



GROWING TO FILL A NEED



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

northmendens.org

Northmen Den Youth Pantries Inc.

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Kathy Petersen, CEO & Founder
kathy@northmendens.org
231-622-8044

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MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is,
‘What are you doing for others?’”

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 1957 Montgomery, AL

In Emmet County alone, over 1000+ middle and high school students face hunger every day. In Alanson and Pellston county, 3 out of 4 students walk to class hungry, and 1 in 3 students in Petoskey. Weekends are more challenging because there are no school lunches.

Northmen Den Youth Services is built on a philosophy of love and service. So, in response to this persistent and urgent need, there are now 13 Emmet County Middle and High School youth pantries and one in Charlevoix. We started with just 8 students in 2016, and grew to serving 360 each week during this 2022-23 school year.

We are incredibly proud of this 2022 achievement. Because of the tremendous generosity and hard work from countless community members and NDYS volunteers, we were able to continue to support innocent children in need, ensuring full bellies, with a side of support and hope.

With your ongoing support from our beloved volunteers and invested stakeholders, we can make a difference in our children’s lives. Together, we can continue to do something for others.

Kathy Petersen

CEO & Founder



MISSION / VISION

Caring Connections are a powerful thing.

They show acceptance, compassion, empathy, and support.

Building healthy relationships is at the heart of all strategies in our mission and vision. Kids thrive when they feel safe, and connection brings that closeness.

Food is the first connection at our youth pantries. Our loving and caring volunteers are the second, for they acknowledge to the kids they matter.

Our AIM Tutoring program, brings connection to our youth in a way that reminds them they can learn. Our tutors provide self-confidence, perseverance, and personal growth. Initially, our students participating in Tutoring must become more confident and encouraged. And, quickly, their confidence grows. It's beautiful to see.

Our third program, AIM Mentoring, connects by helping struggling youth find personal success by realizing they are not broken. Students learn positive mindsets and strategies to overcome adversity. This connection prepares students to face challenges in life with tenacity and grit.

We cannot give up on disadvantaged youth. Our programs remind kids that they are worthy and deserve a bright future. It reminds them that THEY are the key to their own success. Ultimately, our mission removes some of the helplessness many youths experience in difficult life circumstances and prepares them to meet hardships head-on.

Caring Connections are of utmost importance. Thank you for being part of that connection – by changing students' lives through your donations and time.

Food + Tutoring + Mentoring = A Brighter Future – for our youth and community.



“It didn’t take long before I realized that Kathy Petersen and her group were trying to create something very special in our school.”

— Jon Wilcox, Principal, Petoskey Middle School 2022

Northmen Den’s mission is to nourish our neediest students by providing food, tutoring and mentoring in a manner that respects dignity and individuality, while sustaining dreams. Whether it’s individualized help, peer support or groceries that our students need, we’re there for them.

7,500+

students visited our
Youth Pantries in 2022

\$86,250

worth of groceries given to
hungry kids in 2022
(7500 Students x \$11.50 = \$86,250)



SCHOOL-BASED YOUTH PANTRIES

The primary goal of our pantries is to provide students with supplementary, easy to prepare food for the weekend as well as healthy school day snacks and other supplies such as personal toiletries, school supplies, and other individualized needs as we are able. We work in close partnership with the middle school counselors who select students to participate with Northmen Den based on eligibility for free or reduced lunch and other factors.

Our pantries serve middle and high school students. The middle school years are when many students begin to develop an independent, can-do attitude towards school. However, for the disadvantaged, school - the very tool which can be a ticket to new opportunities - may also become the place where a lesser self-image is reinforced and the promises of an education begin to seem out of reach.

The students we serve notice the difference that Northmen Den creates, beyond just food or basic needs items provided. The pantry is staffed by volunteers that truly care, and those relationships are making a huge difference for the kids.



“For some of these kids, that was the highlight of their week - coming to Northmen Den,” said volunteer Joy McBride. She recalls one student who, years after first walking through the den's doors, graduated high school and invited several volunteers to her celebration.

“We met her family, who were so appreciative,” Joy said. “She was excited to introduce us to her family. She's the first person in her family to graduate from high school and she's at our community college now. She truly said without the pantry she doesn't know what she would have done ... without our volunteers encouraging her and listening to her story, she doesn't know how she would have made it through high school.”

On top of expanding the number of school pantries from 1 to 14 in 2022, we have also elevated the pantries to a full shopping experience for students to take whatever basic needs items that they need for home.

As for the community, this program is starting to bring desperately needed awareness about the depth of the issues of poverty in each town – Alanson, Charlevoix, Harbor Springs, Pellston, and Petoskey.



