

## Heart Reach Neighborhood Ministries, Inc.

Heart Reach was founded in 1988 by a group of area church leaders who were concerned about the children of Youngstown. Heart Reach Neighborhood Ministries' Family Assistance program secures resources and mobilizes churches to stabilize and strengthen diverse, low-income families and communities in the greater Youngstown area.

According to the 2020 census, Youngstown, Ohio, ranked as the second poorest city in the country, with 57% of Youngstown's children living in poverty.

The stress of living in poverty is compounded by a struggling school system and the fact that Youngstown is classified as a food desert, with a lack of full-service grocery stores to meet the needs of the residents. Families continue to have to choose between paying for food and paying for utility bills, leaving little to nothing for essential items like school and hygiene supplies and clothing.

When you give generously through your America for Christ offering, your support will be used to train and work with local residents and American Baptist church members to provide direct assistance that includes food boxes, meals for children, clothing banks and commodities distributions that include diapers, school supplies, clothing, and housewares.

Additionally, AFC funds will support special programs like nutritional education and financial literacy training where low-income residents learn how to manage their finances and become self-sufficient.

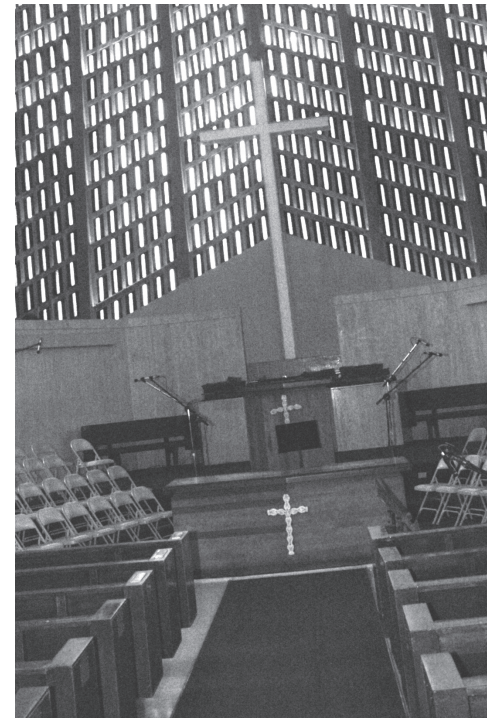
**Please make your donation today to the 2024 America for Christ Offering!**

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## Primera Iglesia Bautista de Caguas (First Baptist Church, Caguas, Puerto Rico)

Primera Iglesia Bautista de Caguas is counting on funds donated through America for Christ to provide Summer Bible School to nearby communities. The program is designed to engage local



children from low-income families in a series of fun workshops that will present the gospel message of salvation in a way that develops their minds and opens their hearts.

Our primary goal is to reach out to the community close to the temple and provide a workshop/health clinic for the community (service activity) where we can reach out and identify children that can participate in a full week of biblical classes, gospel music, service activities, recreation, arts, and crafts.

All the activities will be focused on the gospel of Jesus Christ and the impact on the children's lives.

**Please support this vital ministry in Puerto Rico by contributing to the 2024 America for Christ Offering today.**

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## **Bethel Neighborhood Center**

Bethel Neighborhood Center opened its doors on April 11, 1911, as a community center of The Women's Baptist Home Mission Society. The Bethel Neighborhood Center's (Bethel) mission is to empower individuals to achieve a renewed sense of hope, wellness, and self-sufficiency. Bethel primarily serves the vulnerable communities in eastern Wyandotte County, Kansas, targeting populations that qualify as low-income. 98% of the youth come from ethnic minority groups, 69% Hispanic, 26% Asian (Burmese and Bhutanese), and 3% African American. Most of our youth are first generation immigrants whose parents speak little or no English.

With your generous support, Bethel will continue to deliver hope and help to people in need that may be without resources due to social, educational, and economic barriers. In addition to our Youth Education and Enrichment Programs, Bethel also provides Senior Services providing lunch, health education and socialization, a Food Pantry, and other services. These are hardworking people who are economically challenged.

Bethel's programs and services are designed to support student comprehension, improve academic abilities, and promote understanding of material content, improving understanding and academic achievements. Our program provides educational coaching and activities for children, youth, and young adults, as well as after school and summer programs.

There is no charge to families to participate in the Bethel Youth Education programs.

**Please make your donation today to support Bethel Neighborhood Center through the 2024 America for Christ Offering!**

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## **SoCal Asian-American Churches: Fellowship and DiscipleMakers Project**

In the aftermath of COVID-19, Southern California Asian-American churches were shrinking and in need of revitalization, finding new ways to connect with each other and the denomination, revitalizing leaders, and equipping faith communities.

Born of a collaboration of three organizations; Gardena Valley Baptist Church (GVBC), Evergreen Baptist Church of Los Angeles (EBCLA), and Alliance of Asian American Baptist Churches (AAABC), the project focuses on:

Bringing Southern California (SoCal) Asian-American pastors and leaders together regularly for deepened fellowship and training.

Developing and launching an Asian-American DiscipleMakers program, an intensive 6-month "train-the-trainers" coaching and mentoring program that builds community in personalized cohorts and empowers lay leaders to share the gospel of Jesus Christ—evangelism and justice—in their churches and communities in culturally sensitive, structured, empowering, transformational ways.

