

THE BETHEL BEACON

May 2025



FROM MANG SONNA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Bethel Center's 114th Birthday and Fundraiser Gala was a huge success! It was the first-ever Gala in Bethel's history, and we are so thankful to all of you for joining the celebration and fundraiser. The tireless work of the Bethel board, staff, volunteers, and Sheri, our administrative assistant, paid off, as we had a fun-filled celebration, raising more than \$14,000 for our after-school and summer programs for grades 1-12. The impact stories that were shared through the Bethel Video, as well as from former program participants and board members, warmed our hearts and were very encouraging. Our gifted emcees - Sandra Olivas-Talavera and Jerry Cain entertained the crowd and made the celebration even more fun.

During the celebration, our emcees announced the Bethel College scholarship winner for this year and conducted an impromptu interview. Arturo Delgado, our scholarship winner, said, **"We get help with our homework from the staff at Bethel...I enjoyed all the fun field trips over the years... The college visits were helpful as I learned possibilities to go to college."** He is currently a senior at a local high school and is doing his internship at the KU Medical Center to gain some experience to fulfill what he likes to do.

Thank you for your prayers and financial support of the Bethel ministry. May God bless you abundantly!



FROM NEED TO NEIGHBOR

How Kevin found support, and gave back!

IMPACT STORIES



(Left) Arturo Delgado, a high school senior and recipient of the Bethel College scholarship, delivering a speech.
(Right) Bethel Staff Member Sheri receiving a grocery donation from Kevin.

"I was told that Bethel would help me," Kevin said when he first arrived at Bethel. He had been facing a tough season struggling with food insecurity, unemployment, and unstable housing. Kevin was referred to Bethel by someone who knew him well, his former pastor, who also happens to be one of Bethel's board members.

Since joining Bethel's senior program a few months ago, Kevin has been able to access vital support. With the help of our team, and your generosity, he gained access to our food pantry, computer and internet access for his job certification, and a welcoming community that genuinely cares.

But Kevin's story didn't stop there. Just a few weeks ago, he returned, not to ask for help, but to give help. Carrying bags of groceries, Kevin donated food to the very pantry that once supported him, hoping to ease the burden for others facing food insecurities. Because of supporters and patrons like you, Kevin found more stability, and now, he's part of the chain of hope for others. Thank you for making stories like his possible.

SPRING AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM NEARS COMPLETION

As our Spring after-school program wraps up, we celebrate a season of growth and impact. This semester, 99 students participated across our elementary, middle, and high school groups, engaging in academic & health education, enrichment activities, and community-building rooted in Bethel's mission. Highlights for April included a vibrant Easter Egg Hunt, supported by volunteers from a local church and others who donated Easter Gift bags for your students. Even more meaningful, seven elementary students are now transitioning to our middle school group, and three middle schoolers will join our high school program this summer. We're especially proud to honor one of our high school seniors, who has been accepted to Avila University to study sports medicine. He is also the recipient of Bethel's College scholarship.



As we are nearing the end of our spring school year, we also want to highlight that over half of our after-school staff and volunteers are former students who have returned to serve. Their commitment reflects the lasting impact of this program, and we are deeply grateful for their leadership.

Thank you to our staff, volunteers, and partners for helping us finish strong. We look forward to continuing this momentum into our summer programming!



(Left) Students appreciating their Easter eggs. (Right) Arturo, a high school senior, receiving Bethel's College Scholarship during Bethel's Birthday Gala.

To Donate or learn more about us...

Bethel Neighborhood Center



14 S 7th St
Kansas City, KS 66101
www.bethelcenter.org
913-371-8218



APRIL PANTRY UPDATE

As our food pantry's reach grows, so does our inventory. In April, we supported **350 households**, nourishing **370 adults, 152 seniors, 274 children**, and providing **52 infants** with diapers. We also served nearly **300 meals** on-site through our community meals and other ministries.



Bethel staff collecting food donations from Arrowhead Middle School.

Thanks to generous supporters and partners like Kanbee's Market, Urban Produce Push, Harvesters, and a list of several local churches, we have gathered more food. One highlight for the month of April was when Arrowhead Middle School in Kansas City, Kansas, organized an unsolicited food drive. This reflects the community collaboration that helps our pantry thrive. However, community needs have surged. If you'd like to help, please contact us for a list of needed supplies.



WHAT'S UP IN MAY?

12
MAY

SEWING CLASS GRADUATION

16
MAY

LAST DAY OF SPRING AFTER-SCHOOL

31
MAY

SUMMER PROGRAM KICK-OFF

PRAISE & PRAYER REQUESTS

- Praise God for successfully meeting our financial goal through the Gala and Silent Auction.
- Praise God for those who have donated diapers for the families we serve through the Food Pantry.
- Praise God for the increased number of individuals and families who have come to be with us in the Wednesday evening Fellowship Meal.
- Pray for our Bethel Staff and Volunteers as we strive to do the work of Christ by offering love and hope to our community.
- Pray for the Staff, Volunteers and Students who will participate in the Summer Youth Program.
- Please pray for our Executive Director, Mang Sonna, and his family as they anticipate to welcome their first grandchild into their family in mid-May.