



January Update

Dear Bethel friends and well-wishers,

Happy New Year! We hope the New Year has been good to you as it has been good to us here at Bethel Neighborhood Center. We finally received the long-awaited Certificate of Occupancy from the building inspectors of Unified Government of Wyandotte County in the second week of January! We can now make plans for our grand opening! The two new vans we bought last month and having our name, "**Bethel Neighborhood Center**" written on the vans make our staff members and children excited to drive and ride them. Thank you for your continued prayer and financial support of our ministry. It has already been a very exciting year for us here at Bethel Center.



Our partnership with **Once We Were Refugees** (OWWR) has enabled us to start the first sewing class at Bethel Neighborhood Center. OWWR and Bethel provide sewing training to 17 immigrant women at this time. Each class runs for three hours, two days a week, and the training will be completed in nine weeks. On the day of graduation, each trainee will receive a completion certificate, a sewing machine, fabrics, an iron and an ironing board, and other materials needed to en-

hance their new skills and to be able to sew at home. The most important goal for the sewing class is to equip our immigrant women with new skills to support themselves and their families. It is not a sewing club but it is a job training to become self-sufficient. **We cannot wait to see what all new things that God has in store for our community this year.** We invite you to continue your commitment to this wonderful organization in the New Year.

Through the Bethel Christmas Shop last December, we provided Christmas presents to 79 families, 37 senior adults, and more than 100 children and youth in our community. While helping a homeless family, Sandra Olivas, our board secretary, was brought to tears by what she heard. She said, *"I was giving away turkeys to the families that were leaving and when I tried to offer one mom with four children a turkey, she politely shook her head 'NO.' I explained to her that they were free and I insisted that she takes one home to cook for her family. She then whispered in my ear that she and her children don't have a house right now and that they're living in a hotel, so they don't have anywhere to cook the turkey."* Listening to her mom, Tina said, *"I stood there with tears running down my cheek just thinking about how this poor family doesn't have a proper place to live or even a way to cook their food. It's hard to see such genuine people going through such a hard time. I began to think more and more about families who don't get to enjoy home-cooked meals every day like the rest of us."* We are meeting genuine needs, and we are providing love, hope, education, and activities that are much needed for the people we serve to break the cycle of poverty and to become self-sufficient.



We will need your continued prayer and financial support in 2020 as we continue to grow and add new programs. The Bethel board, staff, volunteers, and families wish you a Prosperous New Year!

Mang Sonna

Rev. Mang & Nem Sonna, Bethel Neighborhood Center