It is the program's goal to heal and empower leaders to share the good news of Jesus Christ. With all participating coming to Christ for a new, revitalized life that includes healing, restoration, and a call to a life that is faith-filled and justice-oriented, we are bringing forth a slice of God's kingdom on earth.

**With your support through the 2024 America for Christ Offering, you too can be part of this vital ministry of uniting American Baptist Asian churches in Southern California. Please donate today!**

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## Race Track Chaplaincy of America PA Division Inc.

The ministry of the Race Track Chaplaincy of America, Pa. Division is based upon the belief that it is God's desire that every person, including those in the horse racing industry, have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, resulting in a life that is full and abundant in its nature and eternal in its scope. Built upon that belief, our work is holistic in its approach, ministering not only to the spiritual needs of those in the horse racing industry, but to their physical, emotional, and social needs as well.

Recent statistics state that the horse racing industry in the United States employs over 450,000 people, many of whom have non-traditional work schedules which do not allow them the opportunity to attend traditional church services. These closed communities present a great need for the message of God's love. Our chaplains follow Jesus' example by following the need and taking the church to the people.

In the Pennsylvania division there was a need for a technology center as it has become increasingly necessary for those we serve to use the internet and computers to apply for social services, to attend classes, to apply for jobs and upload resumes and so much more. We provide transportation to social services offices and classes, but now this is done primarily online.

Since COVID, the high school population of our community has been dropping out at a much higher rate. The youth are also using these services to do schoolwork and homework and we see them increasingly engaged in school and thriving. With your generous support through America for Christ offerings, we can meet the increasing needs to maintain and increase the resources we provide.

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## The First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain

The Food Justice Program of the First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain, operated through our non-profit The Centre for Faith, Art & Justice is a vital community ministry serving thousands of our neighbors who face food insecurity. An effort that began as small sit-down meals on Wednesday and Saturday grew exponentially during COVID to serve 700 meals and provide groceries for over 340 households a week. And, most amazingly, this food was delivered to recipients' homes by hundreds of volunteers.



The Greater Boston Food Bank estimates that 1.6 million citizens of Massachusetts do not get enough to eat. While some aspects of the pandemic have subsided, food insecurity is not one of them. With little publicity we have a waiting list of 100 households and there are people still signing up.

We focus on serving individuals who are historically marginalized populations disproportionately impacted by food insecurity and unhealthy diets, including low-income families, seniors, and members of the Latinx community. Our goal is to collaborate with partners across our city and state to provide as many people as possible with access to healthy food because we believe that good food heals.

**Funds received from grants provided by America for Christ will allow us to sustain the work of distributing healthy food to our neighbors. Please give today!**

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## **Rainbow Acres: EMPOWERing "Ranchers" With Developmental Disabilities to Become Independent**

Rainbow Acres is a faith-based residential community with a wide range of programs for developmentally disabled adults. These programs serve residents (called "Ranchers") who hail from more than 15 U.S. states and represent all types of faith backgrounds. Rainbow Acres serves adults with a wide range of developmental disabilities that may commonly include autism, Down syndrome, autism spectrum, and other developmental delays from various causes. Ranchers range from 18 years of age to well into their 80's. Core programs address the immediate and long-term needs of the Ranchers in vital developmental areas: cognitive, vocational, physical/health, spiritual and social. Our professional educators and staff members are passionate about helping Ranchers develop to their full potential.

Rainbow Acres EMPOWER project provides persons with developmental disabilities with the tools needed to change their lives by focusing on developing life-transforming habits; and will assist employers to create a positive environment for employing these individuals.

Kelly, one of our Ranchers, gained direct experience caring for a diverse range of animals onsite. She dedicated several years of volunteering at the Humane Society and worked at a local animal clinic. The culmination of her extensive and diverse experiences ultimately led to a position as a kennel tech/veterinary assistant trainee at a renowned animal hospital in Sedona, Arizona. Her role includes paid Veterinary Assistant Certification training as part of her responsibilities, making her journey even more rewarding.

"This is my forever job! This is what everything was leading up to. This is what I always wanted to do, and I love it here!", enthuses Kelly. Her success story is a testament to the positive impact of Rainbow Acres' programs in fulfilling dreams and aspirations.

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## **BraveMaker Film Festival**

The BraveMaker Film Festival is in its fifth year. The vision for BraveMaker initiated by Tony Gapastione, an ordained minister and a ABHMS Co-Creators Incubator graduate and mentor, was to create space for change and bring hope and healing to communities through the arts. With a mission to educate, entertain and create community experiences for justice, diversity and inclusion, BraveMaker is connecting thousands of people in its film festival experience that incite conversation on our cultures' most meaningful subjects like mental health, racial and gender equity, LGBTQ+ inclusion, spirituality and how to create societal impact at a global level. A grant from ABHMS would continue to support BraveMaker's efforts to empower and lead, what we believe to be, some of our world's most influential change makers: storytellers. The BraveMaker Film Festival hosts mentors and makers together in workshops and panel discussions poised to elevate brave stories and storytellers to level up their work, make connections in their industries and find funding for sustainable careers.

BraveMaker primarily serves students, marginalized communities and those historically excluded from performing arts through internships and student filmmaking programs from four different high schools in the San Francisco Bay Area.

BraveMaker is prioritizing the work of film artists in partnership with nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, faith communities, individuals, and companies who prioritize and value matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We believe film is one of the most influential change agents, facilitating empathy, and awareness, in our culture.

**Your generous donation through America for Christ will help sustain this important project. Please Give today!**

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