



**ANNUAL REPORT** **2021**

# NEW NAME, SAME NEIGHBOR

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Since 1983, we have been serving our neighbors throughout the Lowcountry. 2021 was a year of transition and growth as we continued to serve those in need. We are committed to bringing a better quality of life to our neighbors through sharing resources, developing relationships and building a sustainable future.

Our Board of Directors and staff engaged in a strategic planning process in 2021 that led to a new name. Tricounty Family Ministries became Neighbors Together on Monday, October 4, 2021. We had witnessed the transformation that occurred when neighbors came together to help one another through the pandemic. This is who we have always been: neighbors working together to build up our community.

North Charleston Mayor Keith Summey, Charleston Mayor John Tecklenburg and Charleston County Council Chairman Teddie E. Pryor, Sr. were our honored guests for this major milestone in our history. More than 200 long-time supporters attended the event, launching us into a future filled with hope and promise.

During 2021, our priority was expanding partnerships to build bridges between organizations in our community. We worked with Lowcountry Continuum of Care to provide outreach services for our homeless neighbors. Our organization supported Charleston County's effort to house families in crisis by providing the case management for their program. We worked with Turn 90, sharing groceries with men who are on track to avoid returning to prison. Neighbors Together deepened

our relationship with the Lowcountry Food Bank, expanding our food delivery program for senior citizens when other organizations were overwhelmed. One of our local schools, Mary Ford Elementary, became a partner site where we provided targeted support services for families at risk. Additionally, our relationship with DHEC expanded as we held multiple vaccine clinics and other immunizations.

We celebrate all the accomplishments of 2021 which you will see outlined in the pages of this Annual Report. We give thanks for all our supporters who have helped us get to this point: our volunteers, our donors, our Board of Directors, and all who serve as ambassadors for us in the community. Because of your support, we continue to serve as a safety net for our neighbors, helping them rebuild in times of crisis. Thanks to our wide network of partner organizations, businesses, and faith groups, we continue to share dignity and hope with our community.



Rev. Kara Joy Stewart  
*Executive Director*  
Neighbors Together





**LEFT** Charleston County Council Chair Teddie Pryor, Neighbors Together Executive Director Rev. Kara Joy Stewart, North Charleston Mayor Keith Summey and City of Charleston Mayor John Tecklenburg celebrate at Neighbors Together renaming ceremony.

**FRONT COVER** Aria, going into third grade, was one of 243 students in the Lowcountry to receive a backpack filled with supplies at our Back to School event in August.

## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the heartbeat of Neighbors Together. In 2021, families, seniors, young adults and empty-nesters gave more than 7,500 hours of time to help our neighbors. One of them was 95-year-old Louise Carpenter who had volunteered with us for the past 12 years. You would usually find her in the kitchen cutting cake slices or rolling silverware. She was a shining example of hope during these trying times. We celebrated her birthday in August, but sadly Louise passed away in December surrounded by her loving family. Her legacy lives on in the hearts of all who give selflessly to help our neighbors.

**719**

Volunteers

**7,550**

Volunteer Hours



# NAVIGATING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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2021 was a transformational year in the life of Neighbors Together. The pandemic is a marathon, not a sprint, and we have been in training. We have developed flexibility so that we could adjust our operations to prioritize health and safety. We have strengthened our support, growing our community of donors, so that we could expand our services. We have grown our team, adding new staff and honing our skills, so that we can position ourselves to expand our programming outreach.

While challenging, we didn't let the Pandemic slow us down because we knew the need from our community was as great as ever. We saw the number of neighbors dealing with hunger for the first time climb 44% in 2021. We expanded our rental and utility assistance program to meet the needs of the dozens of neighbors who call each week.

We didn't let the challenge of the Pandemic dampen our vision of expanding programs to serve more neighbors.

At the start of the year, we welcomed a new Program Director who has worked to improve our case management process and lay the groundwork for the expansion of our job training program. Our new Emergency Needs Program Manager provides in-depth training for our Assessment Counselors and helps to improve our application process for rent and utility assistance. We are continuing to professionalize every area of our operations including the volunteer experience, development and programming.

The Pandemic has impacted every aspect of our neighbors' lives — and we are here to walk with them through these unprecedented times — every step of the way.

# OUR FOUR PILLARS OF SERVICE

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We began 2021 with a strategic planning process that led to a new vision and mission statement. Thanks to direction from a strong and inspired Board of Directors, we were led to focus on four key areas, our “pillars of service,” as we have come to regard them: Hunger, Health & Wellness, Homelessness and Job Training.

## **OUR VISION**

Dignity and Hope for our Community.

## **OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

We are committed to bringing a better quality of life to our neighbors through sharing resources, developing relationships and building a sustainable future.



