

November 2025

THE BETHEL BEACON



FROM MANG SONNA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends of Bethel,

As we enter the month of Thanksgiving, I find myself reflecting deeply on the blessings of this year—and I am overwhelmed with gratitude. God’s faithfulness has been evident in every step, and your continued prayers and financial support have been a vital part of that journey. Because of YOU, we can serve as the hands and feet of Christ in our city. THANK YOU SO MUCH.

This year has brought many reasons to give thanks:

- **Family Joys:** My wife and I are especially grateful for our growing family. Our son graduated with his Master’s degree from Harvard and began a new job in Connecticut. Our daughter and son-in-law in Edmonds, WA, welcomed their first child—our precious grandson, Jonah. Becoming grandparents has been a profound blessing! We’ve also cherished time traveling together along the East and West Coasts, visiting our children.
- **Ministry Joys:** I am thankful for the Bethel board, our dedicated staff and volunteers, and the incredible community of supporters like you. I’m also grateful for the new refugee support programs we’ve launched and the lives we continue to touch here in Kansas City.
- **God’s Redirection:** At the start of the year, we faced disappointment when our refugee resettlement program was halted. After five months of training and preparation, we were ready to welcome families from around the world. But just as doors seemed to close, God opened another—allowing us to serve refugees already in the U.S. who are still finding their footing. I’m reminded that no training or experience is ever wasted in God’s hands.

As we approach the end of the year, we continue to count on your support. Your generosity sustains this ministry and fuels the hope we offer to so many in our community. Please know that we are THANKFUL for YOU! The Bethel board, staff, and volunteers wish you to have a blessed Thanksgiving!

REFUGEE SUPPORT SERVICES: A YOUNG MOTHER’S JOURNEY TOWARD STABILITY

A young refugee mother recently arrived in Kansas City this spring, facing significant challenges without immediate family support. Her husband remains in a refugee camp, awaiting the approval of his visa to join his family. Eight months into pregnancy and caring for two young children, ages five and seven, she carries not only the weight of motherhood in a new country but also the burden of a severe heart condition that will require surgery after she delivers her baby.

Her financial situation is precarious. Despite her determination to work part-time while caring for her children and navigating a complex healthcare system as an expectant mother, her \$1,000 monthly income falls far short of covering basic living costs, childcare, and medical needs. She currently receives food stamps, yet this does not fully meet her family’s needs.

Through the Bethel Neighborhood Center’s Refugee Support Services program, she received some immediate and vital assistance. The help Bethel has provided gives her some relief as she prepares to welcome her new baby, but it is not enough. We point her to other agencies for guidance on connecting to local resources to address her ongoing needs. Bethel is further collaborating with community partners to open pathways for long-term services, including potential intensive case management to ensure she continues receiving the care and support she needs.

This case highlights both the resilience and the hardships refugee families face as they rebuild their lives in a new community. It underscores the importance of sustained, compassionate support systems that extend beyond one-time assistance. Our young mother doesn’t just need a single helping hand; she needs a community that surrounds and supports her with care and compassion. And that is exactly what we strive to provide to our families every day. Thanks for your continued support of what we do in our city.

BETHEL AT KCK PUBLIC LIBRARY



Students participating in a special story time for Bethel

By Hau Leivang
Program Director & Volunteer Coordinator

This fall has been full of creativity, learning, and community spirit at Bethel Neighborhood Center! In October, Bethel students visited the Kansas City, Kansas Public Library twice for an exclusive story and craft session designed just for them. The featured book about shapes and clouds sparked curiosity and imagination as students learned how clouds form and change shape.

Afterward, they created their own cloud art using cotton, colors, and popsicle sticks and filled the room with laughter, creativity, and a bit of healthy competition over who made the best cloud piece. These visits are a part of Bethel's effort to strengthen our partnership with the library and encourage students' interest in reading and learning.

Another highlight of the month was our first (hopefully annual) Fall Festival, which brought together more than 100 students and parents for an evening of fun, food, and connection. Children enjoyed games like mop soccer, balloon ankle pop, and face painting, while families gathered for photos at our beautiful photo booth and claimed prizes from our beloved "lady rooster," Ms. Sheri. Though rain moved the celebration indoors and Bounce houses had to be cancelled, the event was a joyful success, welcoming new families and celebrating the once who have been with us for many years.



OCTOBER PANTRY UPDATE

In October, the growing need for assistance due to food insecurity in our community continues to be evident. We served up to 3 times more families each day than in past months. Our Food Pantry served a total of 444 households, providing nourishment to 790 adults, 212 seniors, and 632 children. Additionally, we supplied diapers to 51 infants. On-site, we served nearly 200 meals through our community meals, the after-school program, and various ministries.

Please continue to keep the Bethel Food Pantry in your prayers as we strive to navigate these difficult times regarding the suspension of the SNAP Program, and as we strive to keep the pantry full for the food-insecure and underserved in our community.

PRAISE & PRAYER REQUESTS

- Praise God for a safe and fun Fall Party.
- Praise God for the new friends we have met through the Refugee Support Services Program.
- Praise God for LeBaron-Ramos Law Firm, LLC. for holding a *Tacos for Cans* Food Drive for the Bethel Food Pantry.
- Praise God for everyone who supports Bethel through prayer, food donations, financial donations, and more.
- Please pray for our Bethel Refugee Support Services Team that we will have wisdom to help all who come to us seeking help and guidance.
- Please pray for the Staff of our Bethel Youth After-school Program.
- Please pray for the families around the country who will be facing new challenges and food insecurity due to the suspension of the SNAP Food Benefit Program in the month of November.
- Please pray for the success of the Bethel Christmas Shop to be held on Saturday, December 20.

To Donate or learn more about us...

Bethel Neighborhood Center



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