



PATHWAYS

2023





As our Wake County community has grown, Urban Ministries of Wake County has reinvented, enhanced, and increased our services and programs to meet ongoing and evolving needs.

We are still a homeless shelter. But, more than that, the Helen Wright Center is a housing program. An unheard of 10-15% of our census moves each month from the street, not just to an address, but to a signed lease.

We are still a free and charitable clinic providing comprehensive, integrated primary care and behavioral health. But, more than that, the Open Door Clinic is partnering with patients to improve their health with measurable, life-saving improvements in the control of hypertension and diabetes.

We are still a food pantry. But, more than that, we are a nutrition program easing food insecurity with healthy food boxes filled with fresh frozen meat, eggs, milk, cheese, and fresh fruit and vegetables.

We are still dependent on community volunteers. But, more than that, we are connecting concrete acts of service with the larger community challenge, enhancing our volunteer experience, and engaging the homeless, the uninsured, and the hungry.

For over forty years we have understood how poverty, trauma, and stress – the so-called Adverse Childhood Experiences – can diminish health, well-being, and longevity. And for those same forty-plus years we have been addressing and ameliorating social determinants of health – housing, hunger, illness, isolation, and despair – and decreasing adverse community experiences.

When so many influences – pandemic, poverty, inflation, and job loss – threatened to beat down our community, the generosity and support of donors, grantors, volunteers, interns, and staff helped Urban Ministries respond with confidence and creativity to raise up our community.

Thank you for being a part of our mission.

Peter Morris

MD, MPH, MDiv
Executive Director

Hunger & Nutrition Program

Feeding Wake County

Food brings people together on many levels. It's nourishment of the soul and body; it's true love. We see this love not only in the meals we share with loved ones but in the food we provide to our community.

Millions of Americans suffer from hunger and food insecurity each year, and food pantries are a vital part of the solution. Urban Ministries of Wake County gave nutritious food directly to 77,415 individuals this past year. Our mission is to support those seeking food and nutrition security in the Wake County community. We envision a society that is food secure.

Dr. Robert Majors and Dr. Ben Ferdon, longtime volunteers at the clinic, started the garden at Urban Ministries of Wake County in 2012. Now, more than 10 years later, the gardener heroes harvested 7,461 pounds of produce, bringing loads of vegetables to the pantry weekly. The glowingly green space ensures those in need can access healthy options and encourages colorful variety in their diets. The volunteer gardeners recently started planting herbs, with the fastest-growing one being rosemary.



"Because vegetables are more available, I feel good that I'm taking care of myself," one UMWC client said as they waited in the food line.

**Total
Individuals
served**
77,415

**3 methods of
service:**

- Onsite
- Local schools
- Community partners

**Local schools
provided
with food**

11

**Community
partners supplied
with food**

6

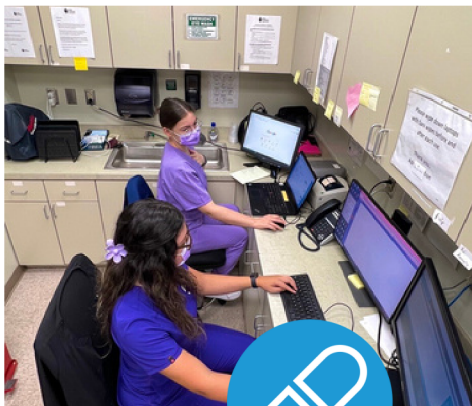
**7,461 lbs
of produce
harvested from
onsite gardens**

Each morning cars wrap around the parking lot to receive a week's worth of groceries. Boxes consist of fresh produce, milk, eggs, meat and shelf-stable essentials.

We at Urban Ministries of Wake County believe that everyone has the right to nutritious food. That's why we work endlessly to ensure access to fresh food is accessible to those who need it. With our network of community partners in the area, we strive to alleviate hunger and build a healthier Wake County.



Beehive donated by Mineral Springs Bee Farm and colony donated by Rise Pest Management.



THE OPEN DOOR CLINIC & PHARMACY

Millions of people of all ages in the United States lack health coverage – or lack affordable health coverage, which often prevents them from seeking the care they need. One in nine (11.8 percent) of Wake County adults aged 18 to 64 are uninsured.

Assessing quality healthcare is a fundamental right, yet many individuals face barriers that prevent them from receiving timely medical attention. Walk-in clinics have become more prevalent in recent years as people seek quick and accessible healthcare options, playing a crucial role in improving community health outcomes.

Since late 2022, the Open Door Clinic's walk-in program has bridged the gap. By providing accessible healthcare options, the walk-in program helps alleviate the strain on emergency rooms. However, with increased popularity comes misconceptions about walk-in clinics and what they offer.

“Day to day, I serve as the primary provider for our Walk-in Program (WIP), which was created by a desire to reach more uninsured members of our community living 250% below poverty, regardless of whether they have established care at the Open Door Clinic in the past.” Nurse practitioner Carrie Ross says, “I see new patients who are interested in making the ODC their primary care home, as well as established patients who have an acute need.”

The walk-in program is not appropriate for life-threatening emergencies; however, it's designed to offer treatment for common ailments. The professionals in the walk-in program service a variety of concerns: sinus cold, stomach flu, eye or ear infections, just to name a few.

**Patients seen by
our providers**

1,565

**Total monthly
prescriptions filled**

44,284

**# of mental health
counseling
appointments**

699

**Total
immunizations**

1,584

**Over half of our
patients are
age 45+**

"My most memorable moment at UMWC so far is probably the first non-established patient I ever saw in the Walk-in Program. She had a need and heard about our clinic through community resources. She said if we hadn't been available to help her, she would have had to seek care in the Emergency Department, incurring a devastating bill as she is uninsured and has a limited, fixed income." Carrie shares.