## HUNGER

Since we opened our doors in 1983, Neighbors Together has provided more than 7.5 million meals. We serve hot lunches four days a week, we deliver groceries to the home-bound and we offer emergency groceries from our food pantry to neighbors in need.



## HEALTH & WELLNESS

Our Health & Wellness program focuses on helping under-served and uninsured individuals with their medical needs, while fostering relationships that empower them to better maintain their own long-term health.



## PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

Our focus is on helping women and children at-risk for homelessness. Our development team found major financial support through grants, local corporations and government to move our vision of a shelter for women and children forward.



## JOB TRAINING

We began to lay the groundwork for an improved job training program that will offer online classes through partnerships, support for new small businesses, budgeting and wealth-building courses.



## FIGHTING HUNGER

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Each week, Neighbors Together works to feed people who are hungry. Monday through Thursday we offer hot meals between 10:30 am - 12:30 pm. On Wednesdays we supply emergency groceries to our neighbors in need. In 2021, we began a partnership with Turn 90, sharing groceries with the men in their program. We have also deepened our relationship with the Lowcountry Food Bank by expanding our food delivery program for senior citizens when other organizations were overwhelmed. Our Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations included a hot meal with all the fixings. Neighbors also received a turkey and groceries to then prepare an at-home holiday dinner. All this was made possible through our amazing partners. We are continuing to seek out the healthiest items to share, including fresh vegetables and lean meat, all sourced from local groceries and farms.





## EMILE LACROIX

Emile LaCroix can no longer work after being hit by a car on Rivers Avenue, resulting in a stroke. Being able to walk to Neighbors Together for a hot meal has kept Emile from going hungry during difficult times. Since 1983, Neighbors Together has offered food to the hungry across the Tricounty area, serving an estimated 7.5 million people over our 38-year history. Donors, community organizations, businesses and faith organizations make all of this possible.

**255,000**

Meals Served

**11,058**

Bags of Groceries Distributed

**25,568**

Households Helped

## PAMELA GREEN

Pamela Green is an educator who lives in Mt. Pleasant and is currently on disability due to the lung condition COPD. Pamela has struggled to make ends meet in the past and had to reach out for utility assistance from Neighbors Together to keep the power on. Without electricity, Pamela would not be able to use the oxygen tanks she needs to breathe and would have had to leave her home.

**4,268**

Homeless Persons in the Lowcountry  
(Lowcountry Continuum of Care)

**229**

Utility & Rental  
Assistance Recipients





## PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

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Statistics show that on any given night over 4,200 people are homeless in the Lowcountry, many of them women and children, living in cars, under bridges or even in temporary motels. Neighbors Together is committed to providing dignity and hope to women and children by offering utility and rental assistance. We also provide budgeting guidance to help prevent homelessness. Additionally, we work with key community partners to support people who do not have a place to stay.

In 2021, Neighbors Together shared our vision of a shelter for homeless women and children. Government leaders, corporations, and several foundations responded with financial pledges to make this a reality. We look forward to making key announcements in 2022 as we move closer to our goal.

