



2023

Annual Report

Passion for Service

BY ADAM DINGWALL, BOARD PRESIDENT

As my time serving on the Charitable Union board of directors is winding down, I can't help but look back at all the incredible achievements our organization, along with its dedicated staff and volunteers, have accomplished. It's been quite a journey, from much-needed building repairs to innovative ways of serving our community.

One thing that stood out to me is the incredible resilience and adaptability of our staff during the challenging times of the pandemic. They really went above and beyond, finding creative ways to deliver services, reopening facilities, and always having that *'how can we improve service'* mindset. You can tell that everyone at Charitable Union truly cares about those around them – it's more than just a job; it's a passion.

Last year was a record-breaking year for us, with over 692,000 items distributed to those in need.

What's even more impressive is that our staff and volunteers achieved this with fewer resources. We've been hoping to be fully staffed, but that's been a bit of a struggle. The good news is that volunteer groups are starting to come back. You know the saying, *'many hands make light work,'* and that's certainly true at our office.

This year has presented us with its own set of challenges and opportunities. Our dedicated staff, always focusing on how to improve service, are working on some exciting new partnership programs to benefit students. The steady course we've been on for the past five years has laid a solid foundation for our future success.

So, as my time on the board of directors comes to an end, I'm filled with gratitude for all the hard work, dedication, and heart that goes into making Charitable Union the amazing organization it is. I'm excited to see what the future holds and confident that our mission to serve the community will continue to thrive. Charitable Union is a beacon of light in our community for those in need and *help that brings hope!*

2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ADAM DINGWALL
President

PATRICE LEWIS
Vice President

ANN BAKER
Treasurer

RACHEL MORELAND
Secretary

TIZIANO BONARDI
Director

MICHAEL GOLDSTEIN
Director

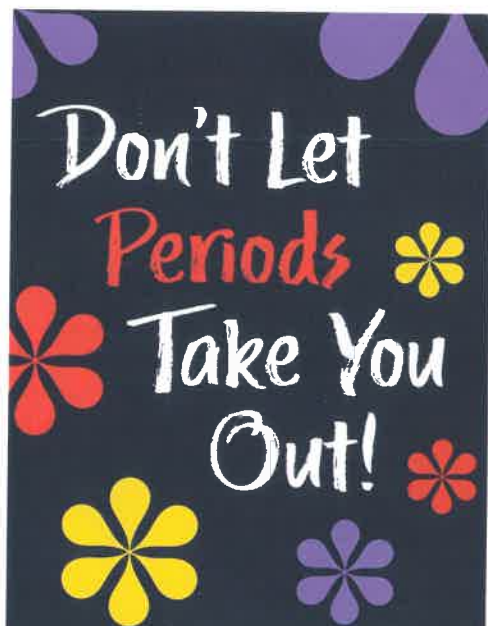
SUZANNE FRANCE
Director

MARK TODD
Director

DIANE RAMIREZ
Director

CHARITABLE UNION

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Battle Creek, MI 49017
(269) 964-7234
www.CharitableUnion.org
f @charunion
i @charitableunion



FREE monthly supply
available at Charitable Union.

You are not alone.
We are here
to help.

**TAMPONS
PADS
DEPENDS**

Our Free Store offers your family
the opportunity to shop for your
needs. From clothing to bedding
and everything in between.

FREE STORE HOURS

Mon - Wed 9:00-4:00
2nd Sat 9:00-12:00



Looking Ahead

BY TERESA ALLEN, CEO

The past few years have taught us so much about our community, our team's resilience, and enhancements to our operational procedures. As we look forward to what is ahead of us, we feel prepared to navigate any challenges that may arise.

*We work in a great place, Calhoun County.
This community believes in helping their neighbors
and is willing to give back in so many ways.*

Because donations ebb and flowed during the year, we posted on social media that we needed kid's clothes, donations ebb and flow from time to time. This post was shared 221 times and donations started to roll-in. The support we receive from all of you in the community overwhelms us with gratitude!

Much like other organizations, we experienced the effects of the 'great resignation.' While we miss our former colleagues, we are equally enthusiastic about welcoming new team members, who bring fresh perspectives. It is heartening to witness a resurgence in volunteer support.

