

# Wellspring

Serving Fort Wayne's Central City Every Day.

interfaith  
social services inc.

Donor Newsletter

March 2024



## THIS MONTH'S FEATURED ARTICLES

New Program for 2024  
Improving Reading Skills  
Creating Brighter Futures



# A word from our CEO

I am writing this letter to express my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you who support Wellspring. Since establishment in 1968, your unwavering dedication and generosity have enabled us to fulfill our mission of delivering food, clothing, and the Program for Older and Disabled Adults in our community as well as our youth programs. Our work is possible solely through the kindness and support of individuals like you, our remarkable donors.

Hunger is widespread. One in eight people face food insecurity nationally. Households are seeing a big rise in food prices resulting in less groceries purchased. In November and December, we helped families who visited our Food Bank by sending them home with a holiday bag of items in addition to the regular food supply.

We assist families who face financial obstacles by providing all services at no cost. Childcare expenses are often unaffordable for most of the families we serve. To help working parents and families without transportation, we continue to offer transportation for children in the After School Program, which is offered five days a week during the school year. This safe, reliable after school option for childcare allows families to continue working to obtain a steady income.

Thank you again for your continued support.

Sincerely,  
*Ermina*  
Ermina Mustedanagic, CEO



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## Youth Programs

In 2023, After School Program served 64 students and provided 3,619 visits.

Summer Day Camp served 178 students and provided 3,194 visits.



## Food Programs

Food Bank served 9,060 clients and distributed 145,634 pounds of food and 4,841 hygiene bags.



Wellspring on Wheels served 5,706 clients and distributed 32,009 pounds of food.

# A new program is starting!

**Wellspring Nutrition Program kick starts healthy habits for 2024.**

Wellspring is now offering a nutrition program to address the public health issue of obesity and obesity related diseases. Led by a dietitian, our program implements a variety of activities that address these issues.



Two major barriers to good nutrition for low-income families include access to healthy foods and knowledge of ways to prepare them. Our Food Bank continues to provide healthier options including fresh fruits and vegetables. We aim to see that our clients use them well and not be wasted. In addition to supplying healthy foods, our program adds the crucial step of classes that instruct clients across generations to learn new cooking skills that incorporate these healthy foods. Our goal is to help our clients make lasting healthy lifestyle changes.

Wellspring Nutrition Program offers hands on classes, educational materials, and recipes that utilize foods from our Food Bank. Food prep classes include group workshops led by our dietitian. Skills such as cooking, label reading, portion control, healthy eating habits, and inclusion of fresh fruits and vegetables are demonstrated. Clients are provided with fresh produce to take home to their families. Last year, our Food Bank provided food for 14,766 individuals!



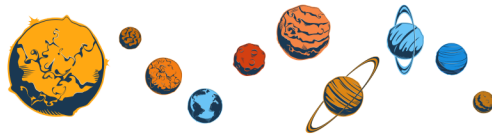
# Improving Reading Skills

## One Child's Story that sparked an interest for life.

Our After School Program focuses on homework assistance and reading. Many of our young participants find reading boring. For many, the struggle to read makes them want to avoid reading time completely. One of these participants was Mikey. Here is his story.

Mikey was an early elementary student that came to our After School Program. His introduction to school was not set in a typical classroom setting but was on a computer screen. When he came to our program, he could not read a single word. The results from his pre-test assessment were disheartening. Mikey could not even score a 1% accuracy with his reading fluency norm test. He read zero words per minute. Mikey fell far behind academically. He would act out and often find himself in trouble during reading time. It wasn't because he enjoyed making trouble, but a reaction to the formidable challenge of reading.





Thankfully, Mikey was a regular attendee of the After School Program. Our staff and volunteers worked with him daily. There was also a special bond created with one of our youth assistants. In this supportive environment, Mikey was able to practice reading skills, play educational games, and gain literacy. By the end of the school year, Mikey had changed. He was acting out less and was often seen reading on his own. In the post-test assessment, Mikey scored a 76% accuracy and was reading 21 words per minute. This was a remarkable improvement from not reading at all when he first came to Wellspring.

