

# Neighbor to Neighbor

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## A Legacy of Smiles

Imagine a broad smile sweeping over the face of a senior isolated from family and friends as they open a mailbox flooded with colorful greeting cards. Spreading smiles among Howard County seniors by reminding them someone cares is what the Adopt-A-Grandparent program is all about. Once a month between October and May, volunteers send Samaritan Caregivers clients, many of whom live at risk of social isolation, friendly acknowledgments to brighten their day.

Program coordinator Karen Berg attests, "It's such an easy way to let someone living alone know that they haven't been forgotten and that they are special. It's also a wonderful volunteer opportunity that requires very little time but means so very much."

The Samaritan Caregivers office receives

regular "thank you" calls from grateful recipients. Berg recalls an adopted grand mother who passed away leaving a house decorated in notes and cards from her adoptive classroom. The family was so touched they sent a special letter to the class showing them how cherished the work of those few volunteer hours had been.



*Mrs. Whitten's 2nd & 3rd graders  
The Children's Christian Academy*

Mail recipients aren't the only ones beaming. Last year's volunteers, including 20 classrooms and youth groups throughout the county,

enjoyed crafting handmade cards to send their adopted grandparents. Kids not only benefit academically from this creative way of practicing writing and art skills; they also improve in awareness and compassion for their wider community. Thanks to a grant from the Miami Correctional Facility, many participating classes were also treated to either an ice cream sundae or pizza party that left both students and teachers grinning.

While the Adopt-A-Grandparent program enriches classroom experience, individuals and groups including offices, families, local businesses, churches, and retirees, benefit from involvement as well. Those few minutes spent once a month signing a card, form bonds between generations and leave a lasting impact on clients, volunteers, and their families. What a simple way to leave a legacy of smiles in Howard County.

*Megan Anderson,  
Freelance Writer  
Samaritan Caregiver Volunteer*

## Leave a legacy of smiles—volunteer!

- **Have time on Wednesday AM & live close to St. Joseph Hospital? A woman is needed to stay with a lady dealing with dementia while her husband gets much-needed time away for exercise.**
- **Sign up your group for the Adopt-A-Grandparent program & send a friendly greeting once a month during the school year or throughout the year. Also accepting groups to**

rake leaves for homeowners later in the fall.

- **Not a snowbird? We need you to drive ONLY during the winter months when so many of our volunteers are away!**

**It's easy to sign up—**

**[www.samaritancaregivers.org](http://www.samaritancaregivers.org)**

**765.453.7611**

**Help us help others!**

### OFFICE NEEDS

- Rolls of \$.45 stamps
- 8 or 16 GB thumb drive
- Bottled Water
- Toilet Tissue
- Large Green Trash Bags
- Scotch tape — disposable dispensers or refills
- Christmas Cards