

2020-2021 Impact Report

Reaching Our Neighbors with the Love of Christ



**Venture
Compassionate
Ministries**

What is Compassionate Ministries?

A compassionate conscience has been part of the identity of the Church of the Nazarene since long before its official beginning in 1908. Nazarene Compassionate Ministries exists in and through the church.

We believe the compassionate nature of the church is rooted in Matthew 25:36, which instructs us to give food to the hungry, to give water to the thirsty, to give clothing to the naked, to welcome the stranger, and to visit those who are sick or in prison. We believe the work of compassion in the church also takes on new forms to address the systemic issues of poverty and hunger in communities, to provide education for children, and to set up long-term rebuilding efforts following disasters.

What is Venture Compassionate Ministries?

Venture Compassionate Ministries, Inc. was formed by Calvary Community Church of the Nazarene. The purpose of Venture is to know, reach and love our community. The mission of Venture is to:

"engage families in our community together through hope, opportunities, and partnerships. Together we will help people at their point of need and inspire them to be of service to others."

Together, Venture Compassionate Ministries and Calvary Community Church of the Nazarene work hand in hand in showing Christ's love to our neighbors.

VENTURE COMPASSIONATE MINISTRIES, INC.

This report reflects the work over the past twelve months (March 2018 - February 2019) of the 12 different ministries that make up Venture Compassionate Ministries. Through the work of the Venture Board of Directors, Venture Ministry Leaders, and the Calvary Community Church of the Nazarene and its partners we reached out to our neighbors in our community and show them the love of Christ.



Our hope is that you will be able to read the full impact that you have invested in through prayer, donations, or volunteering during this past year.

If you have questions or would like to discuss ways that you can become involved in one of our programs, please reach out to one of our board members below, they would be more than glad to talk with you!

Board of Directors:

David Riddell, Director/Chair
Michelle Ober, Vice Chair
Matthew DeAmarel, Treasurer
Jen Wolford, Secretary
Lynn Youngman
Amber Quinn
Rev. Mark Blankenship
Rev. Edwin Martinez

**Compassion
Is the
Church
in Action**

BRIDGE COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP

Leader: Crystal DeAmaral

BRIDGE is an informal playtime for infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their parents. During the school year, BRIDGE meets each Thursday from 9:30-11:30am at Calvary. The group is attended by 4-9 families each week. Through the summer BRIDGE meets once a month at various playgrounds in the area. Playgroup is a great time for children to form strong friendships and develop their sharing, kindness, and communication skills through play. BRIDGE also gives parents and caregivers time to build relationships with other families who are in the same stage of life. For many of our families with small children, this is the day they look forward to most each week. Last year we have helped welcome several new babies to families in our playgroup. Members provided support to moms and their families by preparing meals or giving gift baskets.



Looking Ahead: In the upcoming year, we hope to continue to build on these friendships. Currently, Facebook and word of mouth are our main ways of promoting BRIDGE and reaching new families. In the coming year, we are working to explore other ways to promote BRIDGE with the hopes of gaining new members.

WOODCREST OUTREACH

Leader: Susan Minute

The Woodcrest ministry currently does two main events during the year - a summer barbecue and a Christmas party. The residents of Woodcrest greatly look forward to these events! During this past year's events we have been blessed with wonderful volunteers!

Looking Ahead: There is possibility for much more should others want to participate -- such as kids adopting a grandparent, games with teens or adults who are willing to spend time there, etc. Since the residents often change, so do their abilities and needs. There have been times when something like a knitting group might be appropriate.



MEN'S BASKETBALL

Leaders: Dan Briggs, Matt Roy

Men's Basketball has been occurring weekly on Thursday nights since 2002. It occurs September – May, from 7 – 9pm and is for all men 18 years and over. At the end of each night, there is a devotional and prayer time. Average weekly attendance is between 18 – 20.

