

ALLEN
NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

GROWING IN COMMUNITY

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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Our Vision:

A diverse, equitable, and welcoming Eastside where a rich mix of neighbors enjoys access to everything they need to build an outstanding quality of life, a deep sense of belonging and community pride, and a strong voice in shaping a vibrant, sustainable, healthy future together.

Our Mission:

To serve as a dynamic hub where Lansing Eastside neighbors can access resources to improve their health and well-being; expand their capacity to seize job and entrepreneurial opportunities; create a strong sense of place, belonging, and community pride; and build a safe, sustainable, and thriving neighborhood.

Founded in 1999, Allen Neighborhood Center (ANC) grew out of a four-year-old 'healthy communities' initiative called the Eastside Summit. This summit began as a collaborative effort to mobilize stakeholders on Lansing's Eastside in a creative assessment and planning process to improve the health of the neighborhood. This four-year-long process led to many Eastside neighbors and institutional partners joining together to form task forces focusing on health, housing, and neighborhood stability. Eventually, the summit morphed into a non-profit organization: Allen Neighborhood Center.

As a place-based organization, ANC's stakeholders are centered in a geographic location - the 48912 ZIP code - rather than similarities in identity or background. Primarily residential, the Eastside is home to 17,398 people in 8,229 households; 57% are renter-occupied while 43% are owner-occupied. There are 3,194 families, and neighbors are of a mix of racial and ethnic backgrounds; 12% were born outside the US. The median household income in this neighborhood is 23% less than the state's median household income. Furthermore, 20.2% of the population is below the poverty level, which is nearly double the national rate. This data illustrates that the Eastside is a richly diverse, low-moderate income neighborhood that faces higher-than-average rates of poverty. These factors reduce access to resources that are needed to support a healthy quality of life, such as stable housing, healthy foods, and health coverage, and can limit access to things like employment opportunities.



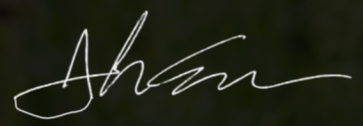
ANC works to ensure all Eastsiders have a strong voice in shaping the organization’s decisions and programs.

In turn, ANC’s community-crafted, neighborhood-driven programs are designed to give neighbors greater power to direct and shape their individual lives as well as the community’s future.

