

The Journal

2020 a year of loss and lessons for CCAP/ Loaves and Fishes

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MARTINSBURG — Though leadership with CCAP/Loaves and Fishes describes 2020 as a year marked with losses and consequential, bittersweet successes for the community service-focused organization, it is looking forward to bringing lessons learned into its work in 2021.

Organized in 1982 by 14 area churches, which has now grown into a network of 52 churches providing local support, Beverly Van Metre, president of the CCAP/Loaves and Fishes board of directors, said 2020 was a year unlike any other in the organization's nearly 30-year existence.

"I don't know about the rest of you, but I have grown so weary of hearing the two terms 'in these uncertain times' and 'the normal,'" Van Metre said. "Yet, I realize that we have all been

looking for a way to define what happened to us in 2020 and continues into this year, and the same is true for CCAP. It was a year of great challenges and a year of great rewards.”

Sharing the details of the past year in its “Report of 2020” via Zoom meeting Thursday evening, Van Metre described the initial struggles CCAP faced when the pandemic and its various restrictions set in, including having to reconfigure how it could safely package and distribute its food supplies and how to operate and hold meetings on CCAP matters.

Van Metre said, aside from those hurdles, CCAP also felt immense loss in 2020, with the retirement of two longtime volunteers and the unexpected passing of the organization’s treasurer and another board member.

“We had much to learn from all of our losses, and I hope we continue to learn moving forward,” Van Metre said. “The biggest blessing has been the response from the community. We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of the Berkeley County community and the faith and love they have bestowed on us as an organization who tries to help the neediest among us.”

Taking these lessons in stride, Van Metre said 2020 provided several successes, including growth in its supplemental food services, which allows clients up to 12 visits for food a year at 30-day intervals to receive boxes of food packed based on household size.

Van Metre said food donations come from a number of sources such as local churches, food drives, the Mountaineer Food Bank, supermarkets, the Feeding America program, farmers and gardeners, farm markets and individual donations.

According to Van Metre, in 2020, roughly 132,374 pounds of food were received by CCAP, and 119,410 pounds of food were distributed to those in need, translating to about 90.2% of the food received by CCAP given out in a timely manner to people in the area in need.

Van Metre added about 156 Thanksgiving boxes were delivered in 2020, and 2,405 food visits were made.

In addition to food support, Van Metre said CCAP was able to continue providing financial assistance services, wherein CCAP helps those in the area who need help with paying past-due rent, electric and water; prescription copays; bus vouchers; vouchers for medical and employment appointments; work clothing and shoes; emergency dental visit referrals; referrals for eye exams and glasses; firewood for heating; propane for cooking; and heating fuel assistance.

Van Metre said CCAP not only provided a number of services in 2020 but was able to establish several community collaborations such as its collaboration with Faith Community Coalition for the Homeless, signed in March of last year, in which CCAP provides a two-day, two-person supply of ready-to-eat food to FCCH volunteers to provide to homeless clients being placed in temporary housing.

Van Metre said the collaboration was able to provide food supplies to 40 adults and 20 children.

Van Metre said CCAP also collaborated with West Virginia University Medicine to provide leaflets of information — including recipes, health information and tips for utilizing different foods — in the boxes delivered by CCAP.

The meeting closed with the votes to fill three board vacancies and the treasurer role.

Van Metre said CCAP is grateful for all of the support and success it saw in 2020 and looks forward to continuing to utilize those lessons learned in their work.

For more information on CCAP and its services, visit [ccaploavesandfishes.com](https://www.ccaploavesandfishes.com)

Journal Article: https://www.journal-news.net/journal-news/2020-a-year-of-loss-and-lessons-for-ccap-loaves-and-fishes/article_6a3ebb91-bab2-5de6-81d8-ed2a0e8ef116.html