DIVORCE RECOVERY

Leader: Bill McGough

Of all the years that I have been leading Divorce Recovery, I think God has truly blessed the last 12 months. The group has had consistently higher numbers than ever I think. I'd say on average 10 – 12 people each week and there are probably almost 20 active members currently. (We've probably served 25 – 30 total individuals this past year, and 20 are still with us, 2 reconciled with their spouses, and a few have moved on). Several of our attendees come every other week because they don't always have their children. I think that everyone that has been coming regularly appreciated the Christ – centered viewpoint. People enter very hurt and often are very angry, yet as difficult as it is, our focus on forgiveness is recognized.



Looking Ahead: It is my sincere hope to continue this ministry into the next year and beyond. I feel God is truly blessing our time each week. I truly love being this groups facilitator, and even though I have personally invited many of the people, we leave it to God to bring back those who can be most impacted. I would love to see more of the participants stay for and attend church, maybe 50% stay for church, but for many of them this group is church. I pray that we'll be able to continue to minister to people who's marriages have unraveled.

CELEBRATE RECOVERY

Leader: Matt Baylock



Celebrate Recovery began meeting on Tuesday nights in January 2019. Celebrate Recovery is a Christ-centered, 12 step recovery program for anyone struggling with hurt, pain or addiction of any kind. It is a safe place to find community and freedom from the issues that are controlling over our life. During this season, the group has focused on Matthew 6: 1 - 4. The group has been averaging 4 -6 participants in attendance over the last two months.

MEALS MINISTRY

Leader: Cindy Sorbera

The meals ministry is a personal, tangible expression of God's love to our church family. We have also had an opportunity to serve members of our community in the past. Those of us who participate are able to meet new people and bring cheer as well as prayer with us when we deliver a meal. The food is certainly a gift for those who are not able to cook or whose finances are limited. This past year we served 6 families, which equaled to 46 meals. We had approximately 8 loyal volunteers who stepped up and contributed when there was a need. We also had several others who contributed when they could. The gratitude and friendship we receive when we visit a family with a meal signifies a milestone in the lives of 2 people. We are changed by the love and caring we give and we receive.

Looking Ahead: Our plan for the coming year is to approach the meal request with a more positive statement i.e., "when would you like us to start meals" or something similar. There are those who don't want to impose or feel they don't need help. We continue to pray for the ability to serve where God presents the need.

QUILTING MINISTRY

Leader: Bonnie Hall

Throughout this past year, our ministry has benefited at least 147 families. The nurses at Highland Hospital in Rochester give each family a quilt/blanket for their child/children. Crocheted hats are given to each child in the nursery as well. Currently we have 8 active volunteers producing quilts, blankets/hats/dresses on a regular basis. We also have several others who assist sporadically when they can throughout the year. We also have 3 shifts of nurses within the Highland Hospital Special Care Nursery who hand out our handmade products under the guidance of our volunteer liaison, Laura Fancher. Our quilt ministry has been providing homemade quilts to ill children at the Highland Hospital Special Care Nursery for the last 14 years. Parents of seriously ill infants have told us how wonderful it is in their moment of need that someone from the church cares enough to provide their child/children (many multiple birth children are cared for in the nursery) with quilts and crocheted blankets and prayers. Additionally we provide cotton dresses to missionary groups traveling to India, Africa and Cuba. We do this to clothe little girls to hopefully prevent human trafficking.

Our numbers over the last year of active participants has dwindled but through God's assistance we've managed to keep up with the demand for our quilts and dresses. Along with the gift of a handmade quilt we feel that the parents also receive the gift of the church caring for them and praying for them. During this year we completed 134 quilts, 13 crocheted blankets, 163 crocheted hats and 20 cotton dresses.