AIM TUTORING

Northmen Den Youth Services' AIM™ tutoring program serves students in Petoskey, MI, and surrounding school districts; the program has grown rapidly in 2022. Adele Forbrig, our AIM Coordinator and Tutor, our tutors, and AIM™ volunteers have done an incredible job developing AIM™ to follow its name – Academically Instructional Mentoring.

The idea for AIM™ tutoring evolved from our Northmen Den Youth Pantries volunteers realizing even a short time with students visiting our youth pantries was an incredible way to encourage them to want to achieve more for themselves rather than being satisfied with their life in the present. But, unfortunately, classroom teachers with 25 to 30 students don't have the time to give individual help to those students who need confidence-building and instruction.

Throughout the year, all tutors agree that a major benefit of the program for students has been increased self-confidence. It's wonderful hearing laughter while learning - between student and tutor - and seeing the bond between students and students! They are learning to love learning.

"It seems like a lot of it is just dealing with their confidence more than it is just dealing with the material. Being an after-school, out of school program, a student can relax without peer pressure and slow down in an environment where there is no judgment and no need to have the right answer all the time. It is not time sensitive." — Robert, tutor

Our tutors have the time to work with individual roadblocks, and that's a lot of what it is. To say, "slow down, let's look at it again," rather than "hurry up, so we can get to the next question."



Here's the impact of our tutoring program straight from the perspective of the students:

"I was falling behind and it was hard because everybody was moving on and I was stuck. And I would get things taken away if my grades fell too low. Now I can understand things better and if I need help, I know how to get it. My grades are good now and it makes me happy."

— 8th grade

"It was very difficult for me to understand what was happening and it almost felt like I was drowning. My tutor taught me to begin seeing things from a new perspective and I didn't have that much of a tunnel vision anymore. It is such a relief!"

— 10th grader



MENTORING

SPARK stands for Speaking to the Potential, Ability and Resilience inside every Kid.

One of the greatest needs of a child is the desire to belong. For some teens, they live each day with the feeling that they are alone in their pain in their own small world.

They may not understand why things are happening in their lives, and many times, children of all ages feel that they are at fault or that things will never change. They desperately want to know that they are loved and that they belong.

We are highly aware of the impact our volunteers' relationships with our students have on the youth's lives. Our mentoring program aims to take that to the next level, and we specifically hope to grow this program over the next year.



Mentor Volunteer Diana G. explains:

“There was an unexpected benefit to the small group mentoring. The mentors formed friendships and bonds with each other that had positive results for the students. I would listen to the conversations and smile.”

One 10th grade girl at the end of the 8 weeks explained to the group, “I have learned that my mean, ugly words not only hurt others but also made me a person I don’t want to be. I feel calmer now that my thoughts are more positive. I especially don’t want to hurt my mom anymore by using bad words to her. She doesn’t deserve that from me.”



INTRODUCING MR. & MRS. PHILL A BAGG

In November 2022, we introduced our new ambassadors, Mr. & Mrs. Phill A Bagg to the Northmen Den community.

From their introduction, Mr. & Mrs. Phill A Bagg have shown their passion about feeding our most hungry students and have helped solicit support from our community. Their first mission was to fill enough bags of food to ensure no students were home hungry over the holidays. Our supporters rallied around Mr. & Mrs. Phill A Bagg to make this happen!

Mr. & Mrs. Phill A Bagg have lots of festive plans for 2023 and will be showcasing ways for our community to support our kids in months to come.



NEW “KINDNESS CLUB” – PLAN TO BE KIND

Northmen Den Youth Services officially became the Plan To Be Kind Fiscal Sponsor in 2022, in order to spread kindness further into our schools and community. This is a collaboration of the Cheetos Club and Northmen Den Youth Services, and will spread true acts of kindness in a deeper and broader manner while touching even more lives for good.

We are excited to share more details on our collaboration in the coming months including a new initiative “Helping Hands, Open Hearts” Podcast! Check out our website for more information, follow us on Facebook or Instagram to watch for us to share episodes, or subscribe to our newsletter to get the important updates on these programs!

Website: www.northmendens.org
Facebook @NorthmenDens
Instagram @ NorthmenDens
Newsletter sign up: <http://bit.ly/3Xs9Awg>

Our other Kindness Club initiative is our Kindness Kloset located in our Petoskey Northmen Den Youth Pantry. The Kindness Kloset is filled with encouraging notes, trinkets, and other items to help put a smile on kids faces.

Take time today to plan for kindness and remember a compassionate young man whose small acts of kindness have truly changed the world. Plan to be Kind!



GIVE A KID A CHANCE FOOD DRIVE



Give a Chance Food Drive's raised a total of \$21,090.10 worth of food in 2022!

