



What's Happening at Van Buren

MONTHLY NEWS & UPDATES

APRIL 2025

You may know us for the emergency shelter services we provide—but did you know we also offer programs to help individuals and families find permanent housing? At the YMCA of Central Ohio, we believe everyone should have safe and secure housing. Through Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing, we support people on their journey from homelessness to home. We're excited to share that starting next month, we'll launch the first edition of our Shelter & Housing Newsletter, where you'll learn more about these impactful programs and the incredible work happening every day at the Van Buren Center.

April Acts of Joy, Care and Wellness

Spreading Easter Cheer at the Family Shelter

This Easter, the Van Buren Center was filled with smiles and joyful moments as families enjoyed a special celebration made possible by our amazing volunteers. Children were surprised with Easter goodie bags, tasty seasonal snacks, and creative spring crafts that brought laughter and fun to the day.

A total of 180 goodie bags, 150



bags of "carrot" cheese puffs, 180 decorated Rice Krispies treats and juice boxes were distributed to the children, made possible through generous donations.

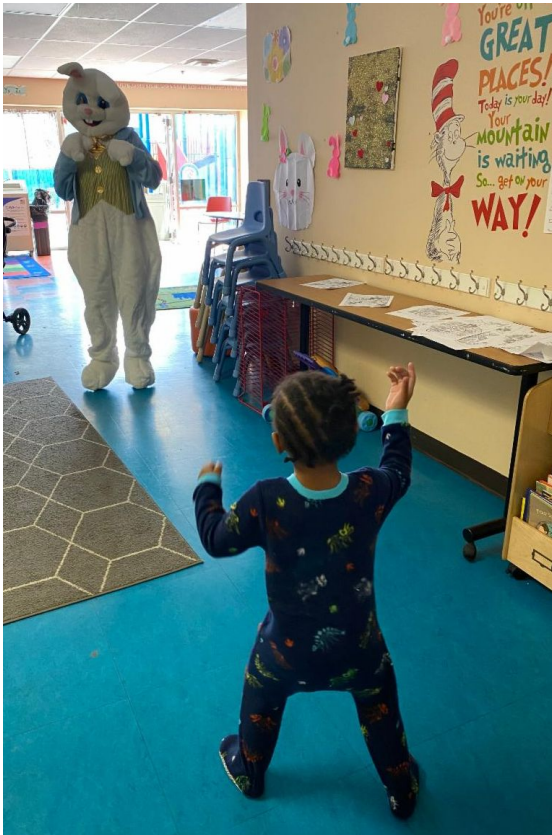
We're so grateful to the volunteers who gave their time and hearts to help make this holiday meaningful. Your kindness brought comfort and joy to families who needed it most. Together, we're building a community of care, one small act of love at a time.

The Van Buren Center is always in need of support to make special events possible for the families and women in the shelter. If you're interested in learning more about how you can get involved—whether through donations or volunteering

—we would love to connect with you.

[Contact Us](#)

[Donate Today](#)





Equitas Earth Day Clean Up Event



This Earth Day, we came together for more than just a cleanup — we united for community, care, and connection. With the incredible support of **Equitas**, we hosted a trash clean-up event that



brought people together to restore and refresh our shared environment.

But the impact didn't stop there.

Equitas went above and beyond, not only sponsoring the event and providing a warm, nourishing lunch for the women and families staying at Van Buren, but also bringing vital on-site health resources, including free HIV and STD testing, along with information and support for holistic well-being.

By combining environmental care with health equity, this event became much more than just a cleanup — it became a powerful reminder that when we care for the earth, we must also care for the people who call it home. The Van Buren Center is grateful to everyone at **Equitas** for their dedication to both public health and community support. Their presence, along with many other community groups and agencies, made this day truly special and meaningful for all who attended.

To every volunteer and partner who joined us: thank you for showing that change is possible when we work together — one act of service, one health resource, and one helping hand at a time. Together, we're creating a cleaner, healthier, and more connected world.





Spring Break & Healthy Kids Day



This spring break, the family shelter at Van Buren Center was full of energy, creativity, and joy as we hosted a weeklong series of activities for the children staying with us, turning time away from school into a time for fun, learning, and healthy habits!

Typically a one-day national YMCA event, Healthy Kids Day turned into a full week of interactive programs, where kids enjoyed hands-on crafts, games, movement activities, and nutrition-focused fun. From painting and movies to dancing and healthy snacks, every day offered something new to keep bodies active and minds engaged.

