

Together we bring hope.
Together we make a difference.

Annual Report 2013



**THERMAL BELT
OUTREACH MINISTRY**

From the President & Executive Director



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Outreach's mission is to provide compassionate assistance to Polk County residents who are unable to provide for their basic life needs.

Together we bring hope. Together we make a difference.

Thermal Belt Outreach Ministry and its generous supporters continue to demonstrate a caring tradition that began 23 years ago of helping people hit hard by financial crisis, suffering from hunger and living “on-the-edge.”

The compassion of the Polk County community is reflected through Outreach's ability to bridge the hard times that an ever increasing number of our citizens face. More often now we see new people, including college graduates, who never expected to need food or help to keep a roof over their family. The unexpected and unwanted circumstances of life can snowball, especially when change is all about us. At Outreach, change is faced with compassion and confidence.

We are grateful for the countless ways that local residents, churches, businesses and other organizations contribute money, time and materials to support the families who come to Outreach. One great example of community support is seen in our Ambassador Program that extends to churches and other organizations that participate in Outreach's various programs. Local businesses share their surplus food and household goods. In 2013, the Polk County Community Foundation provided funding for crucial programs and capital projects. **Without the support of our community, we cannot function.**

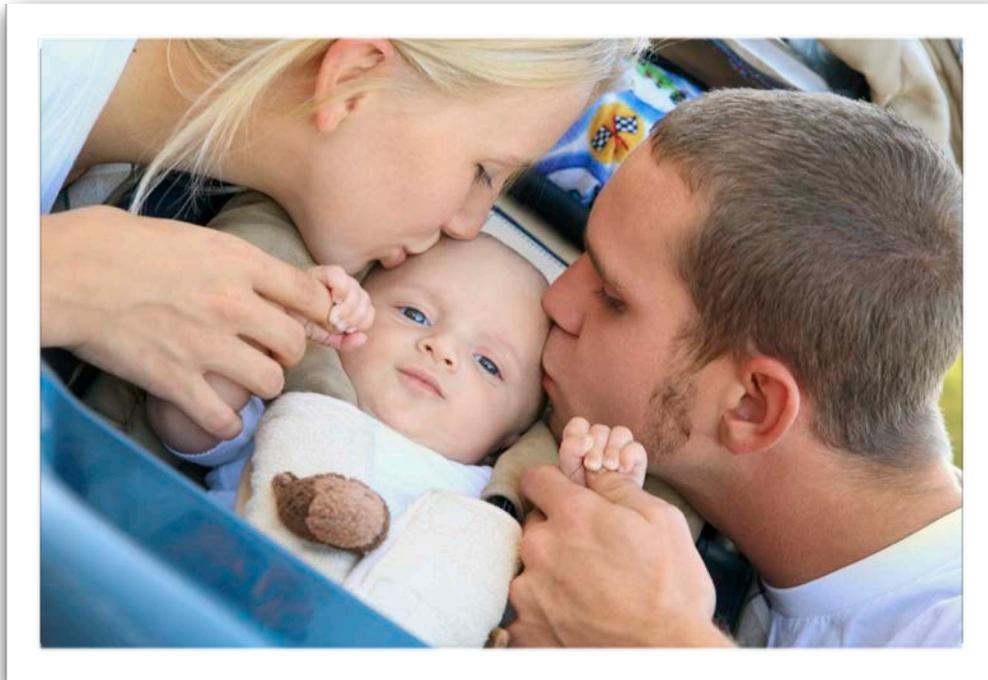
Through careful and compassionate management, we serve as good stewards by making each contribution stretch as far as possible. Our goal is to ease the pain, stress and fear that poverty and crisis bring to far too many local individuals and families.

Thank you for contributing to our effort. It makes a big difference in many lives.


President


Executive Director

One Family's Story



Shelly and John were like many couples, working hard, trying to earn their piece of the American Dream. Shelly was expecting a child in a couple months, and they eagerly awaited the new addition to their family. Life was good until the couple faced a serious crisis.