A Message from the Executive Director

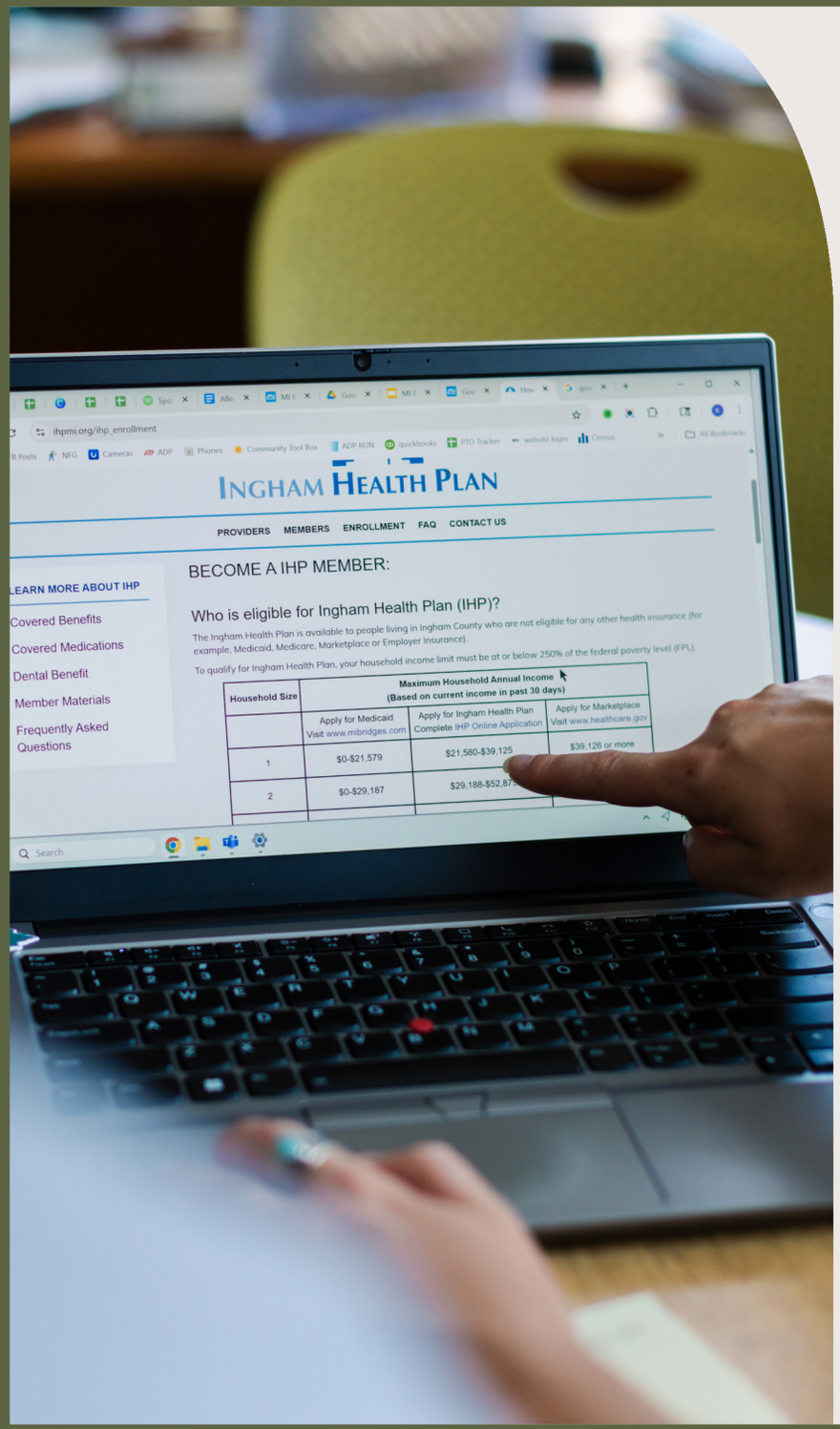
In 2025, ANC sustained a wide range of comprehensive programs supporting health, food access, education, and economic opportunity. These included the Outreach Center, Breadbasket Food Pantry, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Incubator Kitchens, Allen Farmers Market, Youth and Senior Programs, and the Veggie Box. This work was made possible through the leadership of more than 1,200 dedicated volunteers who served as front-line contributors across all program areas.

ANC remains committed to adapting and responding to evolving circumstances while continuing to prioritize the health and resilience of the community. Looking ahead to 2026, the organization will focus on sustaining its core programs, strengthening community partnerships, and ensuring that neighbors continue to have access to essential resources and opportunities. The continued support of donors, volunteers, and community partners remains vital to advancing this work and reinforcing the shared commitment to a thriving Eastside community.



Joe Enerson, Executive Director





The Outreach Center

The Outreach Center is the living room of the neighborhood. It provides information, referral, and advocacy services, ensuring access to health, human, and housing resources. In addition to linking neighbors to our own programs and services, we operate a referral system with other agencies, employing a 'no wrong door' approach to supporting neighbors.



249 neighbors

enrolled in health coverage like the Ingham Health Plan or Medicaid, referred to partner organizations for health-related services, or connected with medical providers



207 neighbors

enrolled in the Food Assistance Program, given a shelf-stable emergency food kit, directed to ANC's own food pantry, or connected to partner organizations' free food resources



187 neighbors

enrolled in utility assistance programs, searched for emergency shelters or affordable housing, or received direct funding for home improvement projects

