

2020 TRANSFORMATIONAL GRANT—Support during the pandemic

Batavia First Presbyterian Church \$1,000

Keeping Hope Alive

Throughout 2020, Keeping Hope Alive has been a theme that we at FPC have tried to maintain. This did not come without challenges, but our primary focus of connecting with our local community, to build on existing relationships, and to build new ones was accomplished.

Our Outreach efforts were expanded in many areas. We continued our work with Jackson Primary School. We were able to provide supplies for individual music bags to allow children to make music. We provided pumpkins and candy for a fall event. The Knitting Group made hats and mittens for students in need. Items were donated for teacher gifts and our Annual Christmas Cookies and Cocoa event for teachers occurred. While each of these events looked very different than our hope to provide in person volunteers, we were able to supplement the school fulfilling their identified needs. These relationships were important to the teachers and students. Recently, I knew more deeply of the school's appreciation as I received an email from the building principal. She was cleaning out her email and came across my name. She emailed me to just check in and make sure we were all ok!

Our Outreach grew to include the local nursing homes. Caring Cards have been collected from the congregation and distributed to the residents at the local facilities. Five hundred cards were collected each of 5 times! In addition to the cards, stuffed animals and candies were provided to them. In the fall, mums were donated to one nursing home to support their decorating. Treats were provided to the local hospital staff. We learned that outside vendors were not being allowed into the hospital to fill vending machines. We provided snacks, cookies, and candies for the staff. In addition, stars were purchased, through the St. Jerome Guild, to be given to our church members who work at the hospital. Their names will also be placed on a wall recognizing their hard work and dedication during the pandemic.

Throughout this last year, Community Connections have continued to be a top priority. We have learned to adjust and be flexible in how we create, maintain, and grow these relationships.

FPC has always believed that Outreach includes:

- creating neighborhood/community partnerships
- faith sharing
- forming personal relationships
- serving and empowering others
- working for social justice

Listening to the needs of our community and helping to fill those needs is important. This continues to be very important. This year, more than others, these connections have allowed us to be active in Batavia.

In each delivery to a community organization, the love of God was with us! God was present in each smile, each thank you, and within our congregation as we knew we were helping during this unprecedented time.

Our hope is to continue to Keep Hope Alive in Batavia! We will continue to build our relationships with these groups. It is our wish to put volunteers out in the community to help support them!

Respectfully submitted,

Caroline Janofsky