Shelly's car was hit by a truck, leaving her injured and in premature labor. Because of her injuries and the potential injuries to the unborn child, Shelly faced an extended hospital stay.

With Shelly in the hospital and so much on the line, John stayed close to his wife and spent as much time as possible at her side. Although he made a choice that many husbands would make, he lost wages during this time away from his job. With both wage-earners in the family out of work, the couple fell behind on bills.

When they came to Outreach, we helped Shelly and John pay their utility bills and provided food and commodities from our pantry during this critical period.

Since then Shelly has delivered a healthy baby, had multiple surgeries to help her heal from the accident, and life is, for the most part, on track again. Outreach continues to provide assistance to the couple through our food pantry while the couple gets back on their feet.

"I donate because I feel strongly about the Golden Rule, especially during an economic downturn."

~ Suzanne Plumly, Volunteer & Donor

We gave crisis assistance to 736 households by providing mortgage or rent payments, fuel, wood, oil, heaters, fans, utility expenditures and critical home repairs during 2013.

Building Our Future



Completing the 1,080 square foot expansion of our pantry was a highlight of 2013. The project is a fantastic example of the result a generous community can produce when we work together to lend our helping hands to those that need it most.

The pantry expansion didn't come too soon. The demand for our services increased nearly two-hundred percent between 2007 and 2013. During 2013, the number of client requests continued to rise. Working quarters were cramped, the building was not energy efficient and it was, so to speak, bursting at the seams.

Most troubling, we were not able to take full advantage of reduced-price food available through our regional food bank or other non-food programs such as the one started by Good Shepherd Episcopal Church. The Good Shepherd program allows Outreach to obtain essential non-food surplus goods from the United Way Gifts-In-Kind Center in Spartanburg and to deliver those items to the eligible residents of Polk County.

Thanks to a generous \$50,000 grant from the Polk County Community Foundation, we were able to increase our pantry space, improve energy efficiency, working conditions and to take full advantage of reduced-priced food and the Gifts-In-Kind program.

To complete the project, the Timken Foundation of Canton graciously provided funds to fix our crumbling parking lot, purchase new pantry shelves and a refrigerator. MANNA FoodBank gave us an additional freezer.

*We provided
food,
commodities
and other
critical
services in
response to
3,525
requests by
area families
in need during
2013.*

