

UCOM

COMMUNICATOR

Fall 2022



**Building relationships
one family at a time.**

Htan Nyo and Moo Nyo Paw and their 4 children Eliana, Elissa, Emily and Dallas

What's on your table?

by Shawn Keener, Program Director

“What are those?”, the volunteer asked as she stocked produce from an early morning shopping trip. “Well, we have lemon grass, daikon radishes, jicama, plantains, pomegranates, papayas, and mangoes.” The loaded cart full of fresh pineapple, berries, carrots and onions were easily recognizable. As UCOM helped hundreds of families put food on their tables for Thanksgiving and prepares to help hundreds more at Christmas, we want to offer culturally appropriate fruits and vegetables.

Our neighbors are a diverse and wonderful group with families from all over the world including Vietnam and Myanmar, Ghana and Sudan, Germany and lately several refugee families from Ukraine.

UCOM also serves a large Hispanic (Latinx) population and while some might think of this group as mono-cultural this could not be further from the truth. Our Latinx neighbors hail from Guatemala, Cuba, Mexico, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Columbia, Honduras and more and each have their own cultural and family traditions.

While a few of our Mexican neighbors were talking about their recipes for pozole or tamales (a big debate over whether to wrap in banana leaves or corn husks) some of our Dominican neighbors were sharing their love of San Cocho, a vegetable stew. A Cuban neighbor chimed in with a pitch for platanos maduros (fried ripe plantains) and a Columbian neighbor mentioned arepas as a holiday favorite.



Each of us celebrates the holidays with so many rich food traditions from our own cultural heritage. Recipes get handed down from generation to generation, and favorites from our childhood take us on a trip down memory lane. Think about your own holidays. What does your table look like?

At UCOM we know how important these traditions and rituals can be. With your help, we are doing our best to ensure that our neighbors have foods available to them that are culturally relevant and meaningful to their holidays.

Helping provide for your neighbors so that they can make a meal that reminds them of family, even when they're thousands of miles away, is a tremendous gift.

Your generous donations to UCOM make that happen. You allow us to continue offering a taste of home to our neighbors from around the world, not just at the holidays, but year-round. For that we are truly grateful.

Blessings!

The Friends of UCOM Benefit Concert is coming back!

Save the Date
Sunday, April 16th 2023
More details coming soon!

If your business, church, or organization is interested in sponsoring the concert or advertising in the program book let us know!
Contact UCOM Development Director Alex Wilson

Supporting our neighbors, supporting each other

by Shawn Keener, Program Director

Meet Marcelle and Meibel, friends from different cultures who bonded over their shared passion for helping their neighbors.

These two talented women have something else in common. Recently each of them became US citizens!

Over the years I have had the great privilege to attend several naturalization ceremonies. The experience of watching people from across the globe unite in their shared wish to become US citizens is a moving one. I was so honored to have been invited to watch both women take their final steps in what is surely a difficult journey.

Marcelle, originally from the Dominican Republic, can usually be found either in her own kitchen preparing food for unhoused neighbors or teaching cooking classes here at UCOM. You may have even seen Marcelle on TV as she recently represented UCOM on the WGTV special "MI American Recipe." Marcelle has also been a chef for past UCOM events and has had several recipes featured on our website and social media.



Meibel, UCOM's newest staff member, was born in Columbia but moved to Michigan many years ago. As the Pantry Resource Assistant, Meibel's bilingual abilities have been indispensable in helping connect with neighbors and make them feel welcome and valued. Before joining UCOM's staff, she and her son Miguel were frequent volunteers making sure the shelves stayed well stocked and organized.

Building relationships and supporting each other is at the heart of everything that UCOM does. Meibel and Marcelle are some of the many people that help us make that possible.

YOU CAN HELP!

1. Join our recurring donors in supporting UCOM each month!
2. Be a volunteer Santa and deliver gifts to Seniors
3. Donate new or used warm gloves and blankets for neighbors in need.
4. Spread the word about UCOM. Share this newsletter with a friend!
5. Volunteer! UCOM desperately needs strong and committed volunteers to unload and sort produce on Monday mornings.



SEASON'S
GREETINGS!

WE APPRECIATE
YOUR
CONTINUED
SUPPORT.
THANK YOU AND
HAPPY
HOLIDAYS!

UCOM

resources for living | hope for life

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