Ministry in Northlake, Embury Hills and Tucker, Georgia

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Director's View

In the seven months or so I've been at NETWorks, one part of our mission statement has become my guiding word. "Responding with the hospitality of Christ" sets our mission and directs my daily interaction with all in our community. Getting to come to work with those words as my mission of the day is both inspiring and challenging.

But, I know that alone I can't do anything. Especially as a general introvert, showing hospitality can be difficult for me. It's only when I rely on our Lord to guide me and infuse me with His Spirit am I able to respond with Christ's hospitality. When I let Christ's hospitality flow through me is when I am truly fulfilling the mission of NETWorks; that's when I get to meet my neighbors in a sacred space as fellow children of God. Please join us in that space.



David Fisher



Taste of Tucker on Saturday, Oct. 22

The seventh annual Taste of Tucker street festival offers gourmet dishes, music from a variety of live bands, and this year, a race for runners.

The event will be held Saturday, Oct. 22, 1 to 6 p.m., on Tucker's Main Street. Two dozen area restaurants will offer samples of appetizers, entrees and desserts for purchase. A full afternoon of live music will feature Southern rock and classic country band Convoy, while Members Only will cover hits of the 1980s. Features include a farmers market, a kids' zone, and special drink venues. Primo Grills will raffle off an \$1800 ceramic outdoor cooker.

Admission is free. Attendees purchase \$1 tickets to exchange for food

samples, with most entrees costing between one and four tickets.

Proceeds from the event benefit NETWorks Cooperative Ministry; EIRO, a consulting service for churches; and the Old Town Tucker Merchants Association.

Earlier in the day, Eric's Fit Lab is sponsoring a Fun Run with a 5K race and a kids' 1K race beginning at 4985 Lavista Road at 7:30 a.m. Proceeds will go to NETWorks Cooperative Ministry and the DeKalb County Police Explorer Program.

For more information about the race, visit www.active.com and search for "Tucker 5K." For info about the street festival, visit www.tasteoftucker.com.

Classes to help our neighbors

NETWorks is helping neighbors improve household budgeting and job hunting skills with two educational courses this autumn.

In September, NETWorks hosted the Resume Cafe, a free, three-class program conducted by professional counselors Carolyn Coburn-Allen and Claire Blake. They focused on assessing each student's work skills, writing a resume, and developing a plan to target likely employers.

A 12-week Faith & Finances course is beginning in October. The classes teach participants how to manage debt and achieve savings goals. Students learn skills such as how to develop and keep to a household budget, and how to deal with a bank to set up a checking account.

For information on future classes, contact NETWorks at 770-939-6454 or visit www.networkscoop.org.

Refrigerated truck increases food supplies

With a grant from the Atlanta Community Food Bank, NETWorks has acquired equipment that will significantly increase food supplies for our neighbors.

The grant purchased a recent model 16-foot refrigerated truck and a commercial size cooler. These assets allow us to gather and store a larger quantity of food to share with households in our Grocery Co-op and other programs.

Previously, volunteers had to drive their own vehicles to ACFB in downtown Atlanta and load individual boxes of food into their cars or pickups. Now we have the capacity to load pallets into the truck and, once back at NETWorks, to keep the food fresh for a longer period of time.

Program Director Stephanie Suggs has noted the difference. "Before, we averaged about 3,000 pounds of food from ACFB each month. Since we put the truck into service in July, we have averaged more than 6,000 pounds," she explained.

"And it is much quicker, more efficient and less stress on our volunteers with the big truck," she added. "Critically, it has allowed us to expand our Grocery Co-op from 10 households to 20, essentially doubling the number of people we're assisting with that program."



Good Neighbor stores provide dignified, affordable shopping

NETWorks will hold its fourth annual Good Neighbor Christmas Store at First Baptist Church of Tucker's gym on Main Street, December 9 - 11. The store enables local families to select gifts for children and adults at greatly reduced prices.

NETWorks receives donations of hundreds of new toys and gifts to sell. These come from congregants at NETWorks partner churches as well as members of local clubs, civic groups, businesses, and individuals throughout the community.

The event needs dozens of volunteers to catalog, sort and tag the items at 50% or more off retail prices, display the goods in appealing fashion throughout the shopping space, work check-out registers, gift wrap presents, and entertain shoppers' children with games or crafts.

Parents or grandparents have an opportunity to work in these jobs and earn in-store credit. Those who have done so in the past have said they were thereby able to provide holiday presents for

their families.

A similar concept was used to conduct a Good Neighbor Back-To-School Store this past July.

Parents were able to purchase pens, glue, notebooks and other supplies at discounted prices. Items that went unsold were later donated to local schools. Plans are now being made to hold the store again next summer.

If you can donate money or items to the Christmas store or work a couple hours there during the week, please contact NETWorks at 770-939-6454 or visit www.networkscoop.org.



Member church profile

Northlake Church of Christ maximizes response to needs of members and neighbors

One of the oldest member churches in NETWorks has a long history of service in the larger world.

When it relocated to Tucker in 1995 and adopted its current name, Northlake Church of Christ had already been supporting local senior housing and a mission in Honduras for many years.

In its new home, the congregation added a clothing ministry which today serves many neighbors referred from NETWorks.

"It's important to us to support Christian outreach in our community," explained Minister Ike Reeser.

Located in one of the most ethnically and economically diverse areas in America, the church has welcomed Sudanese, Liberian and other immigrants. It has also had to address many requests for assistance.

"We were deluged in the past," said Ike. "And we didn't know if people asking for help were telling the truth or not about their needs."

Like many congregations, Northlake Church of Christ faces limitations on financial and human resources. "We depend on lay leadership, and our members tried to answer the needs themselves," Ike elaborated. "Once we joined NETWorks, we saw two benefits.

We could focus our efforts here at the church on serving our members and immediate neighbors. And we could refer others in need to NETWorks, where the staff has more training and resources to provide long-term solutions to their problems."

Ike also noted that NETWorks offers opportunities for his members to serve the wider community.

Marianna Anderson began volunteering when NETWorks was housed at Lawrenceville Road United Methodist Church in the early 2000s.

She has worked as an interviewer to process requests for assistance,

tended the NETWorks food pantry and served on the Board of Directors as the organization's treasurer.

"Working at NETWorks has allowed me to meet a wide range of people from other churches and the community," she said. "Assisting people in need expresses the role of Jesus in my life."

"NETWorks is a great place for people from our church to serve in the outside world," Ike concluded. "And working together is the best way for our local churches to reach out to our neighbors and provide the resources to make a meaningful difference in their lives."



Pastor Ike and Marianna

News Briefs

Requests for help increase. During the first seven months of this year, requests for financial assistance have grown, both in numbers of people served and average amount of assistance provided. Months January through May averaged 115 people served and \$3774 provided in financial assistance, while June and July averaged 135 people and \$7769.

Keller Williams donates pantry supplies. In September, Keller Williams Realty, which has a history of community service, designated NETWorks' pantry as a recipient of its latest campaign. Chris Rollings and employees raised enough money to donate more than 600 pounds of food products.



Smoke Rise Baptist joins the cooperative. Our newest church member is Smoke Rise Baptist, located on Hugh Howell Road. The congregation erected its first building in 1969 and has a history of community service both locally and internationally. The church has already established a generous budget for contributions to NETWorks and supplied volunteers for special events and on-going services.