Our Give A Kid A Chance Food Drive program has allowed us to partner with a number of new local businesses and organizations throughout the year.

Our Give A Kid A Chance Food Drives give groups and businesses a chance to support our students by contributing specific items that the kids need, want, and like! Each month we compose item wish lists and solicit groups to help us collect the items.

All items collected are added to our local food pantry warehouse. Emmanuel Episcopal Church allows us to have our warehouse at their church, we are grateful! Our Pantry Coordinators shop our warehouse to stock our pantries which provides needed food and empowerment to children so they can make a difference in their own lives!

Thank you to all of the businesses and groups that have hosted Give A Kid a Change Food Drive in 2022!

Emmanuel Episcopal Church
Epsilon United Methodist Church
First Baptist Church Petoskey
First Community Bank
First Presbyterian Church Petoskey
Fit Body Boot Camp
Fletch's GMC Aui Buick
Genesis Church
Harbor Brenn Insurance
Moeller Aerospace

New Life Anglican Church
Nicole LaHaie
Petoskey Plastics
Petoskey Public Library
Poetess & Stranger
Rotary Club at Noon
Spartan Nash Van's Business Machines
YWCA
Zonta Club




IMPACT STORY

In Michigan, 1 in 5 kids struggles in poverty. Here in Emmet County, Petoskey, 1 in 2 children are dealing with hunger daily. In rural areas like Emmet County, parents tend to have less education and are more often underemployed, meaning children in rural areas are at higher risk for living in a low-income family. It only takes three generations of this struggle to create a legacy of poverty. The longer a family is in poverty, the more resources they lose, and it becomes harder to escape.

As a 10th grader, Ellie visited her High School Northmen Den for weekend food. She and several other girls began eating their lunch there with our volunteers. We noticed she had a journal with numeric formulas on pages after pages. She loved NUMBERS! So, our volunteers encouraged her to study math and to sign up for AP Mathematics class. She was accepted!

When she was a Senior, she applied to one private Michigan college, and received a full mathematics scholarship! The Northmen Den, our volunteers, and the “lunch girls around the table” had encouraged her to follow her passion with numbers. And she did!



This moment was life-changing for Ellie. Because of the encouragement, support and food she received from our volunteers, she was able to break free from believing she was not capable of attending college. Today, she is a dedicated sophomore college student. We still hear from Ellie on occasion as she sends some of our dedicated volunteers text and 'hugs'.

Poverty often traps youth in cycles of hunger, leading to generations of poor nutrition, chronic health problems, lack of education and academic growth and subsequent career struggles. This is why Northmen Den Youth Pantries exists – to help break the cycle of poverty. We aim to be an integral part of our children's lives, children like Ellie, to help nourish our students by providing food, mentoring, and tutoring in a manner that respects dignity and individuality while sustaining dreams.

Presenting - \$20,000+

The Carls Foundation

Champion - \$10,000+

Petoskey- Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation
Emmanuel Episcopal Church
Oleson Foundation
Women Who Care
Todd & Kathy Petersen
Baibaldi Family Foundation

Kindness - \$5,000+

Fletch's GM Buick Audi of Petoskey
The Isabel Foundation
Michigan Foundation For Agriculture
Hestia Giving Circle
North Harbor Real Estate LLC
First Community Bank
Steve & Anne Murray
Dan Polleys, MI Farm Bureau Insurance (Ins.)
Charlevoix County Community Foundation

Partner - \$1,000+

Ted and Brenda Frey Fund
Bob & Sue Bleyaert
Kirk Rose
Rice Family Foundation
Meyer Ace Hardware
DeVos Family Foundations
First Presbyterian Church of Harbor Springs
David & Joy McBride
Health Department of Northwest Michigan
Raymond James Global Account
MUD BROTHERS of the North ATV Club
Real Estate One - Petoskey
Bearcub Outfitters
Eric Loyd
Woods Giving Fund
Bob Esford
Brian & Dawn Wagner
Charlie & Christie McLravy
Christine & Russell Carpenter
Dr. Dennis McGeath
Gary & Betty High
Jim & Jennifer Jensen
Biggs Family Charitable Fund
Maple Leaf Millworks
Randy Flinn
Ron Rinker
First Presbyterian Church Petoskey
Sharon Schappacher