The pandemic also forced us to look at how we process donations and give them away. One of the take-aways was the need to improve many of our internal systems during 2020. In 2022, we achieved a significant milestone by distributing a record-breaking 692,000 items. The outlook for 2023 suggests we are poised to surpass that benchmark.

Looking forward to 2024, our aspirations include replacing the storage pods currently in our parking lot with a permanent storage space. Our objective is to meet the diverse needs of our community, ensuring we are well-equipped with both staff and volunteers. Our unwavering focus remains on our mission, 'to contribute to human dignity,' by providing vital resources for our community. With your support, 2024 will be our greatest year ever!

Our Little Boutique is 20!

BY NINA WOODMAN

*The Gift Shop @ Charitable Union came to life back in 2003,
all thanks to the brilliant idea of our dedicated volunteers.*

They saw the potential to create a new revenue source for Charitable Union by selling handmade goodies, and they hit the nail on the head! Thanks to their hard work, the Gift Shop @ Charitable Union now boasts an impressive collection of handmade treasures. Picture this: mittens crafted from recycled wool sweaters, charming quilts, bowl cozies, and, of course, a range of sports team merchandise. But that's not all! We've got a unique selection of purses, sparkling jewelry, captivating books, stylish home decor, and one-of-a-kind gems that you won't find anywhere else.

Mission &
Values

OUR PURPOSE

To contribute to
human dignity.

OUR WORK

Provide clothing, bedding and small house-
hold items at no charge and connect people to resources

The Original Recyclers

BY TYLER COLLINS

It's safe to say that tossing items that could have a second life into a landfill isn't a great move, right? Well, here's the cool part about Charitable Union – we're all about recycling, and here's a little secret: we even **recycle damaged textiles and sneakers!**

A while back, out of necessity, we set up a textile recycling program. This means we give a fresh start to items that have run their course, got a little roughed up, or stained. We've also have a sneaker recycling program for those well-worn kicks (must-have shoestrings). All these items get a chance to make a positive impact on our world all over again.

Last year, we managed to recycle a whopping 185,000 pounds of damaged clothing and bedding.

Think about the positive ripple that has on our environment! Let's keep up the good work and make our world a greener, happier place.



Are You A Shoe' Gooder?

BY CYNDI SUTTON

There's nothing quite like landing that new job, right? It's a huge confidence booster to be able to support yourself and your family. In Calhoun County, many jobs require steel-toed shoes, which can be a barrier for some many people. That's why we launched a program to team up with hiring agencies and offer new or used steel-toed shoes.

This year, we helped 700 Calhoun County residents kickstart their new careers.

And with the expected growth in manufacturing jobs in our community over the next few years, this program is set to expand even more! Can we count on you to be a Shoe' Gooder and donate to this great program?



Prom Dresses

BY LORRI HOLDER



Why prom dresses, you ask? Well, when you're taking in donations, you never know what you are going to receive, and over the years, we have acquired hundreds of beautiful formal dresses. This is a unique program, as there is no income requirement. Instead, all high school students who can make their way

This year, 244 high school students received prom dresses from our Free Store.

to Charitable Union in April or May can shop for their perfect prom dress. We even hosted two special shopping events for schools that wanted to bus their students to us. The best part of this program is that the barrier to attending prom, which is the expensive dress, has been removed for 244 families!

OUR VALUES

Honor and respect the people we serve. Collaborate and partner with stakeholders. Respect diversity within our community. Be an exemplary organization. Use resources responsibly.

old items at no
the community.

Donations Make a Huge Difference

BY SCOTT MACCANNELL

Charitable Union has been part of the community for a whopping **136 years**. That's something we're really proud of, but we also recognize that it's **the community's support** that keeps us going year after year.

Did you know, the majority of our financial contributions happen at the end of the year? Recurring donations are a fantastic way to ensure our sustainability and stability of our programs. A small monthly donation can really add up over the course of a year. It allows us to budget our programs consistently throughout the year with significantly less stress.

The best part is that these donations can be automatically deducted from a securely stored card, making it a hassle-free way to contribute each month. You won't need to go online, write a check, or make a phone call. It's a convenient way to support your favorite non-profit and help us plan for the future.

To set up recurring donations, please visit
www.CharitableUnion.org/Give/Giving.html

Your support is making a difference
in another person's life!



*Providing
Help that Brings Hope
has never been easier!*

Scan the QR code to visit our
website and donate today!

Want to help?

We need your talent!

