

# THE BETHEL BEACON

JANUARY 2025

## FROM MANG SONNA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Happy New Year! It is a blessing to be able to bid farewell to the old year and enter a New Year afresh! When I was a young boy, my New Year's resolutions - big and small - helped me follow the right path and guarded my life from bad things. I no longer make New Year's resolutions, but I've been reflecting on how the old year went, and I have been making goals to achieve in the New Year with God's help.

As I reflect on New Year's Eve, I thank God, my family, and my friends for helping me overcome the challenges at work and in my personal life. God is pleased with the God-honoring decisions you and I made, and those decisions helped us get to where we are in life. The decisions we make affect not just us but our family, friends, and community members. I pray that we will make wise decisions that honor God in the New Year and take advantage of the opportunities God has placed in our lives.

I am very grateful to report that generous donors like YOU have helped us touch 9,697 lives in 2024 through the various programs and services we run at the Bethel Center. We are thankful for the big gifts but no gift or donation is too small if it is given with love. God multiplies our gifts as he did to feed the 5,000+ in the Gospels! Our gifts are more in God's hands than in ours. Thank you so much for your partnership in touching and transforming lives in Kansas City. The Bethel Neighborhood Center has been a light in the community for more than 114 years and we would love to serve our community for another 100+ years with your help.

The Bethel board, staff, volunteers, community members, and I are grateful for your generosity. We cannot wait to see what God has in store for us in 2025. Happy New Year!

## Christmas Special



Christmas holds a unique importance, especially at Bethel, where we organize our annual **Christmas Gift Shop**. In this initiative, individuals, families, churches, and various organizations come together to adopt families and fulfill their Christmas wishlists. This year, thanks to the generous support of KU Medical Center, along with several other churches and individuals, we were able to create a memorable Christmas experience filled with gifts and love for 77 families.

During the week of December 9th, board members, staff, volunteers, and neighbors dedicated their time, culminating in a grand event on the 14th, where the gym was brimming with gifts for the families. It was a heartwarming and emotional experience to meet many of the families in person. One parent, in particular, expressed her gratitude to Bethel and the donors, stating that she wouldn't have been able to provide her children with a Christmas experience if not for Bethel and the sponsors. Stories like hers resonated throughout the hallways and gym all morning on the 14th.

However, none of this would have been achievable without your support. The true champions in all of this are the donors like you and God, who have blessed and multiplied our efforts. Thank you!



## AN IMPACTFUL YEAR: 2024!

The Bethel Fall after-school program concluded on December 9th, with 97 students attending regularly in the fall. Thanks to our partners from the ABWMs and numerous individual supporters, every student received a Christmas shoebox gift to take home.

Overall, the 2024 student program was a tremendous success, serving 138 students through our after-school and summer programs. Over 35 students participated in our VBS program, where they learned important biblical principles. We also had 10 teenagers as volunteers and staff during the year, while more than 50 students joined our broader volunteer teams, contributing in various capacities to our programs at BNC. This included participants from the Piper School Basketball team, the 4 Ten group from the ABC Churches, a student team from FBC Boone, IA, and many others.

Additionally, after-school students participated in conflict resolution training and had the chance to engage with guest speakers. Elementary students received help with homework and reading, while middle schoolers developed essential social skills through play and interaction. High school students enjoyed building relationships through career and college discussions and fieldtrips.

## To Donate or learn more about us...

Bethel Neighborhood Center

14 S 7th St  
Kansas City, KS 66101  
[www.bethelcenter.org](http://www.bethelcenter.org)  
913-371-8218



## DECEMBER PANTRY UPDATE

December was an extraordinary month of generosity for Bethel, as we both received support and were able to extend assistance to those in need within our community. We remained open until the 20th of the month before closing for the Christmas and New Year break. During this time, we successfully assisted 2051 individuals, representing 357 households, including 873 children and 167 seniors.

This month also served as a powerful reminder of the incredible impact Bethel has on our community, made possible by the generous contributions from you and many others, both near and far. Despite facing significant food insecurity and limited resources, we came together as a community and concluded the year having served **11770 individuals**. Indeed, your support has made 2024 a reality at Bethel.

## BE IN THE KNOW!

**January 21**

After-school Resumes

**Friday, April 4, 6:30 p.m.**

Bethel 114th Birthday  
Gala!

**Wednesdays at 6 PM**

Community Meal &  
Fellowship/Worship

**February 15-17**

Highschool Trip to  
Chicago

## PRAISE & PRAYER REQUESTS

- Give thanks to God for an impactful 2024 and the growth God has blessed the Bethel ministry with.
- Celebrate the success of the Christmas Shop and Gift-giving event, which supported 77 families.
- Pray for God's favor for our Refugee Resettlement program as we anticipate a change in government administration on the 20th of January.
- Pray for our Bethel board, staff, and volunteers, that they may serve with a renewed commitment and clear sense of purpose.
- Pray for the health and safety of all those we serve, as well as for continued community support and engagement to continue our ministry.

