New Program Director Removes Barriers and Amplifies Strengths

In December 2021, Johnny Anderson III joined the Ministry with Community (MwC) team as our new Program Director. Recently, we sat down with Johnny to learn more about programs, outreach, and what our Social Work Team is focusing on.

MwC: Describe your position at MwC for our readers.

Johnny: My job is to see that our Safety and Security Team and Social Work Team serve the most people with the highest quality of service. I make sure that my teams have the tools and time they need to do their jobs well and help remove barriers for our members.

MwC: Do you have a philosophy, perspective, or viewpoint that you bring to this work?

Johnny: I try to keep myself humble and respectful at all times and with all people. I don't think of myself as an expert and I don't have all of the answers. Socrates said, “I know one thing, and that is that I know nothing.” By taking the approach of not knowing, I can keep an open mind.

MwC: Is there anything that our members are experiencing at this moment in time that is particularly challenging?

Johnny: Housing. It's always going to be housing. Shelter is right there at the bottom of the pyramid of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, along with food and safety. That's where a lot of our members are stuck. Nothing else can really happen without meeting those needs first.

We evaluate what people already have going for them and play off of those strengths. Our members are some of the best representatives for local resources and sometimes they educate us.

How can you expect to improve your life if you are in a constant state of fight or flight and uncertainty? That's why it's so important for us to provide stability and safety for the individuals we serve.

People also need a support system. They need someone they can trust that will listen to them and encourage them.

MwC: Trust is a big part of our work, isn't it?

Johnny: Many of our members come to us because they know we will listen. We provide support to those who may not have a family or people who they can trust who are
encouraging them. We have to walk the walk and have our words and actions align.

James Baldwin said, “I can't believe what you say, because I see what you do.” Making sure that we do what we say we will is what builds that trust and rapport.

When it comes to creating trust and a support system, it really takes a whole community to do that.

**MwC: Speaking of community, let’s talk about some of our community partners.**

**Johnny:** We have several other organizations onsite on a regular basis. Family Health Center, Integrated Services of Kalamazoo, Hope Through Navigation, Disability Network, Priority Health, and others. We’re always working to bring more services onsite that our members need.

Having resources in one place helps our members to navigate this complex system and not have to worry about transportation to multiple service providers.

**MwC: Have we made any recent changes to better serve our members?**

**Johnny:** We recently hired a Restorative Justice Coordinator. That’s big for our members because it gives those who make a mistake the chance to learn from the experience, reflect on what happened, heal from it, and make positive changes for themselves going forward.

We created a new position for Evelyn Thompson. She’s our Program Coordinator now, which is great because we can share our power. Sharing power is important because it strengthens the team and keeps us faster and more flexible when serving members.

I just started to oversee our Safety and Security Team. They see a lot of what our members are going through, even before the Social Work Team does. Often, they can provide some insight on what someone needs from us, or they will have a bigger picture of what a member is currently experiencing. Everything we do is interconnected, and by working across departments, we are better able to meet our members’ needs.

**MwC: So, what brought you to Social Work and how did that bring you to Ministry with Community?**

**Johnny:** I did my undergraduate degree in Social Work with a focus on Holistic Health, but as early as junior high, I could sense when someone was feeling down. I often gave words of encouragement and tried to be supportive. One day, after a classmate confided in me, she said, “You should be a Social Worker,” and I said, “What’s that?”

It’s a calling. I never really chose it. I thought I would be a case manager, but I found that I needed to be in a position where I could make systemic change. That appealed to me about my current position. I just try to go where I’m needed.

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**Follow us on Facebook and Twitter to keep up with news, events, and more at MwC.**

Facebook: facebook.com/KzooMwC

Twitter: @KzooMwC

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**Summer Fun**

Thanks to the Kalamazoo Growlers for making us their Nonprofit of the Night on Saturday, July 30, 2022!
Our Garden

Once again, our garden was a highlight of our summer.

Several staff, volunteers, and members worked to maintain the space and harvest the produce.

Mobile Pet Clinic

This summer, the Kalamazoo Humane Society held two clinics in our parking lot to serve our members’ beloved pets.

Several dogs and cats were vaccinated, microchipped, received health checks, and were scheduled for spay/neuter appointments!
Increased Need for Meals

The need for meals is on the rise. On July 18, 2022, we served 482 meals including breakfast and lunch. That’s the highest number of meals we have served onsite in a single day since before the start of the pandemic.

