



# UCOM COMMUNICATOR

Spring 2020

**Your Neighbors Need You Now More Than Ever**  
*What You are Doing to Help*  
*What Neighbors are Saying*

# What You Are Doing To Help

Dr. Bruce Roller, Executive Director

Donna's family is brand new to UCOM's Healthy Choice Pantry. She picked up a "takeout order" last week and called back as soon as she got home. Unemployed because of shut-downs caused by the coronavirus pandemic, Donna found us by calling 211. Your generosity provided a big box that included a package of toilet paper and other personal hygiene items, and more than a week's supply of groceries, including lots of fresh produce. She was especially pleased with the board game she found in her box. "Thanks to you, I spent most of the afternoon playing board games with my kids."



**Your gifts of love help our neighbors keep going through these uncertain days.** There is still plenty to worry about, but thanks to you, having good healthful food is not one of them.

To protect our neighbors, our staff and volunteers during this pandemic, we have introduced procedures to continue to provide access to good food while practicing common sense recommended measures for physical distancing.

**Your support ensures that our neighbors will still have some choice in what their family will eat.** We ask those using our food services to call from the



parking lot to choose specific meals they want. One woman had asked for Shepherd's Pie, which was inadvertently left out of her box. Her gratitude was palpable when someone brought this comfort food to her car. Going the extra mile is your gift to our neighbors.

Several of our staff members are working remotely to "Stay Home, Stay Safe". This puts additional responsibilities on the staff and volunteers who must be on site to maintain pantry operations. **Your moral support means so much.**

We commit to keeping all of our staff working through this challenging time. We are truly grateful to special gifts from many sources that make us able to provide more direct services to our neighbors. So far none of these are available for wages or operating expenses. For these gifts we turn to you. We know that you will make the great effort needed to continue to share as you are able. This makes us confident that we will succeed in providing for a big share of the needs that this crisis exacerbates.

Your generous heart has seen our neighbors through many hard times for 35 years. Our faith is strong that you will be here for our neighbors today and tomorrow and for as long as they need our services.

# What Neighbors Are Saying

Carol Tanis, Volunteer



**Our neighbors don't know what they would do without UCOM and its donors that make these services happen.**

"Please give to UCOM, because they help so many people with their needs." That's what Eddie says. He's thankful for those who donate to make his life better. "I like the fresh food UCOM has, which is better for us. When I was growing up, we raised our own food, but that's all changed and that's not so good. UCOM's food program is good because you get what you need from the different food groups, like dairy, protein, grains and vegetables. It's very nutritious."

Maintaining the right diet is especially critical to Eddie because he's diabetic. "I attended a class at UCOM that helped me control my diabetes. I learned how to eat better and I even learned about exercises I can do while watching TV."

Glenna doesn't own a car and has chronic health problems. UCOM connects Glenna with supporting churches that deliver food to her. **"If UCOM wasn't there, I'd have**

**to go without,"** she says. "They deliver food to me which helps so much, because I don't have another way to get it." In addition, she always receives something from UCOM that doesn't come in a box or jar, but is still important to her. **"I'm always treated with respect from everyone at UCOM.** You don't always get that anymore when you're a senior citizen. I also know that I can pick-up the phone and talk to someone if I have a question about their services."

UCOM's donors are also heroes to Amber who has two children and began receiving needed help from UCOM just over a year ago. She credits instruction at UCOM for helping her serve healthier meals to her family and finding clothing for them.

"Certain foods I wouldn't normally have tried because I never learned how to prepare them. So now I'm trying lots of new things." **She adds that by helping at UCOM events, her kids have learned about the value of volunteering.**

During the Corona Crisis, food pantries have been designated as essential services and UCOM neighbors' need for food continues. In fact, the number of those needing help for the first time has greatly increased since the pandemic began.

Financial donations are needed now more than ever before. **Think about how you may have been blessed in your life and please continue to share with your neighbors especially in this tumultuous time.**

## Donating and Volunteering

**As a precautionary measure in the fight against the spread of the coronavirus and COVID-19, UCOM is temporarily restricting the items we are accepting as donations and the number of people we are accepting as volunteers.**

**We encourage you to continue to donate online and we are excited to welcome back volunteers when things return to normal.**



ACCESS WALK · for · GOOD FOOD  
GREEN AFFORDABLE FAIR HEALTHY

IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD  
MAY 3-13, 2020

# YOU CAN HELP!

What if everyone in our community could have equal access to food that nourishes, create good jobs, is affordable, and treats the earth well as it is produced? We believe this is possible. That's why we walk. Share the vision, walk with us.

In light of COVID-19 you are encouraged to walk while following social distancing and stay at home guidelines. "Walk for Good Food" organizations like UCOM are actively working to address needs related to food security and poverty in our communities today. We need your support now and invite you to join us as we walk May 3-13 in our own neighborhoods.

For more information and to register visit:  
<http://accessofwestmichigan.org/walk>

1. Become a U are UCOM Club Member by signing up for automatic giving.
2. Donate today! Your neighbors need your help.
3. Tell a friend about UCOM.
4. Sign up to receive email updates at [www.UCOMgr.org](http://www.UCOMgr.org).
5. Sign up to volunteer after social distancing restrictions end.
6. Share this newsletter with a friend!



Resources for living. Hope for life.

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