



*1947 – 2021*

*Communities Together, Inc.*

*2021 Annual Report*



## Communities Together, Inc. Annual Report for 2021

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## **Agenda**

### **74th Annual Meeting of Communities Together, Inc.**

**Wednesday, April 6, 2022 – 1:30 PM  
St. Paul Episcopal Church – North Andover**

**Welcome and Opening Prayer**

**Rev. Edward Frost**

**Ministries in Review**

**Louise Kress and Andrea EK Vannett**

**2021 Annual Report – Posted on Communities Together, Inc. Web Page**

**2021 End of Year Financial Report**

**2022 Grant Applications Report**

**2022 Organizational Budget**

**Leslie Kalafarski**

**Approval of 2021 Annual Reports**

**Introduction of 2022 Officers and Board of Directors**

**Nominations from the Attendees**

**Approval of 2022 Officers and Board of Directors**

**Request for Adjournment**

**Roberta Weller**

**Hymn of Benediction**

**Peter Kalafarski**



## **Annual Report of the President**

I write my third and final report as your board president with a grateful heart. I am grateful that Communities Together has proved resilient to the extreme challenges of surviving and in some areas, flourishing, in the context of a global pandemic that has overshadowed every aspect of our ministry for my entire term as president.

Communities Together serves as an interchurch agency to enhance our mission effectiveness in Greater Lawrence. These past two years have affected our churches profoundly, yet we have been extraordinarily blessed by sustained funding, increased prayer support, and a deepening need for our services. Our grantors have worked with us with notable generosity and our many supporting individuals have steadfastly stood by us, despite all of the global and local difficulties. I think there has been no period that has emphasized more profoundly that we are 'better together'. Communities Together provides a key point of connection between our churches and the greater community that we serve, together. I am deeply grateful for our churches, grantors and supporters.

Our Undies-Sundays ministry had another incredible year with tens of thousands of diapers distributed to needy mothers. Our only non-faith-based program, *Manos Felices!* has remained open as much as Federal, State and Lawrence restrictions would allow, despite significant staffing challenges, and provided desperately needed companionship, education and enrichment to the children of Hancock and Stadium Courts. Our chaplains have courageously served in our area hospitals bringing important spiritual care to people of all faiths, both English and Spanish speaking patients. Literally hundreds of prayer shawls have been beautifully made, prayed over and distributed to bless patients and those in need to a special blessing from God. Our VBS work was so valued by the parishes that joined with us in that partnership.

Finally, my deep and warm thanks for our outgoing Executive Director Lee Schurter who has heroically advanced and improved Communities Together each year. She is loved and appreciated by all who have worked with her, and even now, she is working to keep our work going as we search for a new Executive Director. Lee, you have been the face, hands and heart of our work, and we thank you and bless you.

Faithfully and with gratitude

Fr. Edward Frost  
Board President



## Chaplains Pastoral and Spiritual Care

Communities Together resources two community chaplains who work for us at Holy Family Hospital in the hospital's Methuen campus, serving the communities of Lawrence, Methuen, Andover, North Andover and beyond.

Rev. Dominic Barbieri is our Protestant Chaplain. Ordained with the United Church of Christ, Dom brings extensive medical experience as well as his gentle pastoral presence to all the patients at Holy Family Hospital. Chaplain Dom compliments the hospital's Catholic Priest-Chaplain by focusing his care on protestant patients, and those who do not profess any particular faith.



Dom grew up in Lawrence, and is able to strike up a conversation with just about anybody. Patients trust his quiet and caring approach as they experience good days and challenging days in their healthcare journey.

Rev. Fernando Gomez, ordained with the Lawrence Primitive Methodist Church, is our Hispanic chaplain, serving mainly patients who have Spanish as their primary language.

Chaplain Fernando brings a deep and personal experience of Puerto Rican and Dominican culture as well as a long pastoral history in the Lawrence area. For Hispanic and Lantinx patients, Chaplain Fernando brings the opportunity to share and pray in their heart language.

Chaplains Dom and Fernando have served courageously through these pandemic years. Please pray for their ministry and thank you for your support of their important work in our communities.





## *Manos Felices! – Happy Hands*



*Manos Felices!*...two different doors but the same opportunity for the children who live in Hancock Courts and Stadium Courts Housing Projects to receive homework assistance, educational support, nutrition, socialization, and loving care.

