

## Church World Service Blankets Provide Hope

Communities in Michigan prepare for long, cold winters of ice and snow, sometimes starting as early as mid-November. Last year was no exception. Following a heavy snow storm, the small town of Berrien Springs, Michigan once again had people in a housing crisis looking for ways to keep warm.

“We had a family of five come to Neighbor to Neighbor looking for ways to keep their family warm and we could only give them 2 blankets. It just broke my heart that we didn’t have enough blankets for each member of the family to have one of their own,” said Laura Meyer, Executive Director of Neighbor to Neighbor.

Neighbor to Neighbor, a ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Community Services has been a good neighbor of the Berrien Springs community and surrounding counties since the 1920’s. They assist individuals and families in crisis, focusing first on the physical needs of families. Their faith is the motivation for their ministry. They use Galatians 5:14 as their guiding scripture:

**For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”**

“Our clients come to us from a variety of circumstances. Because of our faith, we follow Christ’s example of meeting people where they are, so we focus on providing for their physical needs first,” said Meyer.

Berrien Springs is a generous community. Neighbors to Neighbor receive donations from the members of the community that allow individuals and families to have the items they need in a housing crisis.

“God is good. We just look at ourselves as the person in the middle, passing the items on to people who need them the most,” said Meyer.

“However, often times we don’t receive enough blankets for the requests we receive. This is always a challenge as we are preparing to distribute the supplies for the long, Michigan winter.”

Because of our generous congregations, Church World Service provided 210 CWS Blankets to Neighbors to Neighbor for their clients. These CWS Blankets are wool, so they help to provide warmth on a cold winter night. “We are thankful for the faithful congregations that provided these wool blankets for families in need. People of faith are so generous and really do love their neighbors,” said Laura Meyer, Executive Director of Neighbors to Neighbors.



“Many churches in Michigan and around the country have been supporting the ministry of CWS for many years. Each year, hundreds of churches host a CWS Blanket Sunday. It is nice to see that some of the CWS Blankets have been donated here in Michigan,” said Rev, Lary D. Jackson, Senior Engagement Specialist for Church World Service.

In addition to providing essentials for daily living to the members of their communities, Neighbors to Neighbors also promotes self-sufficiency through educational programs. None of these ministries are possible without a strong volunteer base. Neighbors to Neighbors is blessed with volunteers and donors who have a desire to help people in need. Their motto is “Volunteers are love in motion!”

Laura often reminds her volunteers of a quote by author Ellen G. White. This quote was used for inspiration while forming the Neighbors to Neighbors ministry.

*“Who is my neighbor?’ is forever answered. Christ has shown that our neighbor does not mean merely one of the church or faith to which we belong. It has no reference to race, color, or class distinction. Our neighbor is every person who needs our help. Our neighbor is every soul who is wounded and bruised by the adversary. Our neighbor is everyone who is the property of God.”—Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 503.*

“Sometimes when we distribute a CWS Blanket or other physical item that a person needs, we need to remember that we are giving hope. We need to continue to give people hope. Thank you to Church World Service for making this hope possible.” said Laura.