

NEWSLINES^{OF} Hope

www.cross-lines.org

Fall 2021

Fighting Hunger with Dignity

As hunger has continued to grow in the community, Cross-Lines has responded to meet the need by transforming our former Thrift Store space into the Community Market.

The Cross-Lines Community Market is an innovative approach to providing struggling families in Wyandotte County with healthy, fresh groceries to help fight hunger in our community, where more than 21% of residents are food insecure. For children, the rate has ballooned from 23% to more than 32% during the Covid-19 pandemic, which means nearly

one in every three children in Wyandotte County is at risk for hunger. Before Cross-Lines created and opened the Community Market in July 2021, we ran a traditional food pantry, where people received a box of food items. The pantry served more than 22,000 people in 2020.

As the pandemic continues and people are still struggling, food insecurity is still an ongoing problem. The Community Market primarily serves people who are living



The Cross-Lines Community Market is an innovative approach to fighting hunger in our community and is set up like a bright and cheery neighborhood grocery.

at 150% of the federal poverty level and below. The Community Market is a deliberate shift away from a traditional food pantry to a more inclusive program where clients are shoppers empowered to choose the items they need most.

“We have a lot of people who do work, who are employed, but they are just barely making it,” said Susila Jones, Cross-Lines Executive Director. “We want to continue to be that stop gap so that people don’t have to decide between buying healthy food and paying rent.”

Cross-Lines wanted to offer clients a more dignified experience by providing a grocery store-like environment where they can choose the foods most appropriate for their family. The market is a bright, cheery space with lime green walls, large wall decals of fresh vegetables with bright windows and well-stocked and organized shelves. Shoppers are greeted at a welcome desk before getting their cart and beginning their trip up and down the wide aisles.

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"So often, food pantries are just stuck in a basement somewhere, and they're not a place anybody wants to go," said Jones. "We want to create a space that people want to come to and kids feel like they're just going to a grocery store and not like they're going to a food pantry."

Like any typical grocery store, a section filled with baskets near the front of the Community Market hold a wide variety of fresh produce such as ears of corn, tomatoes, carrots, peppers, potatoes and cilantro.

Aisles are neatly stocked with cereals, dried and canned goods, peanut butter and a variety of beans. Large glass-front refrigerators hold meat, milk,



Guests enjoyed a tour of the Community Market during the Grand Opening event on August 30.

butter and eggs. There are full-size toiletry necessities such as shampoo, soap, toothpastes, toothbrushes and deodorant. The market also has cleaning supplies, paper towels, diapers and toilet paper.

Shoppers can come once a month and use points based on their household size. The points allow shoppers to get enough food for

approximately 10 meals. For example, a household of 1-2 has 30 points and can get two full plastic bags of fresh produce as well as other items including meat, eggs, butter and canned goods.

The Market also offers items relevant to a person's culture. For instance, the market carries Hispanic food items like mole, beans and Tajin seasoning.

In addition to increasing access to healthy foods and promoting dignity and respect, the Community Market decreases food waste because our shoppers choose exactly what they need instead of getting a pre-made box of food that may contain food that their family cannot use.



In December 2021, the Cross-Lines Christmas Store will provide 250 Wyandotte County families with the opportunity to shop for Christmas gifts for their family.

Each family will receive new clothes, toys, household items, groceries, and gift cards. Our hope is to provide families with joy, as well as the dignity and respect of choosing and gifting brand new presents to their families.

Cross-Lines also gives McDonalds gift cards to people experiencing homelessness.

Cross-Lines is collecting new coats and \$20 Walmart and \$10 McDonalds gift cards for this year's Christmas Store. Monetary donations are also gladly accepted.

Donations should be delivered to Cross-Lines by November 22, 2021.

The Christmas Store will be held December 7-11. For questions about

donations, please contact Susila Jones, susila@cross-lines.org or visit our website, www.cross-lines.org for the latest updates on the Christmas Store.

There are numerous volunteer opportunities available to serve in the Christmas Store. Information will be posted on our website and social media. If you have questions about volunteer opportunities, call 913-281-3388.

Meet Nebraska Furniture Mart

In this issue, we want to spotlight one of our long-term corporate volunteer groups, Nebraska Furniture Mart (NFM).

NFM has been volunteering for years in our community kitchen, packing boxes for seniors for our commodities program, and collecting non-perishable items at their local store for food drives.

Most recently, the team at NFM has become one of our monthly volunteer groups in our new Community Market. Their team



brings smiley faces, helpful hands, and lots of positive energy to our team and the shoppers in the market.