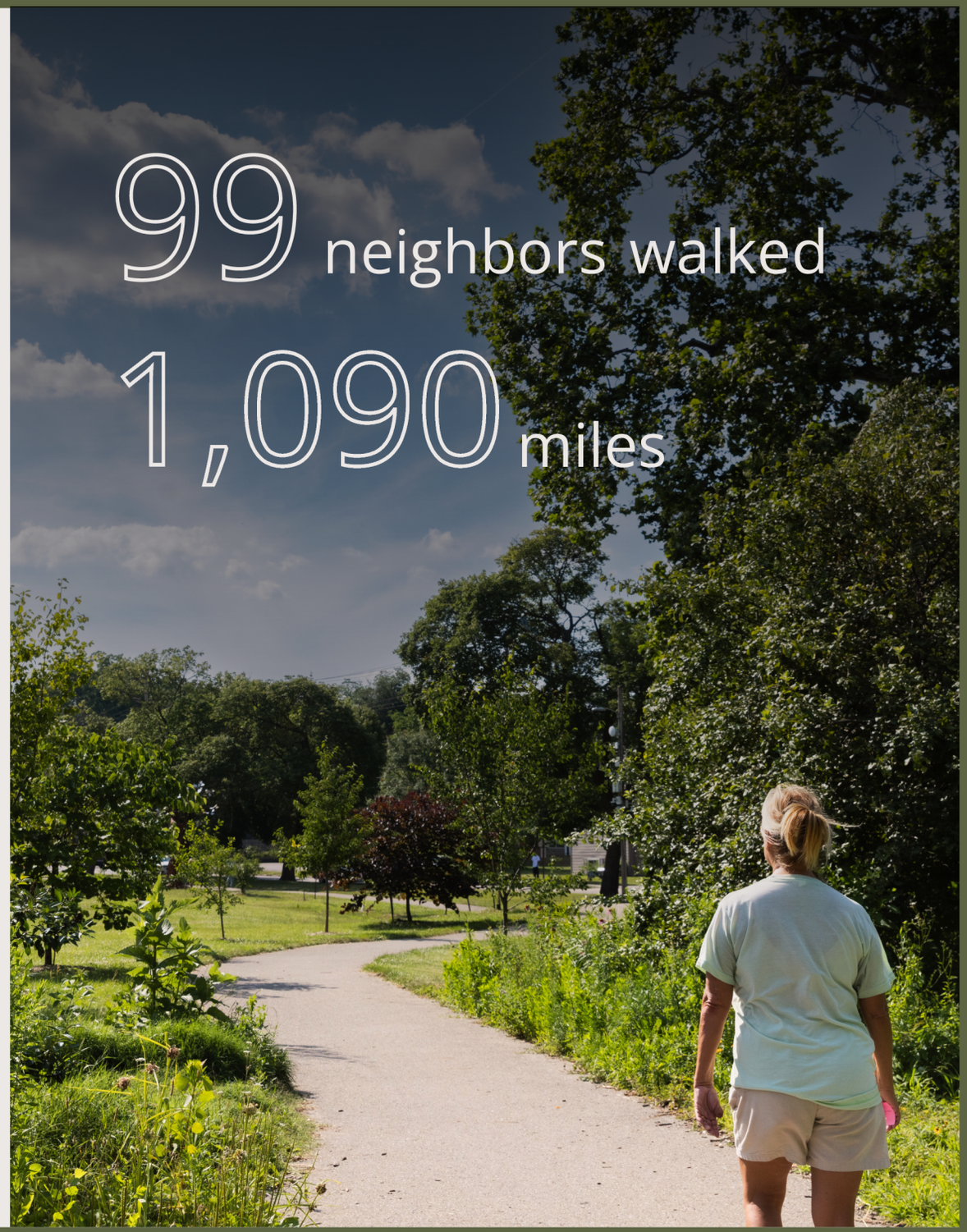


122 neighbors

received support with other types of needs, like resume building, job searching, referrals to legal resources, and free hygiene kits

Market Walk

Market Walk is a creative food-and-fitness program that is designed to improve overall health by increasing physical activity, fresh produce consumption, and social connectivity through a structured walking program. Cumulative miles are rewarded with tokens to be spent at the Allen Farmers Market, which supports healthy people, communities, and economies.





Senior Discovery Group

The Senior Discovery Group has been meeting every Wednesday for the last 25 years for ‘pretty good coffee and great conversation.' This program offers weekly enrichment for seniors with both educational and social programming. Activities include: international guest speakers from Michigan State University; elected officials presenting updates and receiving feedback; estate planning; bocce ball; crafts; age-friendly yoga, and more.

Hunter Park GardenHouse

Hunter Park GardenHouse is a neighborhood-based educational farm and community garden. Developed in 2008 as part of a community-led improvement plan for Hunter Park, the GardenHouse centers programming in three areas: home gardening education for all ages, fresh food access, and urban ecological restoration. Projects include a robust workshop series, the Urban Gardener Certificate Course, a free-to-all community garden and orchard, produce grown for donation, and native wildflower gardens