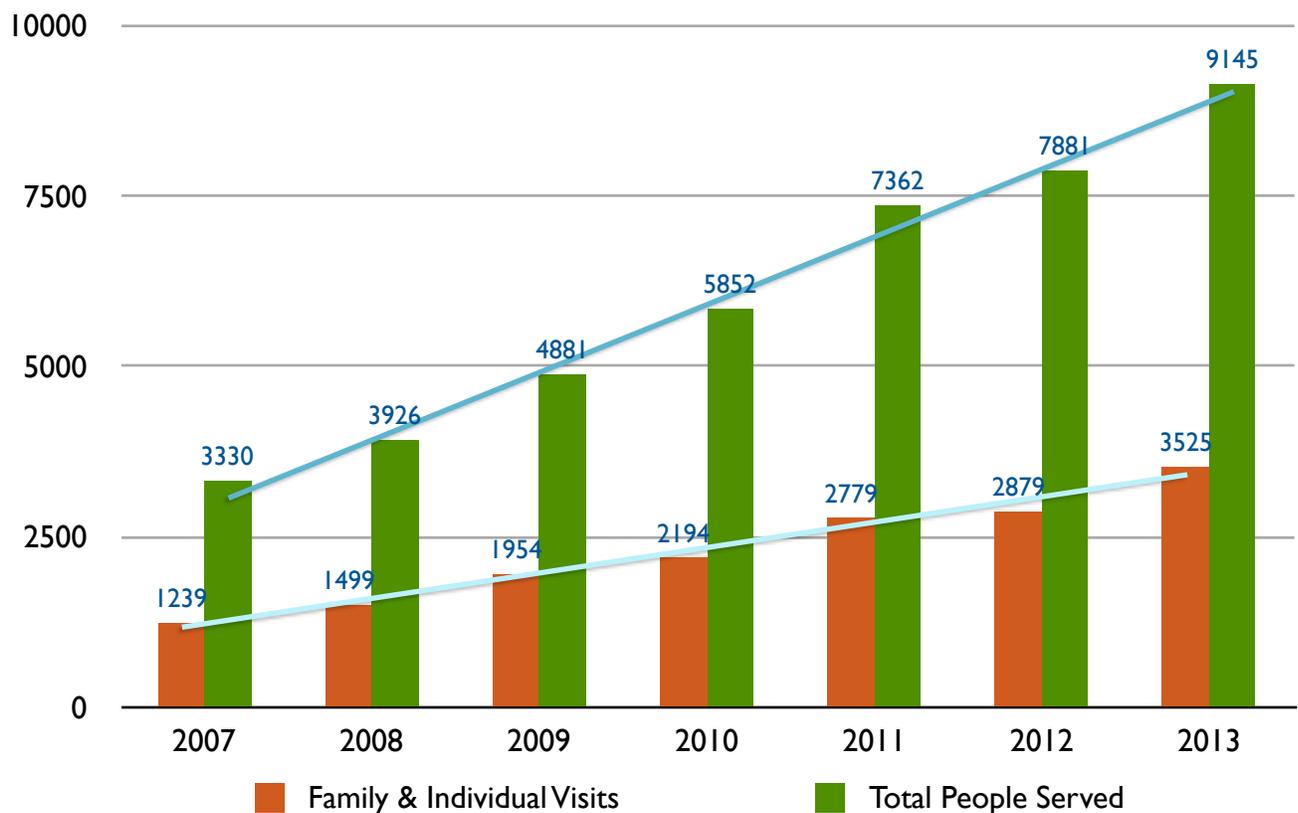
"My work at Outreach connects me with people by whom I feel inspired. Volunteering has always given me great joy."

~ Lis Stucker, Volunteer

Programs & Services

Types of Assistance	
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A generous week's worth of groceries per month • Feed-A-Kid Program provides weekend backpacks of food to hundreds of Polk County school-children at risk for hunger • USDA commodities to supplement governmental assistance
Shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance with mortgage/rent payments, utility and fuel bills, firewood and home repairs
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We help the uninsured pay for vital prescriptions, medical tests and equipment and emergency dental care (for adults)
In-Kind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donated food, household goods, toiletries, pet food and paper products
School Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backpacks of school supplies for eligible Polk County school-children
Holiday Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angel tree gifts for children and seniors • Grocery store gift-cards for Thanksgiving and Christmas meals
Garden of Hope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pairs garden mentors with clients to plant and grow food at client's home

The Growing Need for Outreach Services



Honoring Our Past



During 2013, Polk County students affected by poverty received a variety of goods including shoes, coats, clothes, school supplies and 13,251 Feed-A-Kid food packs.

In 1991, the dynamic Eloise Thwing led the effort to create an organization dedicated to helping the less fortunate in Polk County. Eloise was already at an age when most people think of retiring; however, over the next 20 years, she served as executive director of Outreach.