We have many ways of saving on food costs, but even with those efforts, our food bills have almost doubled.

With this in mind, sponsoring a meal is more impactful than ever. See below for details on how to sponsor a meal at MwC.

Sponsored Meals

April 14: Breakfast & Lunch: In memory of Frank Somers

April 16: Breakfast & Lunch: Society of Muslim Women

May 2: In honor of Julie Luginbill’s birthday

May 8: Breakfast & Lunch: Karol Dill in memory of Everett Dill

May 10: Breakfast & Lunch: Prudence McCabe in memory of Mike Johncock

May 13: Breakfast & Lunch: Maggie Ebrite

May 19: Cornerstone Technologies

May 24: Breakfast & Lunch: Sue Caulfield in celebration of her birthday

June 1: Breakfast & Lunch: Susan Kavanaugh in memory of Dr. Thomas Kavanaugh on his 89th birthday

June 6: Breakfast & Lunch: Kaye Bennett in honor of the Hardy family

June 16: Breakfast & Lunch: John Mason in memory of Linda Mason

July 8: Breakfast & Lunch: George and Linda Dunn in honor of Amy Anderson

July 29: Breakfast & Lunch: Maggie Ebrite

August 9: Westra’s Wonders in celebration of Marley Westra’s birthday

August 20: Breakfast & Lunch: Society of Muslim Women

Thank you to everyone who has participated in our Sponsored Meal program! If you’re looking for a way to thank someone, celebrate a milestone, or remember a loved one, consider sponsoring a meal at Ministry with Community.

A gift of $350 sponsors breakfast or lunch. A gift of $500 sponsors both breakfast and lunch on the day of your choice.

On the day your meal is served you and your honoree will be recognized on Facebook, Twitter, and by mail.

Please contact Matt Claus, Development Director, at 269.343.6073 x131 or via email at mclaus@ministry-withcommunity.org to sponsor a meal!
In Memory Of:

Karen Angele  
Patricia Ysais  
Joyce Beebe  
Mark and Jane Bainbridge  
Agnes Bennink  
Richard Bennink  
Scott and Sharon Peterson  
Arthur Roberts and  
Betty Lujan-Roberts  
Sue and Tom Wright  
Bruce Binns  
Margaret Binns  
Linda Boyle  
John Everts  
Robert Dale Brouwer, MD  
Romulo and Maureen Abueva  
Glen and Geeta Douglass  
Gary and Cynthia Ruoff  
Carol and John Trittschuh  
Carol Buck  
Tim and Margaret Franklin  
Thomas Chase  
Lenore J. Lorion  
Joyce Cleasby  
Constance L. Douglas  
Dave Cretsinger  
Nancy and Robert Cretsinger  
Jim and Dee Davidson  
Kenton and Deborah Fisher  
Tom Deem  
Jean Beemer  
Steve and Margo Beemer  
Stephen Friedman  
Kathy J. Hageman  
Carol and Rick King  
Nancy Mein  
Joe Pridegon and Noralyn Ludwig-Pridegon  
Don DeYoung  
Sally Bawtinheimer  
Alicia and Lydia Boner  
Paul and Aedin Clements  
Phil and Betty DeYoung  
Janice E. Drolen  
Harold and Ellen Grevenstuk  
Esther Kelley  
Al and Jennie Ko  
Alexander and Anne Lipsey  
Mark and Donna Ouwersluys  
Michael and Shari Pruis  
Donald and Carol VerHage  
Ina Way  
Paul and Julie Yelsma  
Don and Jackie DeYoung  
Joe and M. Rebecca Schmitt  
Fred and Marie Zuidema  
Dennis Dixon  
Michaelyn Page  
James H.C. Duncan  
Judy Smith  
Evan Ebline  
Moyra Ebline  
Lois E. Ellis  
Frank Erich  
William and Paula Andrus  
Dennis and Bonita Banghart  
First National Bank of Michigan  
Pat Foley  
Terry Dorcy and Karen Hiler  
Mark and Mary Sue Hoffman

