

## **Good Neighbors**

### **Bringing Hope through Home Repairs**

For over 30 years, Good Neighbors Home Repair has been making homes warmer, safer, drier, and healthier for qualified low-income families who cannot afford critical home repairs. Our mission is to serve and care for people in need by making their homes more livable, following Christ's teaching to love our neighbor. Our goal is to live out our faith by helping those in need in our communities by bringing them hope for a better future in a very practical way, by repairing their homes. We believe that all people deserve to live in a warm, safe, dry and healthy home.

#### **Who do we serve?**

We serve a diverse clientele in the three counties we work in. Southern Chester and Lancaster Counties in Pennsylvania are mostly rural areas with farms and small towns. Income for farm workers and retail employees remains flat. Families are struggling and resources to help are slim. New Castle County, DE is more urban and suburban with concentrations of older homes with low-income homeowners passing them down to their kids as their only asset. Both groups have trouble affording critical home repairs and can benefit from the hope that comes from a helping hand.



Over two-thirds of the families we serve have a female head of household. These are often single moms with kids who are working but not earning more than the cost of their mortgage payments, food, clothing and medicine expenses. We helped Susan whose husband left her due to the stress of coping with a very sick child. She moved into her parents' manufactured home with her family, which needed a new roof, siding, safe entrance steps, and a few small rooms added to the interior. Good Neighbors brought them hope

when she felt there was none.

Over half of the families we help have senior residents. Many are living alone in older homes that need significant repairs. If they are living on just Social Security, they will not be able to afford these repairs and will be forced to live in unsafe, unhealthy homes. Good Neighbors has started a program called Healthy Homes/Aging in Place for these seniors. We provide grab bars, tub cutouts, wheelchair ramps and any other repair that will improve their mobility. We recently helped Ann, who was living alone and was being helped by her son. She couldn't step over the tub and so had not showered for many months. We provided her with a tub cutout which is a cost-effective solution to lower her entry and added grab bars. Now she can shower safely again.



We have a small but growing population of veterans that we serve. We have partnered with a research group that includes the Universities of Pennsylvania and Delaware who are using the CAPABLE (Community Aging in Place – Advancing Better Living for Elders) model from Johns Hopkins to show the benefits of helping disabled veterans through home repairs. They are getting in contact with patients from local VA Hospitals who need help but cannot afford home repairs and Good Neighbors is supplying a certified Aging in Place repair person who can determine the needed repairs to improve the home environment for the veteran. We put in a wheelchair ramp for John so that he can now safely leave his house to go to the VA to get medical care.



## Our Approach to Care

Good Neighbors was started in 1992 by a handyman in a local church who saw the need to help those around him. He asked a few friends to help him, and they went out on weekends to make home repairs for their neighbors in need. We have continued this model and refined it to where we have an extremely efficient process and delivered high quality home repairs for 231 families last year.



We employ experienced Project Managers who can accomplish repairs quickly at professional standards. Past surveys of homeowners after repairs are completed score us at 4.9 out of 5 for client satisfaction. We involve a significant number of volunteers, especially for roof replacements, who can work safely under the direction of the Project Manager. These volunteers gain new skills and benefit from knowing they are giving back to the community. We utilize specialized contractors and local material suppliers, all who give us discounted pricing.

This model of using in-house Project Managers, volunteers, discounts on contractors and materials, and a controlled scope of only critical repairs allows us to provide repairs at a very low cost. Our average home has all its repair needs met for less than \$5000. We have made roofing a subspecialty because keeping a home dry is the most critical repair. We even purchased a hydraulic roofing buggy to increase safety and efficiency on the roof. Considering that we replace 30 roofs or more each year, that average cost shows that we are significantly efficient. As a result, our donation dollars **help more families**. Our donors see that happening and have decided to increase donations each year. Now we are seeing local and state governments deciding to fund Good Neighbors because their dollars will help more people by giving them to us versus trying to run a similar program themselves. See chart attached.

### **Community Partnerships**

Good Neighbors has always worked with local churches, businesses and contractors to meet the needs of the local community. We have close relationships with 20 local churches who provide us with volunteers, referrals and funds for repairs. Every year, four to six churches send their youth to a summer camp that we run for local youth groups to learn repair skills, teamwork, and compassion for those in need around us. For our yearly gala, we often have 20-25 businesses as sponsors raising over \$50k. Also we have 8-10 businesses come out each year for our corporate work weeks so repair 4-5 homes in two weeks.

Last year, we were made aware of an opportunity called the Whole Home Repair Program that was being offered in the state of Pennsylvania. Chester County decided to utilize these funds and received \$2.7m for three years of home repairs. We joined forces with Good Works and Chester County Habitat for Humanity in a coalition to work together to use these funds to help as many families as possible in Chester County. Together we were granted the full \$2.7m. To date we have completed 39 homes with the goal of repairing 166 by the end of 2026. This is the first time that the three major home repair organizations in Chester County have agreed to work collaboratively to impact many families in need. We can see this being a template for future joint efforts.