Hunter Park GardenHouse donated

14,000

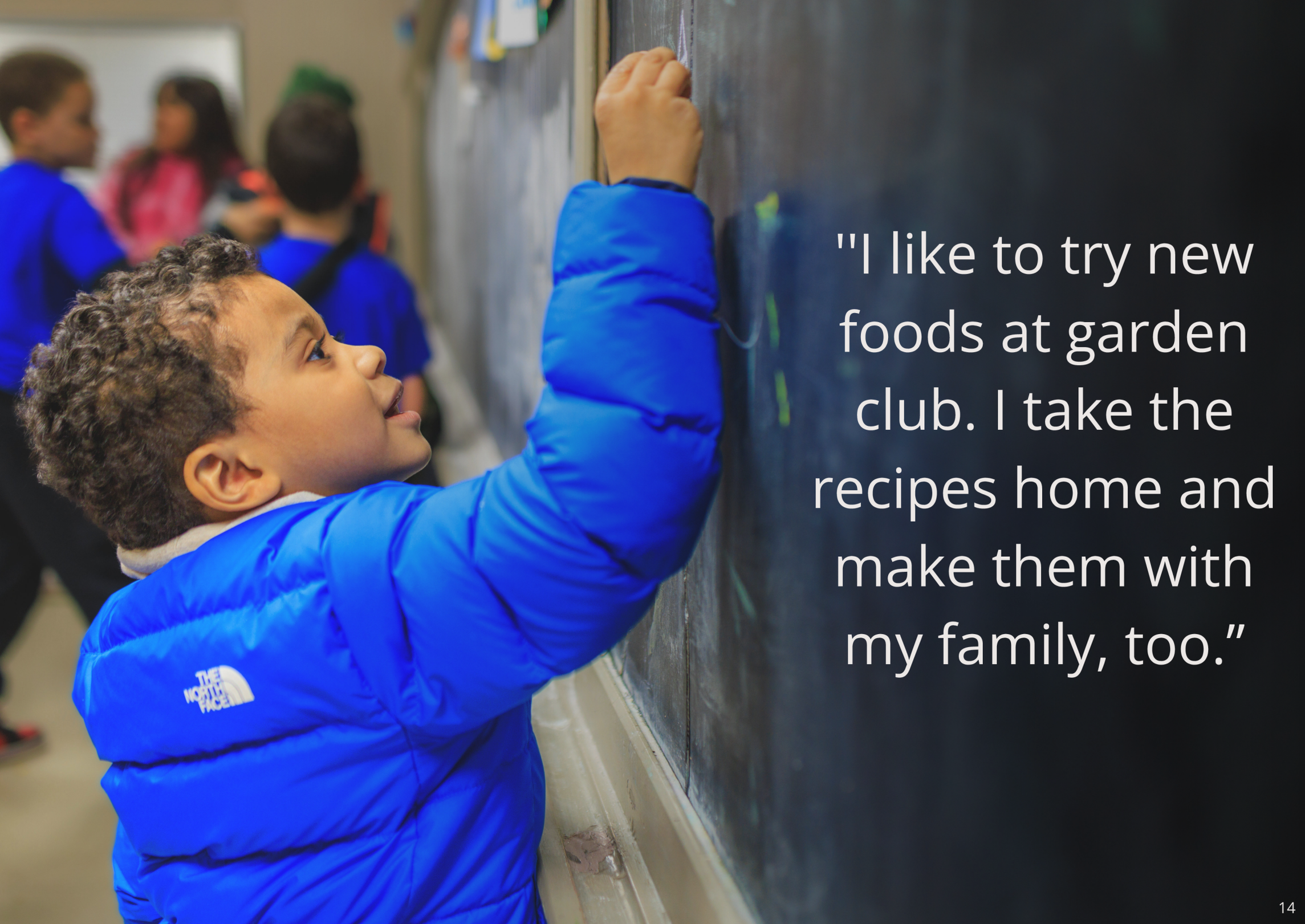
plant starts back into the neighborhood

Youth Programs

ANC operates two youth programs. Youth Service Corps is a community-driven, youth-led job and life skill development program for neighbors between the ages of 11-17. Take Root Garden Club is a curriculum-based gardening and nutrition education program for youth ages 5-10.

A combination of hands-on and assessment-based learning guides the city's youngest neighbors through topics related to health, nutrition, job readiness, the arts, native plants, entrepreneurship, and urban gardening.




"I like to try new foods at garden club. I take the recipes home and make them with my family, too."



The Allen Farmers Market

The Allen Farmers Market – the first market in the state of Michigan to accept SNAP benefits back in 2005 – is a neighbor-crafted solution to a systemic issue: food insecurity. Featuring locally grown, raised, and prepared foods as well as live entertainment and seasonal festivals, this year-round market offers a vibrant space for neighbors to connect with one another and community resources.

The Allen Farmers Market supported

60

farmers, food producers, and artists, keeping dollars circulating within our local economy.