We can't say enough about their ready-to-work attitudes when they arrive

on the campus. Thank you, NFM and associates, for your commitment and time you share at Cross-Lines! We greatly appreciate you!

Are you or your team ready to start your volunteer experience in the community market?

E-mail roxanne@cross-lines.org or call (913) 281-3388 ext. 242 to get scheduled today!

We Need YOU!

Are you interested in volunteering in at Cross-Lines? We are SO excited to welcome individuals and small groups back into our space.

Although vaccination is not a requirement to volunteer, we want you to know we are continuing to follow CDC guidelines related to mitigation of the virus. Clients, volunteers and staff are required to wear masks, wash hands frequently, and not enter facilities while exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms.

If you would like to volunteer or know someone who would like to help, here are our most urgent and current volunteer needs:

Community Market - Our Community Market is busy giving out a wide assortment of food to

families in need. Assist this program by helping shoppers, stocking shelves or other various tasks. Times: 8:30 a.m.-noon or 12:30-3 p.m.

Community Kitchen - Prepare and serve lunch to nearly 200 individuals from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. through our community kitchen-to-go window. Date available at publication time: 12/23

Senior Commodities - Work assembly-line style to pack boxes of shelf-stable food for low-income seniors in our community. Sign up on your own or bring a group of three to six people!

Times: 9-11 a.m. or 1-3 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays

For more information regarding volunteering or accessing our volunteer sign up system, reach out to Roxanne Vega at roxanne@cross-lines.org.

Meet Roxanne

Roxanne Vega has joined the Community Engagement team as Volunteer Coordinator. In her new position, Roxanne will actively recruit, train, schedule, and support volunteers.



Prior to joining the team, Roxanne was in college earning her Bachelor's in health science at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC).

Roxanne started her journey with Cross-Lines in the beginning of 2020 as a volunteer. She joined the staff at Cross-Lines as a Case Manager on the Housing Stabilization team in August 2020.

Roxanne is excited for her new role as Volunteer Coordinator. Because she has experience as a volunteer and knowledge on how Cross-Lines operates, this will be a smooth transition for her.

Roxanne was born and raised in Kansas City. She has always had a passion for the low-income community as she was raised in one. As she was growing up, her family never had a clue about the supports agencies like Cross-Lines offer the community. She enjoys the fulfillment of giving a helping hand, even if it's as little as handing out a meal.

Roxanne enjoys relaxation time and vacations with her loved ones. One of her favorite classes in school was Art. She enjoys getting lost in the art when she does her hobbies; painting, nails, and getting dolled up.

Roxanne is excited to connect with all our amazing volunteers. Have any questions about volunteering? Feel free to contact Roxanne at roxanne@cross-lines.org or (913) 281-3388 ext. 242.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE RAISES \$154,774

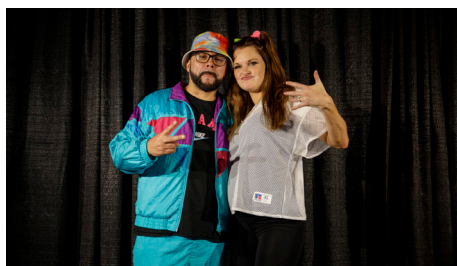
Thank you to all who made our Hope for the Future event a success this year! Cross-Lines is pleased to announce that the event raised more than \$154,774 to support our programs and services.

The 80's-themed event was held on September 30th at the Boulevard Drive-In. In addition to an exciting virtual auction and fun program, guests enjoyed local craft beers and wine, and a wide variety of delicious food from three local food trucks followed by scoops served from the Betty Rae's ice cream truck.

Following a short program, guests watched the 1985 classic, Back to the Future, outdoors on the big screen.

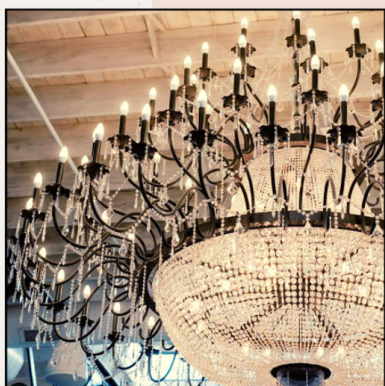
Attendees enjoyed getting to take pictures in an actual DeLorean that was customized like the one in the movie.

Special thanks to all of our donors, sponsors, auction bidders, volunteers and supporters who came together to make this a success for the people we serve!



Save the Date

Gala for Hope 2022!



SEPTEMBER 24TH, 2022
The Abbott, KCMO

Do we need to change your name or address on the envelope? We switched to a new software system, so please let us know if you see any changes we need to make. Contact Kelly Gough Moran at kelly@cross-lines.org. Thank you!