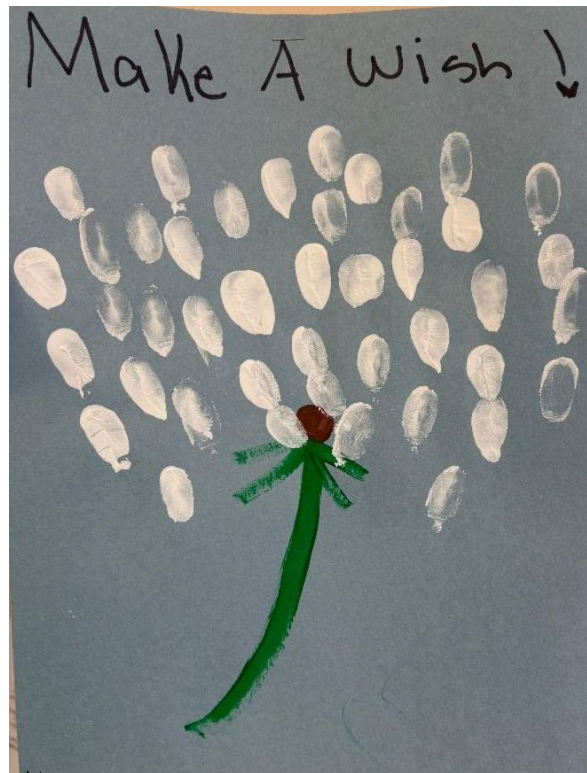


"It's more than just keeping the kids busy — it's about giving them moments of normalcy, fun, and the chance to just be kids."

— Emily, Van Buren Center Staff Member

A huge thank you to our team and volunteers who helped create a safe and joyful space where children could thrive during spring break. These are the moments that build confidence, foster connection, and pave the way for brighter futures.

Donate Today



Reminder to Van Buren Volunteers:
New Process and Website for Sign-Up

Menu

- My Profile
- Project Catalog
- Logout

Volunteer Dashboard



Announcements

reset

Search for Volunteer Opportunities



Keyword Search

Branches

Opportunities On or After



Opportunities Before



Impact Areas

As of May 1st, the Van Buren Center has transitioned our volunteer sign-up from Sign-Up Genius to Volunteer Matters. The new platform will connect our volunteers to even more opportunities available across the YMCA of Central Ohio.

To Volunteer at the Van Buren Center, all volunteers must complete the following requirements:

- **Volunteers Matter Account** – All volunteers are required to register and create an account on the YMCA Volunteer Matters website.
- **Sign-Up/Coordination** - Volunteers are not permitted to be on YMCA Van Buren property outside of scheduled volunteer hours and must sign up through Volunteer Matters or obtain approval for onsite volunteer events/programs directly from the Volunteer Coordinator.

[Learn More](#)[Volunteer Matters](#)

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Van Buren Center as Special Guest at

ALMC Spring Luncheon

April 12th: Assistance League of Metro Columbus



The Van Buren Center is honored to have been invited by the **Assistance League of Metro Columbus** to speak at their annual spring luncheon, where we had the opportunity to share the mission, history, and impact of the Van Buren Center with their dedicated members and supporters.

This inspiring organization has been a vital partner in our efforts to support individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Since 2020, they have donated more than 7,000 hygiene kits, along with countless other essential items that directly support the health, dignity, and well-being of our residents. Their ongoing support has also helped strengthen vital programs that make a real difference every day.

"The Assistance League's generosity doesn't just meet needs, it restores dignity and reminds our guests that they are seen, valued, and supported."

— Carolyn, Van Buren Center Staff Member

We are deeply grateful for this meaningful partnership and for the opportunity to celebrate all that we have accomplished together. Thank

you, **Assistance League of Metro Columbus**, for your unwavering commitment to our community. Together, we are creating lasting change.

The Assistance League is always seeking new members to join its organization. If you are interested in learning more about the incredible work they do and how to get involved, click the link below.

Learn More



Blizzard Claus April Essential Drive

April 12th: The Real Deal Santa Claus



We are incredibly thankful to **The Real Deal Santa Claus** for their continued generosity and support of the women and families at the Van Buren Center. Most recently, they hosted a thoughtful donation drive, collecting blankets, diapers, wipes, and other essential items to help meet the everyday needs of families experiencing homelessness.

