



# UNITED METHODIST HUMAN SERVICES

BIANNUAL NEWSLETTER  
FALL 2022

## EMBRACING CHANGE

*By: Cheryl Bedick Keafer, MSW  
Executive Director*

As we head into the season of winter, my thoughts turn to the beauty of God's design in nature. He created seasons. Each one with a purpose and design. Each one vital for every living thing to thrive. As Ecclesiastes 3 reminds us, and the seasons demonstrate so dramatically, there is a time for everything under heaven. Even a time for change.

At UMHS we are embracing a time for change. God is calling us to take some bold steps of faith. As one of our Board members summed it up for us, "UMHS is moving forward to expand God's calling for our ministry with a new name and a wider horizon." So soon we will no longer be known as United Methodist Human Services, but **Bridges Cooperative Ministry**. The name encompasses the heart of what we are doing, as we create bridges for hope and healing and bridges that encourage our community to work together in the Kingdom of God, doing things His way here on earth.

As we grow into this vision, we are restructuring our staff to meet the need and developing more office space within Franklin Street UMC where our office is located. Stephanie Krumenacker has moved into a much larger role with us as our Administrative Assistant. We are excited for this as we see the compassion and heart that Stephanie has for those we serve. She will take on duties that free myself and Carolyn up to spend more time with the growing work of Bridges to Success. Justin Rohrbaugh, who works for Franklin Street UMC has moved into a new position with the church and will also be working part-time for UMHS, handling the front desk and all that entails.

Please pray with us as we work on embracing change in this season! Pray as we expand our mission of sharing the love of Jesus Christ by alleviating suffering and injustice faced by those with spiritual, emotional, and material needs. Pray too about whether God might be calling you to serve with us.

## REBECCA FREEMAN

### FEATURE GETTING AHEAD GRADUATE

In this issue, Rebecca Freeman is our feature Getting Ahead Graduate. Rebecca has had quite an amazing journey that she will tell in her own words.

My name is Rebecca Freeman. My maiden name is Close. I am a graduate of Greater Johnstown School District.

I was born in 1982 to a single 15-year-old mother. My mother did her best to do right by my younger sister and I, but it definitely was not easy for someone who was still a child herself and did not get to graduate high school, to do much more than get by. She did eventually get her GED, but bounced around from job to job, not making



*Rebecca Freeman*

quite enough to get us out of poverty. She received child support, food stamps, lived in public housing, and we received medical assistance through the state. I ended up bouncing around from home to home and school to school throughout the years, even ending up in foster care for a short time, due to various types of abuse and neglect.

Eventually, I ended up living with my grandparents throughout my time in high school and college. That was my first chance at stability, so I was able to graduate from Greater Johnstown High School with honors and attend UPJ, receiving my undergraduate in Elementary Education.

I was able to work as a substitute teacher for a few years; however, full-time teaching positions were difficult to come

*Continued on page 2*

### COMING SOON!

#### 2022 VIRTUAL FUNDRAISING BANQUET

Friday, December 9, 2022 at 6:00 pm

*See page 5 for details!*

## JANUARY 20th!

### 2023 ANNUAL WINTER GATHERING FOR GA GRADUATES

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## FEBRUARY CLASSES

### BRIDGES FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT (Financial Resources)

Learn from financial leaders in our community about credit repair, interest rates, budgeting, paying off debt and more! This class will be open to GA graduates and the public!

### BOUNDARIES IN RELATIONSHIPS (Relationship Resources)

Based on the book "Boundaries" by Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend. Begin to gain control of your life by learning when to say yes and how to say no.

A new 8-week Healthy Eating Cooking Class is in the works as well!

Watch your mail for postcards with dates and times, or check out the UMHS Getting Ahead Graduates Facebook page.

## REBECCA FREEMAN

### FEATURE GETTING AHEAD GRADUATE

*Continued from page 1*

by back then. I started working as a TSS (Therapeutic Support Staff) so I could obtain a dependable income and benefits.

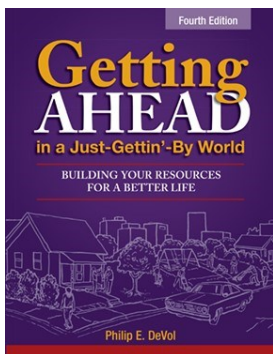
I got married in 2005. We started our family in 2009 with the birth of our daughter, and we had our son in 2011. During this time, my husband was the only one working and we were living paycheck to paycheck. I wanted to stay home with my children while they were young, so we ended up on public assistance. However, I did not waste my time at home. I volunteered at CAPCC Head Start while my children attended and went back to school online at Drexel University to receive my graduate degree in special education. It was still extremely difficult. I felt like such a failure with so much education under my belt, yet not as many opportunities, and living in poverty like I had during my childhood.