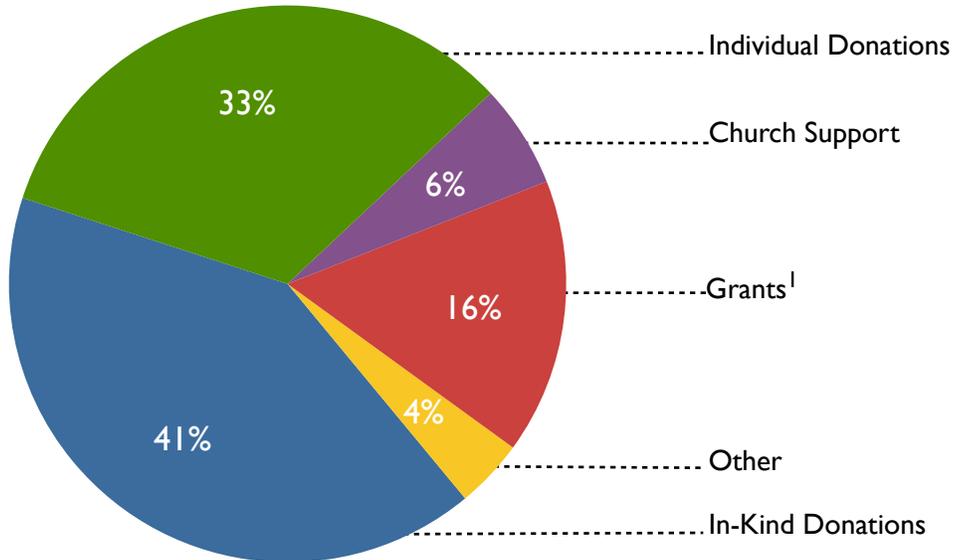
To honor her compassionate leadership and achievements, in 2013 the Outreach Board of Directors named the organization's campus the "Eloise Thwing Center."

Joe Epley, Outreach's current president, sums up Eloise's contribution: "Her leadership, determination and dedication in growing Outreach to serve people in need was phenomenal. Never seeking anything for herself, she wouldn't stop until she got what was needed to further Outreach's mission to help others."

At the dedication ceremony, Eloise herself said, "When I think of all the people Outreach serves, I am overwhelmed. Thank you so much for what you have done. You are all wonderful. It's not too bad to grow to be 93."

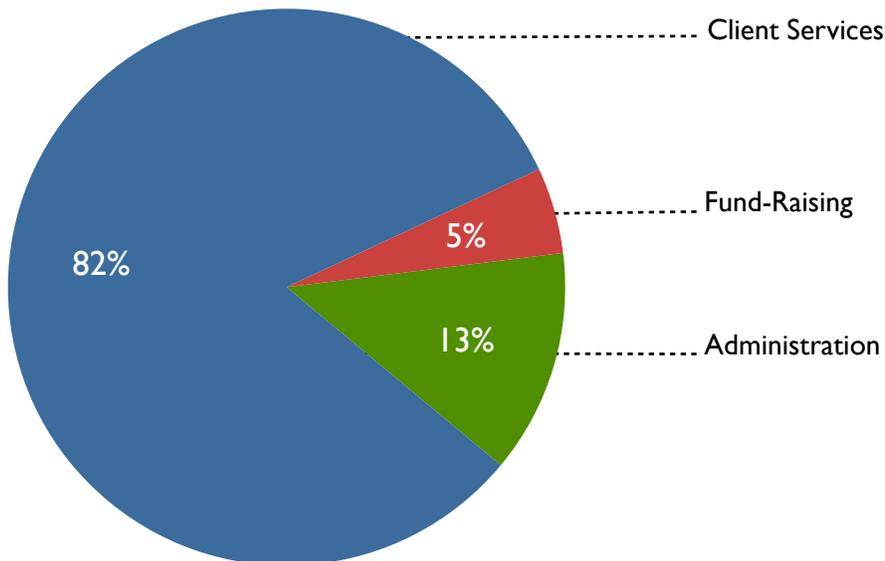
Maintaining a Record of Good Stewardship

2013 Contributions



Total Contributions: \$1,141,013

2013 Distributions



Total Contributions Distributed: \$985,533

"As a board member, I have the privilege of working with dedicated staff and volunteers who help fulfill the community's obligation to offer effective and compassionate assistance to those in Polk County who are struggling to provide basic necessities for their families."

~ Chris Greensfelder, Volunteer Board Member

¹ Grants include capital funding for pantry expansion and other improvements.

2013 Annual Report



***Outreach's vision is to
be the heart of a unified
community-wide effort
through which no
individual or family in
Polk County goes
hungry, cold, or without
shelter.***



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OUTREACH MINISTRY**

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