SOUTHSIDE COMMUNITY KITCHEN

Winter 2025:

A Season of Giving!

Together, we're spreading hope and nourishment this holiday season!

2025: A Year of Change, Gratitude & Steadfast Service

By Kim Gools
SCK Board President

What a year it's been for the Southside Community Kitchen! We've navigated significant transitions that have touched our staff, volunteers and the many guests we serve.

January brought heartbreaking, unexpected loss with the passing of our beloved Assistant Director Joanne Boss. Joanne was truly the heart of SCK, welcoming every person with warmth, recruiting countless volunteers and encouraging anyone who needed it. Her impact continues to guide us.

In April, our remarkable executive director of 15 years, Marcia Beer retired, leaving behind a legacy of compassion and strength.

We also saw longtime President Tony Patrick step down from his leadership role, though we are grateful he continues to serve on the board.

I stepped into the president's role in April to lead the the search for our new executive director. Staci Garcia-Nagel joined us in September and we are thrilled with the great energy and leadership she bring to our mission.

Amidst all these changes, one thing never shifted: our unwavering commitment to our guests. We continue to provide meals to anyone who is hungry — reliably, respectfully and without exception. During the government shutdown and the temporary halt in SNAP benefits, SCK and other feeding organizations throughout our community stepped up to ensure families received healthy, balanced meals during an uncertain time.

None of this would be possible without you, our dedicated volunteers, supporters and donors. Thank you for showing up, giving generously and believing in our mission. As we look toward the coming year, we ask that you consider deepening your support so we can continue serving those who depend on us.

2025 in Review: We are So Thankful

- 17,500 delicious, nutritious meals were served to 13,500 guests.
- More than 150 dedicated volunteers completed 1,248 individual service commitments, leading to more than 5,000 hours of volunteer service.
- Panera Okemos, Meridian Farmers Market Gleaners and Cakes-A-Bloomin' continue to provide generous in-kind donations of bread, desserts, fresh fruit and vegetables, supplementing our daily meals and allowing us to distribute leftover food to our guests.
- 12 local churches and dedicated service groups donated more than $16,000 to help us sustain our mission.
- Food Rescue US — Lansing Communities volunteers delivered 20,888 lbs. of food including fresh fruits and vegetables, meat and desserts — equivalent to 17,206 meals valued at $40,000.
- Our annual Breaking Bread Breakfast raised $11,500 thanks in part to generous contributions from new supporters and sponsors, Dart Bank and Capitol National Bank.
- We received a total of $10,000 in grants from Capital Region Community Foundation, Ingham County, the Savage Foundation and Church World Service.
- The Izzo Legacy Foundation chose Southside Community Kitchen as a 2025 Charity Partner, donating more than $7,000 raised from the Izzo Run/Walk/Roll, and the opportunity to apply for a receive 2025 Izzo Legacy Impact Grant (see *The Year Ahead*, page 2) to continue to serve more meals while building a longer table.
- Thanks to in-kind donations from Playmakers, friends at Independence Village, Delta Dental, Portland Community Fund, The New Citizens Press Community Action Network, The Soup Project and many others, our guests received free shoes, hats, gloves, hygiene products and other much-needed resources.

Food Connects Us, Nourishing Body & Spirit

By Staci Garcia-Nagel
SCK Executive Director

I'm honored to serve as executive director of Southside Community Kitchen, working alongside our talented staff, dedicated board and dozens of committed volunteers to ensure everyone who comes to us is well fed and greeted with kindness and compassion.

As we enter this season of gratitude and giving, I am reminded why our work matters so deeply. Food connects us. It nourishes both our bodies and our spirits. When people are well fed, seen and supported, they're more able to build a better world for themselves and those around them.

Throughout my career I've been drawn to work that improves the quality of life for others, which I attribute to both of my grandmothers. They were both committed to extending hospitality to everyone they met, and both formed genuine connections with neighbors, ensuring everyone they encountered had what they needed to succeed. Each act of kindness I witnessed inspired and reaffirmed my belief that empathy and collaboration can truly change lives.

That same belief drives our mission here at Southside Community Kitchen. Each meal we serve is a small act of hope — a reminder that no one in our community should go hungry or feel unseen. Together, with your generosity and commitment, we've built a welcoming place where everyone belongs at the table.

As we look forward into the New Year, I'm inspired by what we can accomplish together. The challenges of hunger are real, but so is our collective compassion and resolve. With your continued partnership, we will ensure that every person who comes through our doors leaves nourished, valued and cared for.

If you've haven't visited us yet, or it's been a long time, I invite you to come break bread with us and see the impact of your support.

Thank you for being part of this community of kindness. I wish you peace, joy and abundance this holiday season.

The Year Ahead: 2026 Partnerships & Collaborations

Thanks to a generous $50,000 Izzo Legacy Impact Grant, Southside Community Kitchen (SCK) and the Refugee Development Center (RDC) will pilot a 12-month feeding program in January.

This collaborative effort allows SCK to serve 400 after-school meals to middle and high school students Monday through Thursday, and 120 nutritious snacks for families participating in RDC's Newcomer Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays. These meals are in addition to SCK's regular service (Mondays through Thursdays), allowing us to triple our capacity to feed people by serving an additional 32,400 culturally-appropriate meals and snacks.

Monies are earmarked to cover the cost of halal and vegetarian food, additional staff hours, and the purchase of a dedicated commercial refrigerator to hold additional food items. The RDC will provide translated materials to ensure guests have the information needed to participate and understand food ingredients.