LYDIAS CLOSET

Leaders: Ingrid Lancy and Jennifer Fisk

Our direction is clear in that we exist to show His love to families in need within the community by providing free clothing and books for their children. God has been powerfully at work in helping to build bridges within a community that is divided on so many fronts. His work within Lydia's Closet extends not only the warmth that clothing can provide, but also that of His love. Serving in His name in this way conveys that God loves us all and wants us to commit to supporting each other, building one another up and providing for the basic needs within our community. We are talking to families and making connections with people that we may never otherwise interact with in our day to day lives. Also, from a volunteer perspective, we have done more in the past year to include both youth groups at Calvary Community Church and Perinton Community Church. It is teaching our teens a new way to serve others. This past year we held a total of 4 clothing distribution events and 1 winter clothing distribution event. In total, we served well over 300 children. At the end of the year we also worked on setting up clothing systems to help organize and process the generous amounts of clothing that have been donated. We have begun setting up bins in the Venture Room, as well as coordinating volunteers to help organize, fold, and store the clothes. Clothing that will be set aside for larger distribution events will be stored in bins in the shed, and clothing staying inside the room will be kept for "as the need arises" in conjunction with the Food Pantry.

Looking Ahead: We continue to evaluate our approach to distribution events, what works, what does not and how we can improve our service to community partners and families. However, our direction is clear in that we exist to show His love to families in need within the community by providing free clothing and books for their children.

FOOD PANTRY

Leader: Patty McGough

It is exciting to see how the food pantry has grown from a few cans and boxes stuffed in the copy room to an organized food cupboard! We continue to reach a diverse population of church and community members from as close as Stonewood to as far away as North Chili and Irondequoit. Many in the Calvary church body regularly contribute food, hygiene and laundry supplies. There are moving stories of people in need who have been helped.

There are a few moments that stand out: the manager of Stonewood Village brought a single mother of two young teens a few months back. The woman was briefly between jobs but her budget was stretched to the breaking point. She had not eaten in a few days when she came in. We were blessed to be able to provide food for her and her children. There was another day when a single mother of two girls, one a teen and one a kindergartner. The teen daughter is developmentally disabled and the mother had been struggling to provide for her girls while their father is incarcerated. It has been clear that at times the mother has been exhausted and overwhelmed with the challenges she faces alone. Through the food pantry we have been able to support her materially and spiritually.

The information below is the demographic data that we capture for each family that we serve (this data is from March 2018 – February 2019):

Total # of Families/Households Served: 74

Total Adults: 103

Total Children: 121

Total # of people: 224

First Time Families: 25

Zip Codes Served: 14467 (12), 14608(1), 14514(3), 14623 (17) 14621 (1), 14428 (3),
14619 (1), 14580 (1), 14424 (2), 14605 (1), 14414 (1), 14616 (1), Homeless (6)

Looking Ahead:

As we continue to reach out the community there are 3 goals for this year:

1. Increase our contact and connections with Stonewood Village residents.
2. Begin to package groceries for a few balanced meals and include recipes for the families. This will enable them to have recipes on hand that use less expensive foods and are tasty, nutritious meals for families of four. Andrea Giardino has been working on this.
3. Have a minimal amount of clothing from Lydia's available for school age children. The hope is to have at least one seasonally appropriate outfit for boys & girls in each size from 5-14. We have been working and coordinating with the Lydia's Closet volunteers to make this happen and should begin by Spring!

VENTURE KIDS @ STONEWOOD VILLAGE

Elementary Leader (first hour) – Emily McCulla

Calvary Community and Life Stone Wesleyan Churches continued to partner this year in the Venture Kids outreach program at Stonewood Village. This monthly program (September-June) provides crafts, games, snacks, and Bible stories for preschool and elementary-age children during a first hour and activities for middle-school age children during a second hour. Calvary Community organizes volunteers and activities for the preschoolers and elementary-age children. Approximately 5 Calvary volunteers have regularly attended and invested in Venture Kids.

Although attendance has been very low during some months this year, we continue to see many of the same children and parents, many of whom are Muslim. Older siblings frequently bring younger siblings to the first hour then stay for the second hour. This year our first hour focused on the beginning of Scripture, sharing stories of a loving God who not only created but also sought to redeem His creation after the fall. Our time spent with neighborhood children and families has allowed us to begin to build relationships, through which the love of Jesus flows, building trust and opening doors.

Looking Ahead: As we enter the upcoming year, we are prayerfully considering how God may be leading Venture Kids as we continue to build bridges and relationships with our neighbors and friends in Stonewood Village. We believe that as our neighbors, God has called us to love the members of this community and to shine His light.

