



Alpha & Omega
Community Center

Wabank Witness

Fall 2022

SUPPORT THE AOCC THROUGH EXTRAGIVE.ORG

The Alpha & Omega Community Center has been serving Lancaster for more than 30 years now, but this month, for the first time, we are joining with hundreds of other nonprofits to participate in the ExtraGive online giving campaign. We hope you will support us, along with many other worthy organizations.

Unlike for-profit organizations, 501(c)3s are nonprofit organizations established to help others and serve the community. The main objective is to benefit the community, not to make money. This doesn't mean that nonprofits can't make money. Instead, the money that is earned is reinvested in the organization itself. Proceeds are used to participate in activities that fulfill the organization's mission, pay reasonable wages to its employees, and cover operating expenses.

Our organization was born at the initiative of Pastor Guillermo Encarnación with the support of the leadership of the Church of the Brethren Atlantic Northeast District on May 16, 1991. We were originally known as the "Alpha & Omega Family Life Center" and functioned as a ministry of the Alpha & Omega congregation.

In 2010, we formally organized, with our own 501 (c)3 designation, as **Alpha & Omega Community Center**, with the purpose of sharing God's love by providing education and social services to empower the Latino community of Lancaster County to become more productive members of the community. Today the Community Center not only serves Latinos, but also immigrants and refugees from any nation, along with other Lancaster County residents. All are welcome and all are served to the best of our ability each week.

But we need your help! Please consider giving on November 18 through [ExtraGive.org](https://extragive.org) to support our ministries. We have set ambitious goals of \$10,000 and 500 new donors! We need you to tell your friends and family members about the important work we do and ask them to join us in helping to make a difference. (Read more about [ExtraGive.org](https://extragive.org) on page two.)

Our important ministries, including the twice monthly food bank, Computers for Refugees, English and music classes, and the weekly radio program *Hablemos en claro*, touch lives in our neighborhood on Wabank Street and beyond. We also collaborate with other community organizations such as IU13, the Migrant Education Program, Church World Service, and the Community Action Partnership. Together we help make Lancaster a stronger and healthier community. That's what the ExtraGive is all about. We welcome your support on Friday, November 18!



—Joel Peña, Director

LONG-ANTICIPATED BANQUET RAISES \$7,800



After twice cancelling banquets due to the pandemic and missing our 30th anniversary by a year, we were thrilled to finally gather at the Lititz Church of the Brethren on September 10 for a belated anniversary celebration banquet.

A total of \$7,800 was raised, including gifts from Gold Sponsor UPMC Health Plan and Bronze Sponsors Simple Funerals and Members 1st, along with donations from many individuals.

The program included reflections from Executive Director Joel Pena; testimonies by Danny Gingrich, ESL teacher and

Top Right: (From left) AOCC staff Danny Gingrich, Maria Perez, Marisor Diaz, and Joel Peña with a 30th anniversary cake. Right: The Alpha & Omega COB Praise Team provided music.



director of the Computers for Refugees program; uplifting music by the Alpha & Omega COB worship band; and a delicious meal prepared and served by volunteers of the Lititz COB.

In this season of Thanksgiving, we are grateful for the many donors who make it possible for the AOCC to serve the needs of the Latino and refugee community in Lancaster City.

EXTRAGIVE.ORG: HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

For the first time this year, the Alpha & Omega Community Center is participating in the ExtraGive, the Lancaster County Community Foundation's online day of giving. Beginning at midnight on Friday, November 18, and continuing until 11:59 p.m. we invite you to support the AOCC through ExtraGive.org.

All you need to participate is a credit card and an internet connection. On the day of the event visit our giving page at <https://www.extragive.org/organizations/alpha-and-omega-community-center> and make your donation of \$10 or more.

EXTRATM GIVE



In addition to the gifts we receive from our donors, we also will receive a portion of the \$500,000 stretch pool that is provided by generous sponsors. This year,

BIG PROJECT GROWS EVEN BIGGER

Sometimes what seems like a big project becomes an even bigger project!

At the beginning of 2020, the AOCC Board began discussing the need for a driveway beside the Community Center, where the Food Bank box truck could unload food and also be parked when not in use. By September 2020, the Board received estimates and decided to move ahead with B.R. Kreider & Son, Inc. for the construction of the driveway and a new retaining wall. At that point, the plan was for a porous driveway, and we hoped to have the project done before the ground froze in 2020.

B.R. Kreider subcontracted the rebuilding of the retaining wall to Lefever Concrete. By February 2021, Lefever Concrete completed the new retaining wall, fixed the railing, built a parking spot for the truck, and temporarily extended the driveway for a total cost of \$9,600. The construction of a permanent driveway and a sidewalk then was put on hold until adequate funds were acquired. The base bid for this part of the project was \$14,035 (10/28/2020).

In June 2021, the city informed us that the driveway we planned would not be in compliance, and thus began a long series of interactions and discussions between the AOCC (Joel Pena and B.R. Kreider representative Nathan Kulp) and city officials. When



the easement agreement was completed and notarized and zoning and stormwater plans were in compliance, permits were issued. B.R. Kreider & Son, Inc. started work on October 10, 2022.

Additional requirements for the driveway project have increased the cost to an expected \$31,090. The Center has \$11,349 in the bank, designated for the driveway. The Church of the Brethren has granted a \$5,000 Faith in Action Fund grant for this project, and churches have also given special donations. You are invited to be part of this “big and bigger” project, as well as the ministries of the Center, by donating through the ExtraGive on November 18.

instead of being based on the dollar amount of donations, the matching funds depend on the number of donors. The more people who give a gift—whether large or small—the greater the portion of the stretch pool we receive.

So if the 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 \$82 million has been given to support community 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 18.
- 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

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

BOARD MEMBERS

Alan Miller, Chair
Sherry Eshleman, Secretary
Ryan Braught
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SPOTLIGHT ON THE FOOD BANK

For more than 30 years, the Food Bank has addressed food insecurity, serving many families through food distributions on the first and third Tuesdays of each month. Currently, rising food prices place financial stress on this ministry. Both money used to purchase food and also grants from the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank (CPFEB) do not stretch as far as they once did, making it more difficult to provide meat, eggs, milk, and fresh produce, as well as a variety of canned items.

The Food Bank relies upon the faithful service, leadership, and organizational skills of Petra Castro. Serving with Maria Perez, Petra orders food from CPFEB, coordinates other donations, and plans for pick-up from CPFEB and from Community Action Partnership (CAP) each Monday prior to distribution days. During unloading and distribution, the Food Bank also relies upon many

faithful volunteers from the Alpha & Omega COB, the community, and other churches.

Good things are happening! CAP provided a new upright freezer which was stocked immediately. CAP has also given more food for distribution and plans to continue to help. A local Church of the Brethren “stepped up” with the necessary funds when it learned that no one was planning to donate turkeys for Thanksgiving distribution.

What can you do to help?
Suggestions: Make a financial donation to AOCC Food Bank. Organize a food drive at your church, business, or organization, checking with Petra (Petracastro7@comcast.net) about items that are needed. Offer prayer for the AOCC Food Bank, for its volunteers, and for the recipients blessed by the generosity of this ministry.