*Manos Felices!* serves children in elementary grades who live at Hancock Courts and Stadium Courts Housing Projects in Lawrence, arguably two of the poorest housing projects in the Commonwealth. Our objective is to create a culturally-relevant and education-centered program for the children with emphasis on homework and independent reading. This emphasis helps place the children on a path toward academic achievement. Daily STEM projects and special crafts are offered following the homework completion to stimulate creativity and offer an escape from their digital devices. The greater benefit to the children, their families and the Lawrence community is that *Manos Felices!* equips children to become contributors to a brighter future for all Lawrence residents. With homework and reading assistance, the children establish a solid foundation for continued learning. The interaction with volunteer high school and college students inspires them to look toward higher learning as an option.

Creativity in addressing learning loss is crucial. Having experienced uncertainty, chaos and changes within the delivery of educational instructions throughout the pandemic, our children are demonstrating learning loss on all levels. In addition to the daily reading requirement, our volunteer advisors are developing creative ways to address the loss.

As an essential part of our emphasis on educational improvement and achievement, *Manos Felices!* also offers a Summer Enrichment Program for the children who live in the Hancock Courts and Stadium Courts Housing Projects. Our emphasis on reading continues during the summer by focusing on daily reading and providing activities that stimulate interest and development in art, music and science.

Water sports also remain a part of the program for the summer. Through our partnerships with the YWCA we offered swim lessons each week. The Greater Lawrence Boating Program provided water safety lessons as well as a variety of water sports activities.

For their end-of-the –summer experience, the children enjoyed a visit to the New England Aquarium. They also enjoyed blueberry picking at Smolak Farms in North Andover.



## 2021 LENTEN DIAPER AND UNDERWEAR DRIVE

Since 1998 Communities Together has been collecting diapers, pull-ups and underwear for children in the Greater Lawrence area during the Lenten season. This year the outpouring of generosity and support for this initiative has been overwhelming. Your thoughtfulness and concern for others yielded:

- 27,000+ Diapers
- 2,000 Pairs of children's underwear
- 9,000 Wipes

The collection was distributed to the following local social agencies who are serving families in need:

- Lazarus House
- St. Vincent's Ministry
- Horizons for Children Family Shelter
- Si Se Puede
- Bread and Roses
- Pregnancy Care Center
- Fina House/YWCA
- People's Pantry
- Emmaus House
- Neighbors in Need



Communities Together also received \$1,366.55 in donations to the *Undie Sundays* drive. These funds were used to purchase additional diapers as needed for the agencies.

Thank you for making a difference in lives, as we respond together to meet needs within the Greater Lawrence area.





## Vacation Bible School – Greater Lawrence Area

A science lab is full of fascinating things that help us explain how things are possible. In Jesus' ministry, He did things that cannot be explained. He turned water into wine, walked on water, and His greatest miracle of all was dying on the cross and rising from the dead for our salvation. Children discovered that Jesus does the impossible for us at *God's Wonder Lab 2021 VBS!*

VBS Director, Mark Houle of Our Lady of Good Counsel is shown leading children in the remarkable adventure of *God's Wonder Lab*.



*Thanks to your generous support children from Kindergarten to Grade 6 have been participating in this value-centered program since 1975.*





*The earth is full of the Goodness of the lord.  
Psalm 35:5*

The Prayer Shawl Ministry began in 1998 in Hartford, Connecticut. Two women started it as a project while they were attending a program in Applied Spirituality. Weaving healing prayers into the fabric of the shawl is what this ministry is all about. These shawls reach those in need of comfort. Shawls are given during illness or recovery, at times of loss or in times of joy.

Last September, Communities Together had their second Prayer Shawl Drive By at the Trinitarian Congregational Church in North Andover. Representatives from many churches delivered their beautiful, handmade shawls to be blessed by Pastor Debra Adams and Chaplain Dom Barbieri.



After this event, Sisters' Knitting Group donated over 30 shawls which were also blessed by Pastor Debra Adams. The shawls have been delivered to Lawrence General Hospital, Holy Family Hospital, and High Pointe Hospice House .In addition, shawls were delivered to veterans by International Veteran Care Services.

Communities Together plans to host a tea in September 2022. We encourage those who knit, crochet or sew to make shawls for the fall. It will be wonderful to receive shawls in red, white and blue for area veterans.

Communities Together has a few more shawls. If you know any chaplains, pastors or groups who would like some shawls for their ministry, please call us at (978) 686-4012.





