

Wabank Witness

Fall 2023

GIVE EXTRA TO SUPPORT AOCC ON NOVEMBER 17

Mark your calendars, invite your friends, and get ready to give EXTRA on Friday, November 17, through the Lancaster County Community Foundation's online celebration of giving!

Lancaster County is extraordinary because of YOU! Through ExtraGive.org, you can join thousands of people across the community to support more than 400 local organizations in our region. Whether you make a \$10 donation, a \$100 donation, or a \$1,000 donation, your gift will go further for the causes you care about!

We know that you may support other good nonprofits in the region, but we will appreciate it if you choose us as a beneficiary of your donations on November 17, as well. Thanks to matching funds from Lancaster County Community Foundation, Presenting Sponsors High Foundation, Murry Foundation, and other community sponsors, your contribution will make an even bigger impact for our community.



Gifts given through the ExtraGive enable the Community Center to continue to provide the Food Bank, English classes, counseling services, a weekly Spanish radio program, Computers for Refugees, and music lessons for the Latino and refugee communities of Lancaster.

Although we have been in existence for 32 years, I believe that AOCC is one of the smaller nonprofit organizations participating in ExtraGive 2023. I know that you, like me, like to help the little ones. That is why we ask you to give and to invite your friends and family members to help us reach our goal of \$10,000 and 200 new donors and thus make a difference.

Please consider supporting the Alpha & Omega Community Center at ExtraGive.org on November 17.

—Joel Peña, Director

BANQUET FEATURES FOOD, INFORMATION, AND CELEBRATION

People attending the Community Center's 32nd Anniversary Celebration Banquet on September 9 at Lititz Church of the Brethren (COB) not only enjoyed a good meal but also learned how the Community Center ensures that others have enough to eat. Seventy-six persons attended the banquet, and the event raised \$7,805, including donations from Gold Sponsor, UPMC, and Bronze Sponsor, Simple Funerals.

The evening began with a delicious meal prepared and served by Lititz COB volunteers. Throughout the evening, the Alpha & Omega COB worship band provided inspiring music.

The program included a panel of volunteers sharing information about the Food Bank and its impact upon the community. In addition, Director Joel Peña honored Angela Arce for her 30 years of service as the Center's



counselor and welcomed Zaida Ortiz as the new counselor.

The Food Bank is open on the first and third Tuesday of each month from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. Set-up

Left: AOCC Director Joel Peña recognizes longtime counselor Angela Arce (center) and new counselor Zaida Ortiz. Below: A panel of volunteers discussed the vital work of the Food Bank ministry.

occurs on the Monday before each scheduled Food Bank. Monday's volunteers deliver, unload, and organize the food items acquired from Central Penn Food Bank and Community Action Partnership and any additional donations. Tuesday volunteers stock the tables with food items and greet and assist recipients. In September, 321 people were served, including 137 new to the program.



EXTRAGIVE.ORG: HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

The Alpha & Omega Community Center again is participating in the ExtraGive, the Lancaster County Community Foundation's online day of giving. Beginning at midnight on Friday, November 17, and continuing until 11:59 p.m., we invite you to support the AOCC at <https://www.extragive.org/organizations/alpha-and-omega-community-center>.

All you need to participate is a credit card and an internet connection. On the day of the event visit our giving page and make your donation of \$10 or more.

In addition to the gifts we receive from our donors, we also will receive a portion of the "stretch pool" that is

provided by generous sponsors. The matching funds depend on the number of donors who support us. The more people who give a gift—whether large or small—the greater the portion of the stretch pool we receive.

So if the stretch pool is \$500,000 and AOCC receives 1% of all unique donations, we receive a \$5,000 match. In addition, individual donations throughout the day will be randomly chosen to receive a \$500 Golden Ticket prize. Your \$10 gift could become \$510, which would make a huge difference for our ministry!