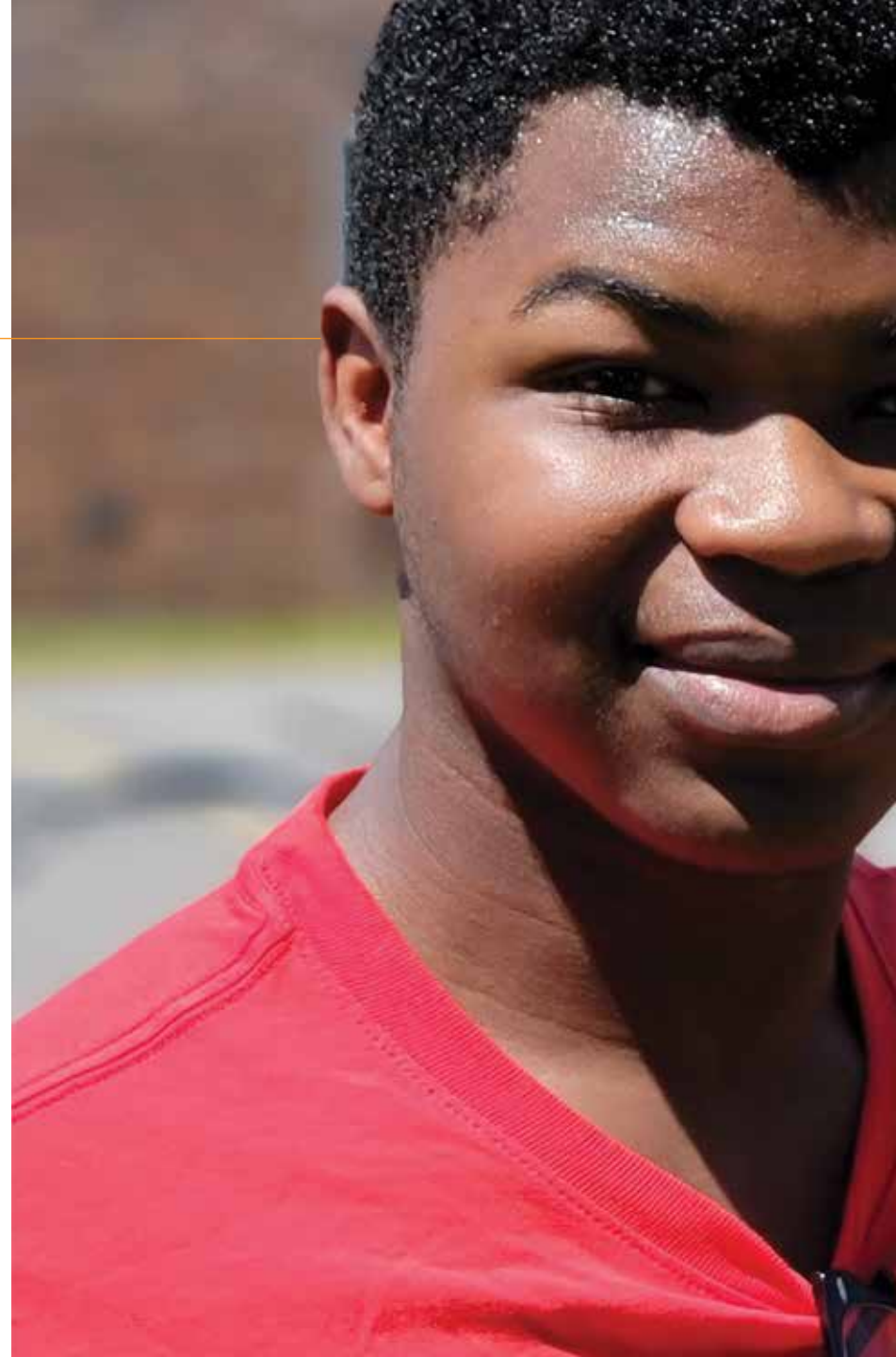
## HEALTH & WELLNESS

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Our Health & Wellness program focuses on helping underserved and uninsured neighbors with their medical needs, while fostering relationships that empower them to better maintain their own long-term health. Staffed by volunteer nurses, the clinic sees hundreds of patients each year with a variety of medical challenges.

Professional nurses volunteer their time running the program and are trained to help cut through red tape and complete applications that allow patients to obtain long-term, life-sustaining medications directly from the manufacturer at little or no cost.

Thanks to partnerships with DHEC and Palmetto Palace, we hosted vaccine clinics to help protect our neighbors from COVID and flu. Through the OneSCFund, neighbors in need of dentures or glasses are now able to see more clearly and brighten their smiles. In 2022, we will be partnering with the Shifa Health Clinic to expand our services to reach even more neighbors than before.





## TJ AND ARRELL CHEEKS

TJ Cheeks and her son Arrell came to Neighbors Together during one of our DHEC sponsored COVID-19 vaccine clinics. Both received their second immunization and were thankful for the opportunity to protect the health of their family and those around them. "Neighbors Together does so much for the community by giving back to families in need," TJ said.

**304**

COVID vaccines

**30**

Flu vaccines

## **NEW FOCUS ON JOB TRAINING PROGRAM**

A key focus for 2022 will be the expansion of the Neighbors Together Job Training Program. A Program Director was hired in the 4th quarter of 2021 to implement a new, invigorated strategy for the Job Training program that will include providing technology for online classes, resume building and job placement services.

**460,596**

Available Jobs in Tricounty Area

**400,000**

Small Businesses in South Carolina





## JOB TRAINING

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Job placement training and education to maintain employment are offered through volunteers and professionals at Neighbors Together. While the pandemic has challenged our ability to offer quarterly job fairs, Neighbors Together is committed to providing online classes through partnerships, support for new small businesses, budgeting and wealth-building courses.

# FINANCIALS

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Following guidelines from the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Neighbors Together believes every donor should be informed of the organization's mission, of the way the organization intends to use donated resources, and of its capacity to use donations effectively for their intended purposes.

Total Revenue  
**\$3,114,362**



Total Expenses  
**\$1,447,276**









2105 Cosgrove Avenue • North Charleston • SC • 843.747.1788 • [NeighborsTogetherSC.org](http://NeighborsTogetherSC.org)