## Community Worship Services

*Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Psalm 95:6*

Communities Together brought the community together for spiritual enrichment throughout the year. Lenten services began on Ash Wednesday, February 24, 2021. Inter-faith services were held for the National Day of Prayer on May 6, 2021 and for Thanksgiving on November 18, 2021.

## 2021 Lenten Service Series

Lenten Services began on Ash Wednesday, February 24, 2021 and continued weekly on Wednesday until Holy Week.

### **Each Wednesday at Noon**

The weekly virtual service featured messages from:

Pastor Kim Gold – First United Methodist Church – North Andover  
Father Chris Casey – Our Lady of Good Counsel - Methuen  
Chaplain Joshua Goulet – Holy Family Hospital - Methuen  
Rev. Sarah Mato' – St. Paul's Episcopal Church – North Andover  
Rev. Mr. Steven Murphy – Communities Together, Inc. Board Member  
Minister Jennifer Murray – South Church – Andover

Worshippers joined online by using the following address:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0\\_3Rf-hcNim4fbl7YHDARw/featured](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0_3Rf-hcNim4fbl7YHDARw/featured)

**2021 NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER**

**Thursday – May 6, 2021 at 6:00 PM**

**'Stations of the Cross' Garden and Gazebo**

**Holy Family Hospital – 70 East Street – Methuen, MA 01844**

Rev. Edward Frost, Holy Family Hospital, welcomed worshipers to the beautiful outdoor setting. Other clergy members leading in prayer were:

Father Kevin Deeley – Saint Michael Parish – North Andover

*Topic: Medical community at all levels and Families – Single parents, senior adults, children*

Rev. Jeanette Leisk – Faith Lutheran Church – Andover

*Topic: First responders – EMTs, law enforcement, firemen*

Father Martin Hyatt – St. Basil Seminary – Methuen

*Topic: The marginalized*

Father Manuel Rahmeh – St. Anthony Maronite Church – Lawrence

*Topic: Civic leaders in Lawrence, in MA, and the US*

Rev. Fernando Gomez – Evangelical Methodist Church – Lawrence

*Topic: The military and military families*

Pastor Jennifer Murray – South Church – Andover

*Topic: Educators, schools, colleges*

**Communities Together, Inc.**

***Interfaith Thanksgiving Service***

**Thursday, November 18, 2021 at Noon**

**St. Theresa – Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish**

**22 Plymouth Street – Methuen, MA 01844**

Worship leaders included:

Father Christopher Casey – St. Theresa – Our Lady of Good Counsel

Rabbi Howard Mandell – Congregation Beth Israel - Andover

Ms. Thea Shapiro – Habitat for Humanity – Essex County

Rev. Jeffrey Snyder – First Calvary Baptist Church – North Andover



**COMMUNITIES TOGETHER, INC.**

**2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

PRESIDENT	REV. EDWARD FROST
VICE PRESIDENT & TREASURER	LESLIE KALAFARSKI
SECRETARY	LOUISE KRESS
DIRECTOR	REV. MR. STEVEN MURPHY
DIRECTOR	PEGGY O'BRIEN
DIRECTOR	KLARA VAJDA
DIRECTOR	ANDREA EK VANNET
DIRECTOR	DEBORAH CHIARAVALLOTI
DIRECTOR	SARAH DUNLAP



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VICE PRESIDENT	
SECRETARY	LOUISE KRESS
TREASURER	
DIRECTOR	STEVEN MURPHY
DIRECTOR	PEGGY O'BRIEN
DIRECTOR	KLARA VAJDA
DIRECTOR	ANDREA EK VANNET



## 2021 Donors

*Thank you for impacting lives through your generosity.*

### **2021 Unrestricted Contributions**

Abbott, Barbara  
Adam, Donna  
Bartle, Priscilla  
Bostock, Dean G.  
Cleary, Linda  
Edwards, David and Anne  
Frost, Edward  
Goff, Loretta  
Kooken, Jean  
Kress, Louise  
Lumb, Sandra  
McGravey, Anne  
Meyer, Mark G.  
Munro III, John  
Nawrocki, Mary Ann  
Power, Dorothy  
Quirk, Brian  
Pickard, Helen N.  
Pritchard Fund  
Robinson, Sylvia  
Rosen, Catherine  
Schurter, Lee  
Shirley, Edna  
Smith, Betty  
Soellner, Barbara  
Swett, Valerie  
Weller, Carl and Roberta



