

April 2025

THE BETHEL BEACON



FROM MANG SONNA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

March was a busy month for us here at the Bethel Center. In addition to our regular activities, we were busy preparing for our first-ever Bethel Birthday Fundraiser Gala, which will be held on Friday, April 4, at 6:30 p.m. We are encouraged by the response we received as our event tickets were sold out in the third week of March! We are very grateful to our supporters and well-wishers far and near for the positive response and energy you all have shown us. We are beyond thrilled to celebrate the Bethel Neighborhood Center's 114th Birthday!

Having completed 16 years as the Executive Director and 21 years as a Bethel staff member, I have heard many heartwarming stories and seen the impact of Bethel Center's practical ministry to young and old alike. Although one door is closed (Refugee Resettlement Program), God is opening a new door, and we are thankful to God and our ministry partners. If everything goes well, Better Together KC and Bethel will join hands to open a free medical clinic to see uninsured patients twice a month in our renovated and expanded facility. I will share more about this partnership as I know more.

Thank you so much for your continued prayers and financial support of the Bethel ministry. We are able to offer hope and help because of your support. May God bless you all abundantly!

MINISTRY HIGHLIGHT: A JOY-FILLED MARCH FOR OUR SENIORS

From the very beginning, Bethel's ministry to seniors has been one of our most meaningful commitments, and this past month was no exception. Every weekday morning from 9 to 11 AM, around 25 seniors gather at Bethel for socialization, wellness, and fun activities. Whether it's bingo with prizes, Zumba or yoga sessions led by certified instructors, or routine health checkups through our partnership with the VNA, these activities support the physical and emotional well-being of our seniors. In fact, one of the most impactful moments came when a nurse detected a serious health concern during a routine checkup. The senior was taken to the ER immediately and that helped avoid a bigger health catastrophe. It's a powerful reminder of how important this ministry truly is.

Each Tuesday, our seniors head home with fresh produce, and every weekday they enjoy a warm, nutritious lunch thanks to our partnership with the Area Agency on Aging. We also continue our monthly shopping trips to ensure they have access to everyday necessities.

March brought several special events, including a visit to the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum and a joyful "Invite a Senior" day that welcomed many first-time guests. One couple, Pao and Xay Her, were especially moved—having been married at Bethel 44 years ago! Our seniors also had a blast at a celebration hosted by the Area Agency at Victory Hills Baptist Church.

We are so grateful for supporters like you who have given Bethel the opportunity to walk alongside our seniors in giving hope, well-ness and self-sufficiency.



STUDENT-LED FUNDRAISER HITS THE MARK!



On the morning of Saturday, March 22nd, Bethel was buzzing with energy and community spirit as our after-school program participants hosted a car wash fundraiser in support of our youth programs. Thanks to the dedication of our young participants and the generosity of our neighbors, we're thrilled to share that we exceeded our fundraising goal—bringing in over \$700 within just two hours.

In the weeks leading up to the event, students took the lead in preparing and promoting — handing out flyers, spreading the word, and organizing supplies. On the day of the car wash, they washed nearly 30 vehicles and grilled hot dogs for hungry guests. Some community members came just to donate, without needing a wash—an incredible show of support that truly touched our hearts.

This event aimed to build confidence, teamwork, and a sense of ownership for our students. We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to the students who worked so hard, the families who showed up to help and cheer them on, and the many individuals — some familiar, some brand new — who gave their time, energy, and/or donations to lift this effort beyond what we imagined. It's moments like this that remind us what the Bethel community is all about: showing up, working together, and believing in our young people.

To Donate or learn more about us...

Bethel Neighborhood Center



14 S 7th St
Kansas City, KS 66101

www.bethelcenter.org
913-371-8218



MARCH PANTRY UPDATE

Our food pantry plays an essential role in assisting families dealing with food shortages. In March, we helped 226 households, providing nourishment to 499 adults, 118 seniors, and 495 children. Additionally, 67 infants benefited from receiving diapers and baby wipes, which were greatly needed. With Sheri Harding stepping into a new position to manage our food orders, the influx of supplies from Harvesters has increased. Despite this, the community's need remains substantial, and we aim to offer hope during these difficult periods.

We are profoundly thankful to our donors, volunteers, and partners for enabling us to serve with respect and empathy. We continue to seek help, especially in acquiring diaper sizes 1 to 6. Contribute to making a difference by donating, volunteering, or spreading the word. Together, we can support those working towards self-sufficiency within our community.



WHAT'S UP IN APRIL?

04
APR

BETHEL'S 114TH BIRTHDAY GALA

18
APR

BETHEL'S CLOSED FOR GOOD FRIDAY

PRAISE & PRAYER REQUESTS

- Praise God for the Bethel Birthday Gala and the support of our donors and Bethel friends.
- Praise God for **Kansas City Board of Public Utilities (KCKBPU)** Employees Charity Golf Corp who generously donated \$10,000 to support our Bethel student program.
- Pray for the refugee families who entered the United States a few weeks/months prior to the suspension of the Refugee Resettlement Program. Resources and jobs are now limited and difficult to find.
- As we near the end of the school year and approach the summer months, please pray for our students and staff as we prepare for the Summer Youth Enrichment Program. May God grant us wisdom and safety as we minister to the youth and their family members.