Since the first ExtraGive in 2012, more than \$92 million has been given to support community

BLESSED TO BLESS OTHERS

As the Community Center's English teacher and Computers for Refugees coordinator, Danny Gingrich has many inspiring stories. Two years ago, Andres, whose country of origin is Cuba, connected with Danny because he wanted to learn English. Andres is a trained watchmaker, but not speaking English made connections in that area difficult.

Andres got a job at the Sensible Portions Factory in Mountville. As a good worker and team-builder, he was promoted to assistant manager. With a heart for bringing others together, he made connections with co-workers and encouraged interaction, including sharing foods from their cultures at lunchtime. During this time, Andres' wife, Gina, remained in Cuba until she was able to join him this past fall.

Parallel to what was happening in Andres' life, another story was unfolding in the city of Lancaster. The building that housed the former Ezra F. Bowman's Sons Jewelry Store and Technical School was empty and relatively untouched for 32 years.

This spring, Danny shared a newspaper article about the acquisition of the building by Ryan Miller (president of Brent L. Miller Jewelers & Goldsmiths) with Gina during an English class. As a result, Andres and Gina attended an Open House at the Manheim Pike store to introduce themselves to Ryan. Elliot, a store employee originally from Mexico, translated.



Hamilton Watch Company, founded in Lancaster in 1892, ceased production in the US in 1969, moving its headquarters and production to Switzerland. The new Hamilton retail store is on the first floor of the former Bowman Technical School building. Persons with technical experience are needed, and Andres was given an interview and subsequently offered a job. Brent L. Miller Jewelers is paying for Andres to be certified.

Andres is a newcomer to our community with much to offer, including expertise in a very specialized field. He has a heart for service, and thanks to right timing and connections with people like Danny and Elliot, he is now able to contribute to the community in his field. He is blessed by how the Lord has worked in his life, and now he blesses others.

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FOUNDATION

organizations through this event. This year we invite you to add to that amazing amount with your support of the Community Center.

Here's how:

- 1) With credit card in hand, visit [ExtraGive.org](https://extragive.org) on Friday, November 17.
- 2) Choose Alpha & Omega Community Center from the list of organizations. The list is in alphabetical order, so we'll be near the top!
- 3) Follow the prompts to make your credit card donation of \$10 or more.
- 4) Give as many times as you like throughout the 24 hours, since any donation could be chosen for a \$500 Golden Ticket prize.

Address Service Requested

STAFF

Joel Peña
Director
Marisor Diaz
Administrative Assistant
Danny Gingrich
ESL Teacher/Computers
Ever Sandoval
Radio Producer
Petra Castro
Food Bank Coordinator
Zaida Ortiz
Counselor

BOARD MEMBERS

Alan Miller, Chair
Dave Bruce, Treasurer
Sherry Eshleman, Secretary
Ryan Braught
Mayra Calix
Carolyn Fitzkee
Maria Perez
Ever Sandoval

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FALL FESTIVAL CELEBRATES COMMUNITY

“Gratis” (free) was a defining concept for the 2023 Fall Festival on September 30. This community event was sponsored jointly by Alpha & Omega Community Center, Alpha & Omega Church of the Brethren, UPMC (Gold Sponsor), and Simple Funerals (Bronze Sponsor).

Many persons filled bags with free clothing and free household items. Both children and adults enjoyed free bags of popcorn and hot dogs. At noon, a free buffet of Latin-American food, including fried chicken, was served. Many of the younger attendees kept the bouncy house bouncing!

Testimonies and energized music were provided by urban music performers Samuel Quinonez and Vladimir; teacher Kerry Broadley and her SWAN4Kids students; and DJ



and presenter Ever Sandoval. A prayer tent was available, as well as information from United Disabilities Services, Water Street Mission: Mental Health and Dental Clinics, and Teen Haven. Many volunteers wore shirts provided by Oak St. Health.

The yearly Fall Festival is a celebration of community.