"After she visited with me in the WIP, she filled out an application to become a patient. Several weeks later she had established care here with us and had access to primary care that she wouldn't have had otherwise. Her symptoms that I treated her for in the WIP also improved and she was able to get back to her favorite hobby: cooking and baking. She even stopped by one afternoon to bring me a cheesecake that she had made."

After discharge from the walk-in program, many patients choose us to become their medical home. Of the people seen, 50% became established ODC patients. However, the program isn't limited to those who aren't patients already. A total of 278 ODC patients visited.

A trip to our walk-in program will get our patients answers and relief a whole lot faster than the ED, and at a fraction of the cost.



THE HELEN WRIGHT CENTER *for Women*

Many communities across the country use rapid exit (RE) programs to help individuals and families experiencing homelessness find housing – including move-in costs and short-term rental assistance – and offer case management. RE has been a powerful strategy for the Helen Wright Center for Women. The solution creates the best opportunity to make homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring.

“The rapid exit program has substantially changed the shelter. The rapid exit funding has allowed us to be able to house more women in a shorter time period as well as assist those that have housing barriers preventing them from getting into permanent housing.” Kathleen Otero, an HWCW case manager explains.

The Helen Wright Center for Women offers a stable and secure living environment for individuals who have a desire to return to mainstream living. Residents generally stay with us for a period of two months. Our team will help restore their self-confidence so that residents are able to achieve their personal and professional goals. During their stay, the women receive life skills training, help accessing educational and employment opportunities, advice on financial budgeting, and overcoming debt.



"After completing an intake, clients are given a tour of our facility, showing them where they can access different services offered by the center. Within 1-week clients are assigned a case manager and can begin working with staff on their housing goals. When a client finds housing and signs a lease, their case manager can provide financial assistance for the first month's rent and the security deposit, and upon their move-in date, clients exit the center with their belongings into permanent housing." Mich Bowersox, case manager, inputs.

Case management is a vital component of the RE program design and is essential to assess clients' needs and provide tailored financial aid and supportive services. Caroline, Kitty, Kathleen, and Mich get to know each woman personally, help them set their priorities, and connect them with other available services. Kathleen described her case manager's support:

"The case manager's role is to provide an extended level of support for the women. We act as a primary point of contact for the women while they are at the shelter to assist with anything from helping apply for birth certificates to jobs and permanent housing."

The Housing First approach centers around providing permanent housing as the solution to homelessness and the foundation for people experiencing homelessness to pursue their goals. Guided by the belief that everyone can achieve stability in permanent housing directly from homelessness, Housing First's framework prioritizes providing a place to live as quickly as possible. The Helen Wright Center for Women provides individuals with a temporary window of housing stability, and within as little as eight days, clients are housed in their new forever homes.

People
Sheltered

283

Nights of Shelter
Provided

15,773

of meal
provider groups

140+

of guests
who received
mental health
counseling

68

Average length
of stay

56 days

"Caroline was my case manager when I stayed at the Helen Wright Center. She's sweet, caring, and a nice person who makes you fight for what you want. I really appreciate her. I wouldn't have my housing without her."

- Arlene T., former HWCW resident



Volunteer Services

Volunteers are special people – those rare gems who step up to lend a helping hand to people in need. At Urban Ministries of Wake County, our volunteers are absolutely priceless. They come on board donating their time, energy, and knowledge. We're grateful for the countless hours, warm smiles, and immense kindness that our volunteers have contributed to make our work possible.

Being founded by volunteers, they always played a key role at UMWC. Not only does volunteerism provide support for families and staff, but it also allows the community to come together in this work to end family hunger, provide healthcare equality, and support our women's shelter. There's no denying that COVID-19 has created difficult challenges for nonprofits, especially those relating to volunteering.

The pandemic impacted the number of people available. Many nonprofits saw dwindling pools of volunteers, whittled down by the virus' restrictions, even as the number of beneficiaries they serve continues to grow. Yet these are the times when our organization is needed the most. As such, UMWC is rising to the challenge and striving hard to help our neighbors in need. COVID-19 and its aftermath have shown the importance of nonprofit organizations to help the most vulnerable people in the community. The whole purpose of nonprofit organizations is to make a positive impact and difference in the lives of those in their communities. You can make our community better.

"I have volunteered at several other organizations. Volunteering at UMWC is different in that it is always grateful for all volunteering. I have not experienced that gratitude at all the other organizations where I have volunteered."

– Food Pantry Volunteer

“Our volunteers are selfless, exceptional volunteers. They surely make change happen.” Volunteer Services Specialist, Diana Velasco, says, “Building relationships with volunteers by taking the time to get to know them. Greeting each one of them, not everyone is ready to chat and that is okay too. We ask about their day and shift.

During those small talks, I discovered we have a retired judge, archeologist, dietician, and more! It truly amazes me how we can come from all parts of the world. With different experiences, ethnicities, and languages, and yet our community needs bring us all together. United and with a willing heart, our volunteers make all the difference!”

Become a volunteer with us today!

Urban Ministries of Wake County offers many volunteer opportunities for individuals and groups.

Work behind the clinic’s scenes or on the food pantry’s front line to hand out weekly groceries. Some positions are specialized and require particular knowledge and abilities. Other positions only require a desire and willingness to volunteer like lawncare or meal provision.



Want to get involved?

- Volunteer onsite with us
- Host a food drive
- Donate items



Visit urbanmin.org/get-involved



Leadership

Peter J. Morris, Executive Director

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Establish your legacy with a stock donation, gift from your IRA, join the Circle of Compassion, or sign up to become a volunteer.



Scan the QR code above to give.





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