## **2021 Restricted Contributions**

### **Lenten Services**

Orchard, Hazel

### **Website Development**

Kalafarski, Leslie and Peter

### **Undies Sundays**

Byrne, Phyllis  
Cleary, Linda  
First Baptist Church of Methuen  
Larson, Robert and Marilyn  
Orchard, Hazel  
Power, Dorothy  
Rocca, Cheryl  
Schwarzenberg, Lillian  
Tupper, Sherry  
Tyler, Phyllis  
Weller, Carl and Roberts  
Willing Workers of First Calvary Baptist Church

### **Vacation Bible School**

Free Christian Church

#### ***Manos Felices!***

Difruscia, Celeste M.  
Faith Lutheran Church  
First Baptist Church of Methuen  
Fundeklian, Lillian  
Kress, Louise  
Schurter, Lee  
Trinitarian Congregational Church  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church

### **Chaplaincy – Holy Family Hospital**

Steward Healthcare

## 2021 Participating Congregations

Andover Baptist Church  
Ballardvale United Church  
Centro de Adoracion Jesucristo es el Senor  
The Parish of Christ Church Andover  
Christian Fellowship of Merrimack Valley  
Christ United Methodist Church  
Ebenezer Christian Church  
Faith Lutheran Church  
First Baptist Church of Methuen  
First-Calvary Baptist Church  
First Church Congregational  
First Spanish Free Methodist Church  
First United Methodist Church of North Andover  
Forest Street Union Church  
Free Christian Church  
Iglesia Cristiana Metodista  
Iglesia Episcopal de Gracia  
Iglesia Cristo Principe de Paz  
Iglesia Dios de la Profesia  
New England Conference of United Methodist Church  
Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish  
Redeemer Lutheran Church  
St. Augustine Parish Andover  
St. Lucy Parish  
St. Mary of the Assumption Parish  
St. Michael Parish  
St. Monica Parish  
St. Patrick Parish  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
South Church in Andover  
South Congregational Church  
Spanish Assemblies of God Church  
Spanish Free Methodist Church  
Spanish Primitive Methodist Church  
Third Baptist Church  
Trinitarian Congregational Church  
United Riverside Congregational Church  
West Parish Church

**COMMUNITIES TOGETHER, INC.**  
**GRANT APPLICATIONS**

**2022 Grant Application - Vacation Bible School**

<u>Grantor</u>	<u>Request</u>
BBCU	5,000.00

**2022 Grant Applications - *Manos Felices!***

<u>Grantor</u>	
Josephine G. Russell Trust	9,500.00
Artemas W. Stearns Trust	4,000.00
Nathaniel & Elizabeth P. Stevens Foundation	26,000.00
Cummings Foundation	25,000.00
ECCF - Summer Program	6,000.00
Amelia Peabody Foundation	30,000.00
South Church	3,000.00
Rogers Family Foundation	3,000.00
Charles G. Pringle Foundation	3,000.00
Margaret Collins Charitable Foundation	3,000.00
2022 Greater Lawrence Community Fund	3,000.00
Saab Family Foundation	4,000.00
Catherine McCarthy Memorial Trust Foundation	2,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>121,500.00</b>

**Communities Together, Inc.  
Organizational Budget 2022**

**Income**

Restricted Grants	125,500
Restricted Gifts	27,000
Churches	6,000
Friends	10,000
Fundraisers/Events	500
 Total Unrestricted Gifts	 16,500
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>169,000</b>
Carry Forward (2020 Balance Sheet)	47,812
<b>Total Funds Available</b>	<b>216,812</b>

**Expense**

Program Budgets:	
<i>Manos Felices!</i> – Hancock Courts	63,511
<i>Manos Felices!</i> – Stadium Courts	64,824
Chaplains	17,348
Vacation Bible School	9,438
Diaper & Underwear Drive	1,500
<b>Total Program Expense</b>	<b>156,621</b>
Operating Expense:	
Unallocated Salaries	12,433
Unallocated Salary Expense	951
Property & Liability Insurance	4,000
Workers Comp	1,500
Rent	4,800
Postage and Delivery	950
Printing and Reproduction	1,900
Telephone and Internet	4,968
Travel Allowance	1,200
Equipment/Copier	200
Fundraisers/Events	500
Other Office Expenses	150
Miscellaneous	90
Subtract Allocated Operating Expense s	- 14,719
<b>Total Unallocated Operating Expense</b>	<b>18,923</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>175,544</b>
<b>Carry Forward to 2023</b>	<b>41,268</b>