Steve & Nancy Eibling
Robert & Susan Clarke
Daniel & Erin Ibele

Advocate - \$500+

Fern Law
Suanne & Russell LaBeau
Thomas Dye
Michael Banyai
Ironwood Construction
Grain Train
Graham Real Estate
Andrew & Deb Kiteley
Crooked Tree Breadworks
Petoskey United Methodist Church
James Chattaway, Bess Bleyaert
Ward & Eis Gallery
Jill Whelan
Petoskey Realty Group
John Mastenbrook
Joseph & Charlene Sproles
Cormack's Deli
Julie Norcross
Linda Longworth
Paul & Lisa Blanchard
Margaret Kromm
Carter's Imagewear & Awards
Mary Daniels
Dave Kring Chevrolet
Phyllis & Mark Rowlands
Richard Bugno
Sara Smith
Jane Amato
Exodus Painting
Northern Brewing LLC TAP 30
Richard Taylor
Dave & Jill Patterson
Daniel & Erin Ibele
Darlene Sieradski
Joy McBride
Jim Jones
John & Mary Agria
Furgeson Plumbing Heating & AC
Rachel & Douglas Meighan-Mantha
Brenda Hough
Complete Paint & Supplies
Gina Wittenberg
Laurie McMurray
Episilon United Methodist Church
Ameriprise - River Source Life Ins Company
Jessica & Duane Shaw-Nolff
Matt & Ashley McSweeney
Contractor Supply Inc.
Ron & Judy Varga

Brenda Uhlich
Dean & Cheryl Morford
Jim & Stephanie Jones
Joel & Jennifer Kato-Shorter
John & Robyn Lacoangeli
Meyerson Family Tzedakah Fund
Margo Todd
Mary Lou Hansen
Paul & Lona Horn
Susan Hoffman
Cecelia Johnston
Mary Kreid
Kara Henning
Eric Thuma

Friends - \$50+

American Online Giving Foundation
Mr. Loe Civics Class
My Sister's Bake Shop
Elizabeth (Dibby) Smith
Kendall & Diana Stanley
Steve Radecki
Peter Hill
Bill & Ann Chatterson
Neil & Marsha Bidwell
Balky & Patricia Grannis
Barb & Charles Smith
Betsy Clark
Bryan Griffin
Dewayne & Carole Griffin
Chelsey Verardi
Cynthia Van Allen
Dave & Sonya Gerathy
David Hansen
McBride Remodeling, Inc.
Elizabeth Marklewitz
Erika Kleeman
Ginger Burdick
Helen Wolfgang
Sky's the Limit
Jim Ance
Jim & Phyllis Epps
John Smith
Lawrence Williams
Mark & Diann Gaylord
North45 Architecture Inc
Richard & Juliet Moynihan
Frances Shepard
Elizabeth Fate
Frank & Carole Lamberti
Naomi Singer
Nicole Lahaie
Paul W. Reed, DDS
Rick & Meredith Neumann

Roberta Vaderbreggen
Roger Fate
Steven Decarteret
Winegarden Elder Law LLC
Todd & Jill Decker
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Erin Luckhardt
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Jill Petro
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Petoskey Rotary Club Charities Inc.
Linda Adams
Mark & Patricia Fralick
Mary Jane Barnwell
Michael & Jessica Karr
Ray & Jayne Fisher
Robert K. Brill Builder
Scott O'Neill
Scott And Sarah Schornak
Sharon & Kenneth Crockett
Shawn & Karin Corcoran
Steve & Kathy Erber
Sue Levitte
Sue & Sheryl Schuch-Haneckow
Tom & Nancy Campbell
Tracy Brines
Muller Electric Inc.
Chris Geerer
Andrew Henning
Dennis & Carol Cross
Donna Thompson
Franz & Joan Neubrecht
George & Carol Tippet
Gerald Cosens
James Beno
Jeff Ebert
Mary Elizabeth Chaney
Michelle Baumgartner
Pat Emmendorfer
Robert Splinter
Shelley Paulsen
Pamela Moyer



THANK YOU!



Petoskey Middle School – Northmen Den, Nov. 2016
 Petoskey High School – Northmen Den, Sept. 2017
 Harbor Springs Middle School – Harbor Hut, Sept. 2017
 Lakeview Academy High School – Lakeview Locker, Spring 2018
 Crooked Tree High School – Culinary Kitchen, Sept 2020
 Concord Academy Middle & High Schools – Concord Corner 2021
 Alanson Middle & High Schools – Viking Vault, Spring 2022
 Pellston Middle & High Schools – Hornet's Nest, Spring 2022
 Charlevoix Round Lake Education Center – Round Table, Fall 2022
 Petoskey Odawa Youth Center – Waaniigaanzijik, (Future Leaders) Fall 2022
 Harbor Light Academy K-12 – Spring 2023



Write checks to Northmen Den Youth Services, PO Box 2085,
 Petoskey, Michigan 49770
 (231) 622-8044 | kathy@northmendens.org