I learned about the Getting Ahead classes via Head Start and took them through UMHS in early 2016, right as I was graduating from Drexel University. The classes provided me with the knowledge and resources I needed to help get myself in the right position and headspace to start making the changes that I needed (to improve my situation at the time). The classes also provided me with resources that I would eventually use and share during my time as a teacher at Appalachia IU8 and eventually my alma mater, Greater Johnstown School District.

For the last three years, I have been an autistic support teacher at Greater Johnstown Middle School. At the same time, I have continued to take courses through UMHS related to finances, emotional stability, and leadership. I was pleasantly surprised that there was a mini presentation from Bridges Out of Poverty during my orientation at Greater Johnstown. That was one of the many reasons that I continued to take courses through UMHS.

More recently, I co-facilitated a Getting Ahead class and completed Getting Ahead facilitator certification training. I really believe in the programs provided through UMHS—Bridges Out of Poverty and Getting Ahead. The classes have helped me personally, but I also see the benefit in taking these courses in order to offer assistance to the community we serve, as well as facilitating the courses with the members of our community.

Becky Freeman  
Spring 2016 Getting Ahead Graduate  
Certified Getting Ahead Facilitator



## APPLICATIONS ARE NOW BEING ACCEPTED FOR THE SPRING GETTING AHEAD COHORTS

If you know of someone who is ready for a change and who could benefit from the program, please contact Carolyn at 814-418-4336.

COHORTS START 4TH WEEK OF JANUARY!

# BRIDGES TO SUCCESS NEWS

## BRIDGES FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT CLASS MAKING AN IMPACT

The UMHS Bridges Financial Management Class, one of our most popular ongoing enrichment programs, provides a wide variety of information on improving financial resources.

Participants of the Fall 2022 class were asked, **“What have you learned so far that has made an impact on you?”** Here are their answers.

- ◆ “I have learned the importance of credit and how to build it. I’ve learned that my financial stability and growth depends on how close I pay attention to my finances.”
- ◆ “That credit score has an impact on car insurance rates.”
- ◆ “I have learned that by actually tracking all the money I spend, I waste a lot of money. I learned also that I need to be more disciplined and write and follow a budget.”
- ◆ “How to establish good credit when you have bad credit or no credit and to trust local banks or credit unions to give you good advice on how to do that. I appreciate the warning not to trust other companies that promise quick fixes to financial problems. And to stay away from rent-to-own companies.”
- ◆ “I learned that if I watch my money and take care of debt my credit can go up and I can manage money by saving and watching what I spend I can make it on my income.”
- ◆ “I’ve learned how to be more “mindful” of my spending habits, and how to build and repair my credit. Mr. Henry is a great teacher and is very knowledgeable and takes his time to answer every question asked. The topics are great, and the day and time works out just fine, but I would have liked the class to start out with each of us sending for our credit reports so that we could go over them whenever Mr. Shepley had his session. Other than that, the class is very informative and well needed. Also, it was very nice meeting presenters and other classmates. Thank you, United Methodist church, for holding these classes.”

- ◆ “I learned how to save money, how to build up my credit, how to take a shopping list with me to the store so I don’t buy nothing extra I don’t need, how to stay away from predators that promise me credit at a high interest rate just to get you locked in, and how to open up banking account and get a credit card from the bank as a small loan so I can build up my credit and look out for fraud and scams.”
- ◆ “The little day-to-day impulse buying wastes far more money than you think. Debt to income ratio has a big impact on the amount of interest you are charged when you make big purchases. Being on time or ahead of time on your regular payments speaks well for you when someone is considering you for a loan. DO NOT CO-SIGN FOR ANYBODY!!! NO, NO, NO. Making a budget helps you keep track of your spending and what save. Saving something out of everything you get helps you build up a nest egg. If you don’t hit a big stump, you may have enough to treat yourself with a nice present! You deserve something nice after your good financial stewardship! Congratulations!”

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Congratulations to **Rebecca Freeman** and **Ashlee Urban** for completing Certified Getting Ahead Facilitator Training!



Rebecca Freeman



Ashlee Urban



# OTHER MINISTRY UPDATES

## 18th Annual H.F. Lenz Company Charity Golf Outing

This year, we were honored to be chosen as the non-profit agency to benefit from the 18th Annual H.F. Lenz Company Charity Golf Outing.

The tournament was held on August 22 at Omni Bedford Springs Resort. Despite the threatening skies, 33 teams of four participated. The teams, along with 31 hole sponsors, raised an amazing \$22,500 to benefit UMHS! This money is especially valuable as we begin to expand our Bridges to Success Program that will address Workforce and Workplace Development.

Thank you, H.F. Lenz Company, golfers, and hole sponsors for your generosity as we strive to “share the love of Jesus Christ by alleviating suffering and injustice faced by those with spiritual, emotional, and material needs.”