Middle School Leader (second hour) – Amber Quinn

I have thoroughly enjoyed working this year with Venture Kids. Despite some minor setbacks, God was in control and guided me every month. Not only did I leave an impact with the students, they impacted me and my life as well. Through various lessons, games and snacks, great discourse took place pertaining to what it means to be a Christian and the meaning of God's love (which was one of my favorite conversations). I believe this connects to the impact on how God is using me to impact our neighbors; through relationships, talks, games, and memories shared. During this past year, the average participants were 8. However, the majority of the attendees were the same group that attended every month which was a blessing due because the relationships were consistent and further elaborated. My husband and son were also able to attend, so the students were able to engage with my family which was enjoyable for all parties involved. Despite facilitating Venture Kids alone for most of the year, I felt God was still using me to pour into the students through various forms of activities. However, I was able to recruit a volunteer who consistently volunteered the last few months. This was exciting for the students because she used to run a camp that the majority of the students attend. It is always nice to see new faces and watching the students interact with volunteers.

Looking Ahead: After reflecting and praying about Venture Kids, I've received some visions as to the direction I would like to implement for this upcoming year (as far as engagement through the lesson and more sports related games pending weather) and receiving higher attendance.

STONEWOOD VILLAGE OUTREACH

Venture Compassionate Ministries vision has been to know, love and reach our neighbors. Early on, it was set on the heart of many to reach out to our neighbors down the road at Stonewood Village. Stonewood Village is a unique community. Made up of over 200 townhouse and apartments, there are anywhere from 500 - 600 members of this community, including a senior living complex. It has been our goal and desire to reach out to our neighbors and show them Christ's love in a variety of ways. Venture Kids was one of the foundational program that began several years ago. There have been several other programs that have started over the last couple of years.

Nazarene Compassionate Ministries Grant:

This past year, we applied for and receive a \$5,500 grant from Nazarene Compassionate Ministries. The grant funds also allowed us to purchase equipment and supplies to use in the future such as a portable sound system, foldable tables, arts and craft supplies, bibles in several languages and for several ages and games. It also provided funds for events and to help some of our other ministries that work with Stonewood throughout the year such as the Food Pantry and Lydia's Closet. We are very grateful for the funds that we received as it helped us to provide more resources and reach out to the community.

Love Your Neighbor Day

This event was now in its 4th year! This year it was held on July 14. We had over 130 Stonewood Residents attend as well as over 40 volunteers.

Back to School Backpack Distribution: This year, we worked with the Stonewood Village Staff in advertising and asking families that were in need of back to school supplies and backpacks. By having families sign up, it helped us to prepare each backpack for each child and make sure we had enough supplies for everyone. The donations came pouring in from our partners and monetary gifts as well that came in. We distributed 88 backpacks, all filled with the basic school supplies.

Family Friendly Events: This year, in conjunction with our partners at Life Stone Wesleyan Church we held an Easter Egg Hunt in the spring and Trunk or Treat event in the Fall. Both were very well attended by the community and with families from our churches. These events help us to meet our neighbors, and get to know them in a fun environment.

Looking Ahead: The Stonewood community is a diverse community, in terms of culture and religion. A significant amount of the community is from the Middle East and are Muslim. In the year ahead we will be working with our ministry teams and praying about how we can share Christ's love to this community. Additionally we will be working with the local schools, Stonewood Management, and area partners to evaluate and assist in meeting some of the needs of the community such as food insecurity and health initiatives.



MERCY MINISTRY

Leader: Lynn Youngman

In 2018 we reached out to the homeless in various ways-the Dimitri House winter meals, our homeless picnics and the RAIHN program. Upon re-evaluation for 2019 our focus will be more on the RAIHN program as the success rate for permanent housing is very high. RAIHN has increased 25% in families they were able to serve this year and 85% of the families graduated into permanent housing and remained after a year. We currently have a list of 25 volunteers, of which many are active, for this program. This is volunteering to be hosts, provide meals or spend the night. But, we will continue to do a homeless picnic in the summer and provide for any specific needs for the homeless as they arise.