The market had a total of

15,332

visits, enhancing food security, promoting seasonal eating, and supporting social connectivity.



Breadbasket Food Pantry



Breadbasket Food Pantry is a free food distribution program that provides thousands of pounds of fruit, vegetables, bread, and other goods to approximately 120 families every week.

While the goal of Breadbasket is to provide emergency food to neighbors who are experiencing hunger, ANC is in a unique position to expand this impact by connecting neighbors to additional programs and services that may enhance their lives.

722 families received

137,187

pounds of food

Incubator Kitchens

The Incubator Kitchen Program utilizes commercial shared-use kitchens to help scale production and solidify operations for new food businesses. Since 2014, 103 entrepreneurs have moved through this pipeline. The shared-use model lowers both risk and cost of entry, provides access to one-on-one mentorship, trains in food cost analysis and labor controls, provides food safety training and certification, and assists in building standard operating procedures. The kitchens also offer free career and workforce training as well as an educational workshop series.





"Through the Incubator Kitchens program, I have blossomed as a chef and also as a business and brand. The shared space model has given me the opportunity to rub elbows with various chefs and pick the brains of ANC staff, while preparing for the Maker Showcase Dinners and teaching cooking classes to the community has not only not only improved my culinary and hospitality techniques, but has helped me grow in confidence.

ANC's support - specifically that of Matt Jones - has also allowed Poppa's Cookbook to incorporate community-minded programs into our day-to-day. *ABLE Allies* lets us provide job training and employment support to adults with disabilities, and our *Pay it Forward program* provides the chance for customers to pre-purchase meals for neighbors in need.

None of this would have been possible without ANC. And for that, I'm thankful. I'm grateful. I'm blessed."

Eric King
Chef and Owner of Poppa's Cookbook

Veggie Box

Veggie Box is a multi-farm Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program – a subscription to local food – that unites dozens of farmers and food producers to feed a common community. The goal is to have long-term impacts on mid-Michigan's food system: substantial economic benefits, access to nutritionally-dense foods, and a stronger sense of place and belonging. Veggie Box prioritizes eating foods that are grown and produced by family, friends, and neighbors, and in turn nurtures more thoughtful relationships between food, land, and community.



Veggie Box purchased

$207,000

of local food from

36

mid-Michigan growers and food producers in order to fulfill

672

memberships



In addition to its regular programming, ANC served as a venue for

74

events

These events were either organized by community partners or via private rentals, and ranged from weddings to expungement fairs and neighborhood townhalls to concerts.


Maker
Kitchen

Allen Place

In 2018, ANC purchased the blighted complex that it had been housed in for the last two decades and began the process of converting it into a comprehensive community space; in 2021, Allen Place was born. Allen Place builds upon the legacy of ANC, serving as a continuation of its health, housing, and food related programming. For the last several years, Allen Place has offered 21 mixed-income apartments, the Allen Community Health Center, the Eastside Lansing Food Co-op, and of course, ANC.

In 2025, Allen Place grew. The block celebrated the opening of a pharmacy, an essential hub for accessible healthcare in the neighborhood. By December, ANC also completed construction of a housing co-op. This space will offer twelve private bedrooms and a shared living space, providing affordable, secure, and community-driven housing.



Board of Directors

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Sister of Mercy

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GardenHouse
Manager



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& Food Pantry
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Abie Kopacz

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Matt Jones

Kitchens & Facilities
Coordinator



Sharyl Allen

Facilities
Worker



Gary Storms

Maintenance
Worker



Honoring Allen Neighborhood Center's

Volunteers, Sponsors, Funders, and Donors

Volunteers

Our volunteers dedicate their time, energy, and skills to the mission and vision of Allen Neighborhood Center. These are our community leaders; the front-line people who make the health and connectivity of the neighborhood a personal commitment. They help create an environment that supports shared responsibility for our children, elders, and families.




1,198 volunteers served
10,838 hours



Naming Sponsors

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Individual focus. Collective strength.

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Ingham County Controllers Office

Ingham County Health Department

Jackson National Life

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Kroger Foundation

Lansing Area Community Trust

Lansing Area Federal Credit Union

Lansing Board of Water & Light

Lansing Common Football Club

McLaren Greater Lansing

McLaren Health Plan

MI State Housing Development Authority

Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

Michigan Fitness Foundation

Michigan Health Endowment Fund

PNC Bank

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Designed by Kat Logan