"We are grateful to our partners at Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lansing, who continue to work with us to find additional space and address and solve any potential barriers to implementing this new program," said Staci Garcia-Nagel, SCK's new executive director.

"We're only able to do the work we do because of our generous partners and collaborations. Together, we're building a longer, more inclusive table, one meal at a time."

> "At RDC, we believe that a warm, nourishing meal can offer both comfort and connection. We're thankful SCK will prepare meals that help ensure families are greeted with food that reflects their traditions, tastes and memories from home, helping families feel seen and supported during a time of significant transition.
>
> "These meals do more than fill a plate. They offer stability, dignity and connection as families navigate new systems and routines."
>
> — Erika Brown-Binion,
> RDC Executive Director

WAYS TO GIVE: We Can't Do This Without You

We Need You to Be Our Date

By Rev. Tony Patrick
Immediate Past President

One of the things that has helped my marriage last 45 years is that we maintain a date night. On our date night we go out to eat and either go to a movie or dance or a play.

Around 2010, while serving as pastor of Mt. Hope Presbyterian Church, there was a road sign in front of Christ United Methodist Church, just down Jolly Road from my church, advertising a Swiss steak dinner for the Southside Community Kitchen (SCK).

It was that monthly fundraiser that eventually drew me in to serve on the board of directors and eventually as president.

The Swiss steak dinners gave way when the church had to close and SCK had to move to St. Casimir, where fish dinners and the Breaking Bread Breakfast engaged a wide new group of supporters, sustaining the ministry of feeding southsiders a balanced meal.

Since then, SCK has continued to face challenges to meet our community's needs: the closing of St. Casimir and move to UU Lansing, COVID, accomodating new guests' food sensitivities, diminishing resources and of course the the rising cost of food.

Like committing to date night to sustain our marriage, the Southside Community Kitchen needs regular, sustaining financial support to continue its mission to feed those struggling with food insecurity.

We need *you* to be our date in this ministry of love.

May God's peace be with you all!

NEW: Customized Online Campaigns

Online fundraising campaigns offer flexible, accessible ways for you to help us share our story, expand our reach, and strengthen the impact of our programs.

We can create a customized campaign for you, with a unique link to make it easier for you to share with family and friends. Here are some examples:

- Have an upcoming birthday? We can create a customized link for you to use on your social media platforms to encourage your friends and family to donate in lieu of gifts.
- Families can link to our donation page from online obituaries and memorial pages, providing a meaningful way to honor someone's life through contributions to Southside Community Kitchen.
- Do you have a workplace giving program? We can create a unique online campaign so employees can contribute through coordinated holiday fundraisers or through employer-matched giving.

For more information or to request a customized online giving campaign, contact SCK Executive Director Staci Garcia-Nagel at 517-643-0319 or southsidecommunitykitchen.org.

Make an Impact, Save on Taxes with Your Required Minimum Distribution

If you're 73 or older and have a traditional IRA, you are required to take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) each year. You may not need or want this extra income, but it's still fully taxable.

The good news is there's a smart and simple way to put those funds to work for a cause you care about, without the taxes: a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD).

A QCD allows you to transfer some of your RMD directly from your IRA to Southside Community Kitchen — completely tax-free!

Such gifts count toward your annual RMD requirement, but aren't included in your taxable income, which can lower your Adjusted Gross Income and potentially reduce other tax liabilities.

Talk to your tax professional, financial advisor or IRA administrator about how to designate Southside Community Kitchen as your charity of choice for your QCD.

Look for Food Rescue Opportunities

Do you know a business with excess food that's going to waste?

Connect them with Food Rescue US – Lansing Communities to discuss donating foods that can be donated:

- Fresh produce
- Dairy products
- Fresh or frozen meats
- Baked goods
- Pre-packaged foods
- Dry goods, non-perishables
- Unserved prepared foods

To learn more about food donations, contact Val Lafferty at lansingcommunitiesmi@foodrescue.us or 517-349-6660.

Volunteer!

We're only able to do what we do because of our dedicated volunteers! There's a job for everyone, whether it's helping prepare or serve food, cleaning up, washing dishes, bundling plasticware, or picking up or delivering donated food.

In 2026 we'll be using Signup Genius to schedule volunteers and send reminders of scheduled shifts.

If you're interested in volunteering, visit the volunteer page on our website (www.southsidecommunitykitchen.org/volunteer.html) to sign up for shifts at Galilee Baptist or Unitarian Universalist Church.

You can also contact SCK Assistant Director Raina Gilbert (517-410-8976; gilbertdrop17@gmail.com)

SOUTHSIDE COMMUNITY KITCHEN

Board of Directors

- Kim Gools, President
- Diane Dykstra, Vice President
- Sandy Norton, Treasurer
- Phyllis Easton, Secretary & Assistant Treasurer
- Kimberly Cotter
- Fredrick E. Galloway
- Judy McLean
- Jeff Nyquist
- Anthony Patrick
- Betty Sanford
- Majory Weldon, UU Church Liaison (ex officio)

Staff

- Staci Garcia-Nagel, Executive Director
- Raina Gilbert, Assistant Director
- Corey Marie Kitley-Hassenger, Lead Cook
- Celeste Jennings, Guest Experience Assistant

Contact

www.southsidecommunitykitchen.org

southsidecommunitykitchen@gmail.com

MAKE AN ONLINE DONATION TODAY!