Mikey joined the After School Program for a second year in a row. Today you will find him reading books about outer space on his own. He eagerly shares his new passion for all things outer space with our staff and volunteers. He dreams of becoming an astronaut or a NASA scientist. It can even be hard to pull Mikey from our reading nook to start a new activity. Mikey's reading skills have flourished in our program as well as his overall academic performance. We are excited to help Mikey keep his spark for learning and reading.



## Thank you to our top 5 supporters!



# Upcoming Event

Save the date for our upcoming fundraiser!

May 23, 2024

Wellspring is excited to announce a new fun fundraiser benefiting our youth programs. Our youth programs include the After School Program during the school year and Summer Day Camp in the summer. Creating Brighter Futures will raise funds for these opportunities to enrich and empower youth in our community. These programs are offered to low-income families at absolutely no cost. Last year 242 children were served in our youth programs.

Creating Brighter Futures fundraiser will take place on May 23, 2024 at Carson LLP at 6pm. Their large meeting space overlooks Parkview Field. A home game will bring additional entertainment that evening. The celebration will also include heavy hors d'oeuvres, open bar, and a sale of jewelry and crafts made by kids in the Wellspring After School Program. In addition, local jewelry stores have donated jewelry to assist in our fundraising.

We hope to see you there!



**When:** Thursday, May 23, 2024 at 6pm

**Where:** Carson LLP, 301 W Jefferson Blvd, Suite 200

**Tickets** are \$75 and can be purchased through our Eventbrite page. Scan the QR code now to purchase tickets.



*Interested in becoming a **sponsor**, visit our website:  
[www.wellspringinterfaith.org](http://www.wellspringinterfaith.org).*

## Wellspring Shoppe

In 2023, the Shoppe served 3,060 clients and provided 37,381 pieces of clothing to our clients.



## Program for Older and Disabled Adults

Program for Older and Disabled Adults served 142 clients and provided 2,198 visits.

# Strengthening our Vision

**We are happy to strengthen our organization with these committee members.**

## Congregational Committee Members

Ermina Mustedanagic, Wellspring, CEO

Terri Lindvall, Committee Chair

Dr. Scott Miller, Community Volunteer

Dr. Leonard Mastbaum, Community Volunteer

Sara Ofner-Seals, Plymouth Congregational Church

Dr. Diane Calinski, Manchester School of Pharmacy

Ken Christmon, Purdue Fort Wayne

David Goodman, Community Volunteer

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Jeffrey Griggs, Treasurer

Rachel Tobin, Community Volunteer

Zach Zehner, Carson LLP

Branden Wildey, Lake City Bank

Dawn Clopton, Premier Bank

Richard Phillips, Community Volunteer

Jim Mathews, Copy Solutions

Elizabeth Tulloch, The State Bank and Trust Company

Jennifer Dalton, Wellspring Finance Manager



## Operations Committee Members

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Steve Smethers, Committee Chair, Fort Wayne Community Schools

Philip Pelz, Wellspring Director of Operations

Kathy Wehrle, Parkview Health

Lisa Weston, Fort Wayne Orthopedics

Stephanie Goad, Community Volunteer

Dr. Jim Wehrenberg, Physicians Health Plan

Dr. Shenita Bolton, Fort Wayne Community Schools

Alan Buck, Community Volunteer

Michael McCartin, Community Volunteer

Karen Till, Lutheran Health Network

Michelle Hipskind, SYM Financial

## Fundraising Committee Members

Ermina Mustedanagic, Wellspring CEO

Rachel Tobin-Smith, Committee Chair

Michael McCartin, Community Volunteer

Samantha Glover, Wellspring Director of Development and Marketing

Todd Steele, Liechty Media LLC

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TO HELP US CONTINUE SERVING, SCAN THE  
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**Mission:** People of faith serving the social, physical, and educational needs of the community in Allen County.

**Wellspring**  
Serving Fort Wayne's Central City Every Day.  
Interfaith social services™  
1318 Broadway  
Fort Wayne, IN 46802