Ronald and Patricia Johnson  
Ken and Dee Lintz  
Dave and Cheryl Martin  
Marshall Schau  
Joe and M. Rebecca Schmitt  
Rose Fear  
John Fear  
David Gray  
Barbara Albanese  
Harold L.J. Grenke  
Lenore J. Lorion  
Sistina J. Grenke  
Lenore J. Lorion  
Bob and Peggy Hegel  
Judith H. Halseth  
Fr. Mike Howell  
Patrick O’Hara and Nancy Groenewold  
Robert and Charlotte Koestner  
Thomas Swiat and  
Priscilla Crowley-Swiat  
Dr. Michael Kudlas  
John Hoek and Mary Meagher  
Dorothy Markusse  
Wayne M. Conner  
Greg Melvin  
Joan B. and Gary A. Melvin  
Jack Moss  
Mike and Margaret Low  
Jackie Nemedi  
Ron Nemedi  
Wenda Newhouse  
The Andrews Family  
Dr. Edward Orlovsky  
Allan and Rita LaReau  
Samuel Davis Parker  
George and Gladys Manley  
Greg Plano  
Allan and Shirley Heavery  
Donald Shull  
Pamela and Mark Cassino  
Bruce and Alice Cleveland  
Bob and MaryAnn Hayward  
Prudence McCabe  
Judy E. Park  
R. Thomas and Linda Powell  
Elaine Spieldenner  
Don and Irma Shull  
Leona Van Antwerp  
Ilan Stenesh  
Jochanan and Mabel Stenesh  
Tom and Jutta Swiat  
Thomas Swiat and  
Priscilla Crowley-Swiat  
Dale E. Van Antwerp  
Leona Van Antwerp  
Joan Van Zoeren  
Charles Van Zoeren  
Joyce Vliek  
Ted Vliek  
Florence and Barney Westra  
Karl Westra and Kristine Pioch  
Florence, John, Barney, and Shirley Westra  
Karl Westra and Kristine Pioch  
Patricia Will  
Marie N. Mackey  
M. Gayle Stephenson  
Donald Wiltshire  
Elizabeth Roelofs  
Richard Wisser  
Judy and Jeffrey Smith

In Honor Of:

Charles and Florence Brown  
Carolyn Murphy  
Ellen J. Chase  
Lenore J. Lorion  
John F. Chmiel  
David and Shelley Chmiel  
Robert and Ann Kilkuskie  
Jon and Michelle Crooks  
James M. Minich  
Mikka Dryer  
Shawn and Nita Dryer  
First Presbyterian Church of Richland  
Andrea M. Trautman  
Martin Gerber  
Jacqueline L. Wylie  
Janet Karpus  
Katherine Houston  
Tom and Mary Losiewski  
Laurel E. Hazel  
Prudence McCabe  
A. Gregory and Mary Ann Laurell  
Joan and Gary Melvin  
Constance L. Douglas  
Sam and Mary Oberfee  
Laurel E. Hazel  
William and Nancy Richardson  
Carolyn and Sid Williams  
Street Medicine Kalamazoo  
Ron and Carmen Tanis  
Leona Van Antwerp  
Dick and Carol Van Antwerp  
Nancy Zielske  
Lenore J. Lorion

In Celebration Of:

Kathy Dickason’s Birthday  
Donna Harmon  
Jane and Justin’s Wedding  
Arlan and Sara Gulkem  
Brian and Dar Root  
Doug Wolthuis  
Kaye and Carl’s Birthaversary  
Mike Hardy  
Marlena Kerst on Mother’s Day  
Dennis and Pamela Hjemquist  
Jane and Thomas Norton’s 50th Anniversary  
Linda DeYoung and Tim Finton  
Dave and Jan Snyder’s Anniversary  
Cindy Bushouse

Please note: Memorials and Honorees listed here were received March 26, 2022 through August 25, 2022.

Memorials and Honorees received after August 25, 2022 will appear in the next newsletter.

To correct any errors, please contact Matt Claus at 269.343.6073 x131 or at mclaus@ministrywithcommunity.org.
ITEMS MAY BE DROPPED OFF DAILY FROM 9:00 A.M.–2:00 P.M. AT THE BACK DOOR NEXT TO OUR LOADING DOCK. PLEASE RING THE DOORBELL AND A STAFF MEMBER WILL ASSIST YOU. PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE ITEMS UNATTENDED.

Check out our wish list at ministrywithcommunity.org/wishlist.

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