

- ACLU of Ohio Foundation
- Asian American Community Services
- Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Org
- Camp Fire USA Central Ohio Council
- Camp Sunrise
- Capital Area Humane Society
- Cat Welfare
- Center For Wholeness
- Central Ohio Green Ed Fund
- COSI Columbus
- City Year Columbus
- Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio
- CASA Court Appointed Special Advocates of Franklin County
- Deaf Services Center
- Enhanced Life Styles Training Facility
- Equal Justice Foundation
- Franklinton Development Association
- The Free Press - Columbus Institute For Contemporary Journalism
- Friends of the Scioto
- Greater Columbus Habitat for Humanity
- The Inn at Broad
- Interfaith Center for Peace
- Kaleidoscope Youth Coalition
- League of Women Voters of Metro Columbus Ed Fund
- Material Assistance Providers
- Mercy For Animals
- Mid Ohio Board for an Independent Living Environment
- Native American Center of Central Ohio
- NARAL/Ohio Education Foundation
- Neighborhood Services, Inc.
- Niches Retreat Center
- Ohio Alliance for Art Education
- Ohio Citizen Action Education Fund
- Ohio Coalition on Sexual Assault
- Ohio Domestic Violence Network
- Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association Education Fund
- Ohio League for the Mentally Retarded
- Ohio Literacy Network
- Ohio NOW Education and Legal Fund
- Ohio Parents For Drug Free Youth
- Project Open Hand Columbus
- Simply Living
- Stonewall Columbus
- Tri-County Community Action Agency
- Vietnam Veterans of Ohio
- Waldorf Education Columbus
- Wright Choice Intern Program

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Focus on Community

HOW YOUR CONTRIBUTION HELPS

Community Shares now includes forty-three non-profit members providing vital services and programs in central Ohio and throughout the state. It's impossible to cover in this space all the important work being done by our members, but we'd like to highlight some of our agencies' work on behalf of children in central Ohio.

Neighborhood Services, Inc. (NSI)

Recently *The Columbus Dispatch* ran an article that said 1 in 6 children will go to bed hungry tonight. It's always shocking to read these kinds of statistics about hunger in our community, especially when it affects children. Unfortunately it is a real problem in our neighborhoods that significantly impacts the future of our youth. (See related story below.)

"COSMO donations help Neighborhood Services, Inc. provide food for approximately 275 families a month, which includes 285 children under the age of 17 years," says Cheryl Carter, NSI Executive Director.

Other initiatives of NSI focused on children include: a Summer Youth Program for inner city children who could not otherwise attend camp, offering arts and crafts, reading and math tutoring, field trips, a 4H Club, and more; the Children's Christmas Program; and the Back-to-School Clothing Program which provides children with new school clothes.

Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO)

The largest segment of homeless people in Ohio is _____? Can you fill in the blank? If you said children you were correct. More than 60,000 children and youth will experience homelessness in Ohio this year.

COHHIO's Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) was developed to meet the needs of homeless children and youth by increasing community service, leadership training, and other activities. These youth put their own ideas into action and provide significant input to local state and national policies.

Recent successes include: Changing policies in family shelters to admit teenagers; assisting a local shelter to build a safer building with improved services for children and teens; partnering with national organizations to increase homeless education funding; and participating in over 1,000 community services hours this year alone.

Over the past three years, **11 YEP state council members have graduated from High School, and 4 have gotten their GED's. Of those, 6 have gone on to attend college. Two YEP youth have received National Awards for their individual contributions to the needs of homeless children.**



Deaf Services Center (DSC)

"We can do anything but hear," is the motto of the Deaf Kids & Teens Club. Deaf children get together to learn about themselves and develop interpersonal skills to their fullest potential. The program assists children ages 9 to 18 years old in developing the necessary self-confidence and leadership qualities that will allow them to make the transition from the protected environment of the home and school into the world of young adulthood. Through the club activities, deaf youth grow to understand and believe that "Deaf people can do anything hearing people can do, except hear."

Other programs include Wilderness Bond, an adventure-based program for deaf teens ages 15 to 17 operated at Camp Mary Orton, that provides an opportunity for personal growth through outdoor activities and the Summer 2006 Deaf Adventure Camp at Camp Kern, a fun outdoor experience program for Deaf Kids and Teens. The Family Group, for parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts and uncles, supports families with deaf or hard of hearing children birth through kindergarten.

A true story from Neighborhood Services

I want to tell you about the day I met Mike. A teacher who works with honor students called NSI from a Columbus High School where the majority of the children live in low-income households. She told me that three student's families needed help with food over the holiday break.

When I met Mike, he was a shy, 15 year old young man who seemed uncomfortable that he was in a food pantry. Mike's mother and aunt share a home and Mike is the oldest of six children in the home. Both women work but they make a minimum wage, totaling together about \$21,000 a year.

His teacher had shared with me that he had passed out at school a couple of times and he had told the school nurse that he had not eaten for a day or so. Mike didn't eat dinner some nights so that he could save the food for the days he had a test or so other younger children in the family could eat.

The families came to NSI and shopped through the food pantry selecting the food that their family could use. As Mike and his family got ready to leave, he said, "Thank you! My mother is so proud of me today because I helped the family get food."