Two years ago, Good Neighbors developed a joint program in New Castle County, DE to help needy seniors who were living in unsafe and unhealthy homes. We developed a partnership with the area's primary health insurance company, Highmark Blue Cross, and the largest healthcare provider, Christiana Care. Highmark provided \$100k and Christiana Care provided referrals of discharged patients so that we could help 40 seniors who are leaving the hospital after surgery or illness and need care at home. The Christiana Care social worker who sees the patient and their living conditions and rehabilitation needs then contacts us to provide a wheelchair ramp so they can safely leave the house or grab bars and a tub cutout so they can safely shower. These are low-income seniors who cannot afford these basic safety repairs.

We have completed the repairs for 40 seniors and have shown that falls have been reduced by 93% and ER visits by 76%. Christiana Care has invested another \$100k to help 40 more seniors because they see the value of this work. We have set a goal to increase funding to \$500k by adding in two new foundations and two new insurance and healthcare providers to expand this effort in the three counties we serve. By partnering with local companies, we have demonstrated that a small investment in safety can save considerable money for healthcare providers and patients as well as reduce pain and suffering and improve the quality of life of those we help. Local and state governments are starting to take notice of this effort.

We have maintained a close relationship with local and state government in our area. One example is shown above with the Whole Home Repair Program in Chester County. In New Castle County, we are considered, along with New Castle County Habitat for Humanity, as one of the main providers of home repairs for low-income homeowners. When we first considered working in New Castle County in 2016, we approached the county officials to understand the need for this work. They told us that they had a backlog of 900 people and that they were swamped. We raised our own funds initially and started with 6 homes in 2016 and we have grown that to 158 in just 7 years. Last fiscal year the county gave us \$240k to repair homes since they see us as a major partner to accomplish their goals in the county. A similar investment is coming to Good Neighbors this coming fiscal year.

## **Impact**

Good Neighbors has increased its impact on the local community every year for the past 10 years. More families now have safe homes that eliminate slips and falls and the injuries that come from those. Kids can live in healthy homes that are free from mold so that they do not develop asthma or other debilitating illnesses. Single moms can live in warm homes that keep their families from the dangers of portable heaters or gas stoves as heaters. Veterans have dry homes with new roofs that prevent damage that could lead to foreclosure. We are on track to achieve our goal this year of helping 250 families live better lives by having adequate housing.

Recent surveys that we have conducted with homeowners we have served. Here are the results:

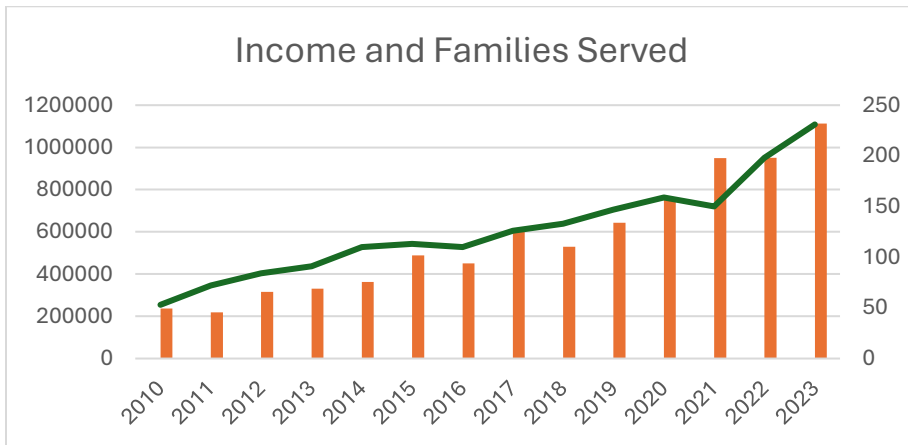
- 49% said they saw a reduction in their utility bills
- 70% said they can now independently maintain their homes
- Twice as many homeowners said they felt comfortable having guests in their homes after their repairs than before the repairs
- 80% are more optimistic about the future

People's lives are being changed. Families are staying together. Their costs are going down.

Good Neighbors is a faith-based organization, and we take our faith seriously. We understand that many of the people we serve are lonely and hurting, many for reasons beyond home repair issues. We always take the time to talk with our homeowners and try to give them referrals to other organizations that might help them with food insecurity or transportation issues. We also care for their spiritual health. If they are open to our offers, we will pray for them, listen to their heartfelt emotional needs, and offer to help them find a faith community that can be a support to them. Almost all people we serve are open to this, and many are now going to local churches that help them grow and prosper.

Good Neighbors is excited about the future opportunities to grow and impact even more families. We are considering new areas where there are no groups helping with home repairs. And we are planning to grow the programs we have started. We are currently creating a 3-year strategic plan with the goal to double the income to \$2M and the families served to 400 by the end of 2027. We are blessed to be able to serve so many in our community.

## Attachments



### Letter from JoAnn Bruch, social worker for Christiana Healthcare

I wanted to share something with you. Over the past week I have visited with 3 different patients that had work completed by Good Neighbors. All 3 of the patients (and their families) were THRILLED with the work you all completed and were very appreciative of how it has helped them care for their loved ones. As a clinician visiting the home, it was sooooo nice to see the results of some of the referrals I have submitted. The work you have done, whether large or small, has made life alerting changes for families. From the bottom of my heart – THANK YOU!!!!!!

[Link to Good Neighbors 2023 Annual Report](#)

[Link to Good Neighbors Newspaper Article](#)