- Sewers
- Quilters
- Knitters & Crocheters
- Data Entry
- Maintenance
- Special Events
- Community Outreach
- Help with Fundraisers
- Help at our Donor Door
- Sorting and Hanging Clothing

UPCOMING EVENTS

Come Join Us!

You can help support our mission in 2024.

Save the Date for
DECORATED TABLE

THUR | MAY 9 | 2024
at **FIREKEEPERS**

JEANS DAY
FOR CHARITABLE UNION

JANUARY 25TH, 2024

Contact info@charitableunion.org
if interested in running an event
at your organization!

\$5



*Charitable Union Recycles on Average
200,000 lbs. of Unusable Clothing
Each Year, Keeping it Out of Landfills!*

T-Shirt Quilts

BY TONYA CROUT

Do you have a collection of t-shirts that hold sentimental value?

These might be mementos from your school days, sports events, adventures, or hobbies. Alternatively, you might be a dedicated fan of Disney, Star Wars, or a favorite sports team. If you're interested in transforming these shirts into a cool display, stop by the Gift Shop @ Charitable Union where we will work with you for the perfect layout. Our skilled team of sewers will craft these shirts into a high-quality, one-of-a-kind, quilt.



Programs at Charitable Union help all those in need.

Clothing for All Ages

Baby, Toddler, Kids, and Adult Sizes
shirts, pants, sweaters, dresses, shoes, coats and more for all weather and occasions

Infants

Layettees
start mothers off right by providing everything for a nurturing beginning

Formula
protect growing brains with proper nutrition and supplemental formula

Diapers
maintain proper hygiene for better health

Children's Books
stimulate growing brains with language and concept exposure

School-Age Kids

Back-to-School Clothing
help kids dress for success

Winter Weather Gear
keep kids warm on their way to and from school, while outside, and exercising

Storybooks
help kids explore their interests and expand their vocabularies

Period Packs
no girl should have to skip school because she doesn't have product when she needs it

Prom Dresses
every girl should experience this right of passage

Adults

Interview Attire
steel-toed shoes, hospitality uniforms, business suits, and scrubs

Housewares
pots and pans, bed and kitchen linens, end tables, décor, lamps, etc.

Literature
contemporary soft and hard cover books, eclectic reference manuals, etc.

Formal-Event Wear
funeral, interview, and wedding attire

Period Packs
no woman should miss work because she doesn't have product when she needs it

Seniors

Incontinence Materials
our bodies break down, humiliation at it shouldn't be a thing

Homeless

Weather Appropriate Gear
heavy-duty clothing, tents, sleeping bags, cooking vessels, etc.

Personal Hygiene Kits
toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, soap, razor, and deodorant

Disaster Recovery

Fire Victims
clothing, bedding, towels, dishes, and more for those who suffered a house fire or other home disaster

Want to give?

Consider shopping from our store [The Gift Shop](#) on Etsy or choose Charitable Union as your charity on Amazon Smile.

The Gift Shop



@CharitableUnionGift
Shop The Gift Shop on Etsy

GiftShopAtCharitableUnion
Shop The Gift Shop on FB



Like & Follow Us!

[f @Charunion](#)
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Volunteers Keep Us Going

BY NICOLE FROHLICH

Our volunteers have given more than 17,000 hours so far this year. Which is the equivalent of **11 full-time employees** (that's more volunteer hours than staff hours). You can find volunteers in all aspects of the work we do, from processing donations, hanging clothing, stocking our Free Store, organizing our basement, prepping our off-site events, recruiting more volunteers, sewing, knitting, crocheting, prepping items for our Gift Shop, and a variety of other clerical tasks.

But it's not just about the hours they put in; it's about the difference they make.

Our volunteers are the true champions when it comes to spreading the word about our services, making families feel at home, ensuring our shelves stay filled for shoppers, expressing heartfelt gratitude to donors, and emphasizing the importance of their contributions that keep us going.

We want to emphasize that without the generous helping hands of our community, we simply couldn't achieve the level of work we do. It's their spirit of giving that fuels our mission. If you're inspired by our story and want to join our volunteer force or if you're part of an organization looking to support our daily operations, please reach out to our operations manager, Nicole, at 269-964-7234 ext. 108 or drop her an email at nicole@charitableunion.org. Together, we can keep making a positive impact on our community.

