



January 15th, 2021

Happy New Year!

We have so much to be grateful for as we start a new year and despite everything that 2020 threw our way, our volunteers and community partners got us through it!

The compassion and outpouring of help we received from you all gave us hope as we work to sustain and strengthen our services and programming. As we reflect on the past year, we know that as long as we have your support, we will continue to increase our impact and make a difference.

- By gathering supplies, organizing donation drives with friends, family, church groups, schools, businesses, and other organizations, you made it possible for us to provide our guests with basic need items and more in 2020.
- By providing a hot meal, or funds so that those we serve did not go without, you made a difference in 2020.
- By sending us a kind thought, a note of encouragement, or extending us grace, you let us know you care in 2020.
- By signing up to volunteer, patiently waiting for us to restart volunteer opportunities, and then eagerly signing up for them once they were available again, you made an impact and let us know we can count on you in 2020 and beyond.

Holiday Workshop

Being in shelter is tough enough, and during the holiday season it can be even more difficult. During this time of year, we work to make the holidays special for the

children and adults in shelter by providing opportunities for joy, excitement, and positive memories.

This year marked the 4th anniversary of Van Buren Center’s Holiday Workshop. Together with the help of volunteers our Holiday Workshop happened with added measures to keep everyone safe and socially distanced, while still creating a space and event that let our families know how important and special, they are.



52 families participated in the Holiday Workshop this year and **93 children** received a joyful holiday season. Volunteers, or “elves” as we like to call them, helped parents pick out 6 new toys, a stuffed animal, blanket, unlimited books, and clothing for their children and then wrapped the gifts. The parents also received their own gift, as well as our single adult men and women.

Holiday Highlight

We had a family who previously was a guest in our Van Buren Family shelter and participated in our Holiday Workshop return, but this year as a donor. They have been successfully housed since their stay at Van Buren Center but have not forgotten about what a special and meaningful experience the Holiday Workshop was for them. The mother of the family explained it was her son that asked if they could donate toys because he remembered how much it meant to him to receive gifts while they were in shelter.



We try our best to do all we can to provide opportunities for positive memories and to hear stories like this inspires us to work even harder to make a difference in the lives of those we serve. Thank you to everyone who helped make the holiday special for our families, women, and men.

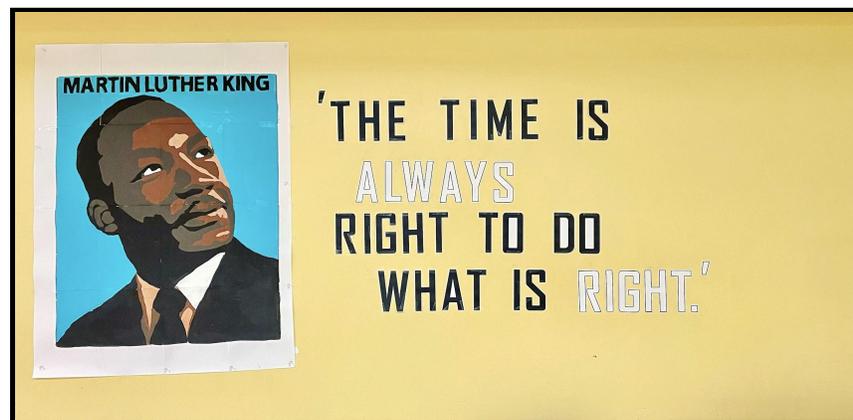
Watch the Holiday in Review video by clicking on the link below:

<https://vimeo.com/497742179/c2474a1a74>

Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. dedicated his life to strengthening communities and recognizing the human dignity in all of the people we serve. Observed each year on the 3rd Monday of January, MLK Day is the only federal holiday designated as a national day of service. We are committed to upholding the values he exemplified through his commitment to making a difference and the power of service. He famously said, "Everyone can be great because everybody can serve."

Below is a picture of a painting made by a staff member and quote by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. that is currently hung up in our Family Cafeteria to help celebrate his legacy.



What's to Come in 2021

- To sign up to become a YMCA Shelter Services Volunteer, click on the link below to register and complete the training.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/805OF48ACA62CA5FE3-volunteer1>

- To sign up for our **Kitchen Meal Service Opportunities**, or for more information click on the link below.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/805OF48ACA62CA5FE3-dinner>

- To sign up for our **Weekend Meal Donation at Van Buren North Men's Shelter**, or for more information click on the link below.

Staff Spotlight

Blaine Turner

Case Manager, Van Buren North Men's Shelter

Without a doubt, we can all always count on Blaine! He helps with housing, building guests, staff, and community rapport, as well as being the "man" on campus to put out those small fires that sometimes arise in our day-to-day life as human service workers. Blaine has restored hope for so many of our single adult women experiencing a homeless crisis as well as families. His willingness to always go above and beyond the call of duty is never unnoticed. Thank you for continuing your journey with us Blaine. We are excited to see what great things are in the works for the Van Buren North Men's Shelter!

Shiree Tillman

Team Member, Van Buren Center

Shiree shows dedication to her work and flexibility on her shift. She comes to work ready to be helpful, and it's a joy for anyone that works with her. Every team lead knows it's going to be a good shift if Shiree is on their shift.

AREA OF IMPACT	SEPTEMBER 2020	OCTOBER 2020	NOVEMBER 2020	DECEMBER 2020
# of Women Served	271 Individuals	323 Individuals	284 Individuals	313 Individuals
# of Men Served	303 Individual	311 Individuals	347 Individuals	423 Individuals
# of Families Served	91 Families, 295 Individuals	86 Families, 264 Individuals	88 Families, 285 Individuals	71 Families, 222 Individuals