*Cheryl Bedick Keafer, MSW, accepting a check from Thomas Deter, P.E., LEED AP, President, Government and Higher Education, H.F. Lenz Company*



*Front from left: Stephanie Krumenacker, UMHS Administrative Assistant; Ginger McCoy, GA Graduate; Cheryl Bedick Keafer, UMHS Executive Director; Carolyn Varchol, UMHS Associate Director. Back from left: Thomas Deter, H.F. Lenz Co.; Rev. Rodney Hatfield, UMHS Board Member; Bob Semelsberger, UMHS Board Member; Rod Horner, UMHS Board Member.*



## GRANTS

Many thanks to the following for recent grants:

- Independent Order of Odd Fellows Alma Lodge No. 523 for their recent gift supporting our Franklin Street Food Pantry
- Poverty Team of the WPAUMC in support of our Emergency Financial Assistance

# OTHER MINISTRY UPDATES

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Virtual Fundraising Banquet!

Once again we decided to do a virtual event. We hope you can join us **Friday evening, December 9, 2022, at 6:00 pm** for our virtual presentation.

Gather some good food & friends and go to our website [www.umhumanservices.org](http://www.umhumanservices.org) - there you will find:

- A link to our *Virtual Banquet Video* (about 20 mins) – it will go live on December 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm. The link will take you to our YouTube channel from our website. If you hit SUBSCRIBE you can interact with us during the live event.
- A *Banquet Donation* button and all the information you need to donate, online or by mail.

If you miss it live, you'll be able to view it later on our website, no problem!

## OTHER PROGRAM UPDATES

Our Direct Aid programs continue to minister to those in need. In 2022:

More than 400 kids have gotten shoes or boots with Project Shoes so far this year.

The Franklin Street Food Pantry continues to help thousands! A big Thank You to Giant Eagle for helping 127 families with a gift card for Thanksgiving.

We have almost doubled our instances of other direct help in 2022, with Bundles of Joy, the Care program, Emergency Food Supply, and Emergency Financial Assistance. With more than 300 instances of help, close to 800 individuals have been impacted.

Thank you for helping us provide such immediate care to those who are struggling!

*Cheryl Bedick Keafer, MSW  
Executive Director*

## BEING A SECOND HAWK

*By: Carolyn Varchol, MA  
Associate Director*

I'm a nature lover. Recently, I came across the story of a newly rehabilitated red-tailed hawk that was attacked by a murder of crows upon his release. The hawk had been nursed through an injury for several weeks and had gained flying strength in a 70-foot cage. Once satisfied that he was strong enough, his rescuer released him in a field surrounded by trees. Immediately, the call of a crow rose from the trees. Then another and another. Apparently, the hawk was released in the crows' territory, and they weren't at all happy about that. A half a dozen crows began circling the hawk and striking at him. He deftly flew in quick circles, up and down, frantically trying to elude them. After what seemed like eternity, a second hawk appeared and sprang into action to assist him! The crows began dispersing. Evidently, they were comfortable with bringing down one hawk, but not two. Some landed in the treetops to rest. The second hawk then left, but with renewed vigor, the first hawk took advantage of the situation. He began flying straight up in the air, then dropping head-first, dive-bombing the resting crows. With just that little bit of encouragement from another hawk, his life was saved, and he gained new territory that day.

I believe we have much to learn from the animal kingdom. Folks stuck in poverty may feel like that first hawk, just learning to fly again, but being savagely attacked from all sides by the powers of society that seemingly knock them down over and over again.

Recently, I talked to a struggling single mother who works part-time. She had acquired death benefit money from her child's father and wanted to save it for the child's college fund. Instead, the extra money caused her to lose her food stamps and she was told that the money should be used for food. Meanwhile this mother, who has no car, is worried because her job within walking distance may be closing. She doesn't make enough money to save for a car that would enable her to get a job elsewhere.

Over and over again we at UMHS see similar situations keeping families stuck in poverty. But I see hope – where there is a person or an agency willing to be that second hawk to help someone who they don't even know. To go alongside and support them so that they can rise above their struggles and find a way through. Maybe even helping someone find hope – that there is a way out of the cycle of poverty – that they CAN gain new territory and a better future. Through our programs at UMHS and partnerships, we strive to be that second hawk – to engage, to come alongside, to encourage, to support... to help struggling folks fight their way to economic stability.

## 2022-2023 UMHS Board of Directors

Rev. Sung Shik Chung	District Superintendent
Pastor Mike McKool	Board Chair
Jennifer Hautz	Vice Chair
Rod Horner	Secretary
Rev. Gary Grau	Member at Large
Rev. Rodney Hatfield	Member at Large
Brenda Hoover	Member at Large
Bob Semelsberger	Member at Large
Mark F. Sotosky	Member at Large
Rev. Terry Knipple	Ex-Officio Voting Member

## TO UNSUBSCRIBE

We would love to continue to keep you informed of UMHS news, but if you would like to be removed from our newsletter mailing list you may call the office at 814-539-2633 or send an e-mail to [carolyn@umhumanservices.org](mailto:carolyn@umhumanservices.org). Thank you!

## CONTACT US

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## UNITED METHODIST HUMAN SERVICES

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