Our gift bags to over 100 Woodcrest residents were a big hit. The residents were surprised and very grateful at the generosity of those who donated. 10 volunteers put together the bags and distributed them.

A new outreach last summer was loads of Love-a day of free laundry, given by the owner, and Mercy Ministry provided the detergent, books, lunch and Lydia's closet distributed clothing. We had around 12 volunteers assisting that day.

Our yearly Stonewood National Night Out provided refreshments and a bounce house to continue building relationships with the folks there.

We provided 14 Thanksgiving baskets for families in need and also food for Cross of Christ church to distribute to those in need in the city. 13 gift cards were given to families who struggle to buy gifts for their families at Christmas time.

Looking Ahead: There may be opportunities to get more involved with the refugee population this year. Would love to see people step up and be willing to take charge of a project of serving. Also more volunteers with a desire to serve. Our ministry is always willing to help those who are in need and if we do not have the resources we will refer to other agencies that could help. Putting together a resource guide would be a goal for Mercy Ministry to work on this year. Mercy Ministry is an important outreach to those with various needs. Even though sometimes the acts are small the ministry is always making an impact for Christ.



PIYO WOMENS FITNESS MINISTRY

Leader: Michelle Ober

PiYo LIVE women's fitness ministry is held every Tuesday night (including the summer!). This ministry also celebrated it's 3rd birthday in January! This year, we held several "Kid-PiYo" classes throughout the year where a mini guest instructor (Giselle) helped to lead the workout. These classes are a fun way to reach out to different people in the community that normally wouldn't attend a regular class. What started as a fun way to include the kids has definitely turned into a little more. Some of Giselle's fellow cheerleaders have attended and my youngest sister (a self-proclaimed atheist and anti-exerciser) came to one and has been attending regularly since then. During this past year class attendance ranged from 3 to 8 on a normal week. During special "kid" events, numbers are generally higher. To give a good example, class on 2/19/19 held 9 kids and 8 adults!

Leading this class brings joy to me personally and I believe it brings joy to others and God. It may not look the same as preparing a meal for someone, or providing clothing or shelter, but it feels as though God uses this ministry to lift women up. I'm a firm believer that exercise is not punishment. Finding a form of exercise that doesn't feel like "work" is helpful for a person's physical and mental well-being. I also think that exercise that is enjoyed is grossly underestimated (by the general public) for the way it can improve mood and mental health. Combine that with hearing a devotion that helps us to remember or hear about the immeasurable and unfailing love of Christ and I know that God is working through this and people are feeling His love.

Looking Ahead: All of that being said, for the next year, I don't anticipate any major changes occurring, but of course I am open to it if it seems as though that's where God is leading it! I will keep praying for God to continue to guide my decisions and work through me in actions, words and relationships that may or may not come from this ministry.



VENTURE COMPASSIONATE MINISTRIES, INC.



Venture Compassionate Ministries exists in and through the amazing work of the church. It exists because of faithful servants like you who support it through your prayers, your time, and your gifts.

We can see the compassionate nature of the church in Matthew 25:36 where it instructs us to give food to the hungry, to give water to the thirsty, to give clothing to the naked, to welcome the stranger, and to visit those who are sick or in prison. I believe the work of compassion in the church also takes on new forms to address the issues of poverty and hunger in our communities, to provide education to children and their families, and to share God's love to all those around us. Through our work, we seek to help build better families in our communities.

I hope you have learned something new that you didn't know before about one of our many ministries. God has blessed us with an amazing dedicated team of ministry leaders who volunteer countless hours every week and every month. They are passionate about their work and what God has called them to.

I encourage you to pray for the leaders, the participants and our neighbors. Please pray that God will use us to be a tool to reaching the lost.

Blessings,

David Riddell

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**We are very grateful to our ministry
and program partners this year:**



**Spanish First Church
of the Nazarene**



DIMITRI HOUSE



**The Cross of Christ
Deliverance Temple**