Their commitment to uplifting our community goes even further. **The Real Deal Santa Claus** is also a proud supporter of our Santa's Workshop Toy Drive, helping bring holiday magic and joy to children

during the most wonderful time of the year.

"Donations like these have an immediate impact. They meet critical needs and let our residents know that they are not alone — that someone out there cares about their well-being."

— Annie, Van Buren Center Staff Member

Thank you, Real Deal Santa Claus, for showing up throughout the year with compassion, care, and a true spirit of giving. Your partnership

helps us provide not only essential items but also hope, dignity, and joy.

[Learn More](#)

Hygiene Kit Project at the DMEC Compliance Conference

April 14th - 17th: Disability Management Employer Coalition



The **Disability Management Employer Coalition (DMEC)** is the only association dedicated to providing focused education, knowledge, and networking for absence and disability professionals. The Van Buren Center is proud to recognize the incredible generosity of the **DMEC**, which chose to make a real impact during their annual

conference by supporting the Van Buren Center in a meaningful way.

As part of their conference programming, attendees came together to assemble 200 hygiene kits filled with essential items for individuals and

families experiencing homelessness. These kits, packed with care and compassion, are already making a difference in the lives of our guests.

Thank you to the DMEC for turning your event into a mission-driven moment of kindness. Your support helps us provide dignity and comfort to those working to rebuild their lives.



Volunteer Opportunities

Meal Prep

Available 7 days a week
2:00 pm-4:00 pm

Dinner Service

Available 7 days a week
5:00 pm-7:00 pm



Donation Needs

- Baby diapers (4, 5, & 6)
- Baby wipes
- Bar soap
- Travel-size shampoo & conditioner
- Sunscreen Lotion

The minimum age requirement for all volunteer opportunities is 14, and a guardian or parent must accompany anyone under 18.

Upcoming Van Buren Events:

- [Van Buren Community Garden](#)
May 2025 - September 2025
- [Back to School Rally](#) - August 2025

**Meal
Prep**

Dinner Service

- Women's Tennis Shoes (size 9)

Items for our Success Stores:

- Bath & Body Works Lotions
- Purses
- Wallets
- Phone Chargers
- Pre-Paid Phones
- New Make-Up (unopened)
- New Nail polish

Please coordinate your donation drop-off directly with the Volunteer Coordinator.

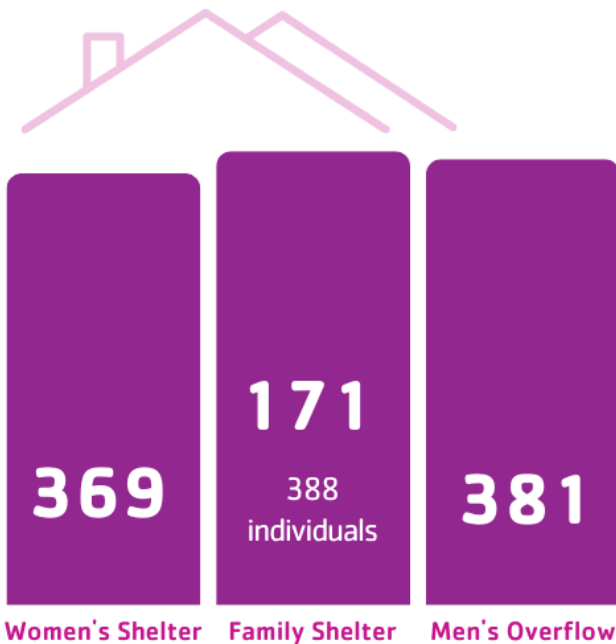
For more information about our current donation needs, email Katrina Martin at katrina.martin@ymcacolumbus.org.

**Click Here for Amazon
Wish List**

YMCA VAN BUREN CENTER

MARCH 2025 IMPACT

Van Buren Center provided safe shelter to 1,128 individuals in March 2025.



PROGRAM OUTCOMES

42

Workshops available onsite to guests in March.



245+

Guests participated in and attended a workshop and 97 hours of direct service offered.



14,809

Meals served in March at Van Buren Center.



102

Volunteers gave their time to make a difference and totaled 270 hours.



Invest In Your Community

Your gift today transforms lives and strengthens communities. 100% of contributions to our Annual Campaign support providing access to opportunities for all. An investment in the YMCA of Central Ohio goes beyond the Van Buren Center emergency shelter; it's an investment in your community.

Donate Today

Volunteer & Donation Hub



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