

Highlights of 2019

Celebrating Our Champions

By Anne Byl

On April 12, 2019, we celebrated our first Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. As a volunteer (or, as we like to say, “champion”), you may have heard, “We appreciate all you do” repeatedly. However, you may never know the impact you had on someone’s life by sharing a kind word or spending time to stop and listen as someone shares their loneliness or pain, making their burden a little more bearable. You have given generously of your skills, abilities, compassion and humor, and yet you ask for nothing in return.

Because we see the sacrifices our champions make, we wanted to show our appreciation by celebrating them with a catered meal, gifts and games. What a memorable night with laughter and smiles in abundance, as we thanked God for all of them.

Our champions are an amazing support system that we consider part of our family. Here, they receive the reward of comradeship, social activity and lasting friendships with other champions whom they might never have met otherwise.



New Youth Program: “The Pursuit”

By Phillip Santellan

The Ladder established a new youth program in 2019! “The Pursuit” takes a holistic approach, guiding youth to build caring relationships with peers and trained adult mentors, encounter Biblical Truth, and grow to fully pursue God. We use a powerfully effective series of guided group discussions (called “One Life”) for creating communication and building relationships between youth and trained mentors. We gathered for our first celebration in December and were so encouraged that mothers, fathers, siblings, and even friends showed up to love and support the youth. We are so excited to see what God will produce in these youth, who have chosen to invest in themselves and each other. Be in prayer as we continue to establish a one-on-one mentorship component for “The Pursuit.”



Fall Family Festival

By Holly Baxter

In 2019, we decided to start a new fall tradition at The Ladder that families could look forward to each year. Our first Fall Family Celebration on October 24, sponsored by Thrivent Financial & Trinity Lutheran Church of New Era, was a huge success. The festival attracted more than 120 people for snacks, drinks, games and prizes. The staff, along with 24 champions, had a blast leading the games and giving out prizes to the kids.

Personal Investment for Members

By Brian Beckman

Last October, The Ladder prayerfully made a change to collect an investment fee from our members, to begin the first steps in becoming self-sustaining. It was always The Ladder’s plan to be self-sufficient, allowing God to use others to share in this exciting ministry. We desire our members and champions to move from being participants to becoming engaged in helping – and ultimately owning – The Ladder’s vision. Part of owning is making a commitment to invest and spread the vision to others, so they catch the excitement of being a part of this awesome God thing that is happening in Shelby, MI. We are thankful for the many who are choosing ownership by spreading the word and investing financially in The Ladder. Over the next few years, we will encourage others to join us in partnering with what God is doing at the The Ladder.

DTE Holiday Dinner

By Michelle Deuling

A huge “thank you” goes to the 17 volunteers and five staff members who served 103 folks from the Shelby community at the third annual DTE Holiday Dinner on December 19, 2019. The delicious AgeWell meal was sponsored with a grant from DTE. This festive event began with a word by The Ladder’s Youth Director Phillip Santellan, followed by a stellar performance by the Shelby High School choir, piano music and Christmas carols by Judie McGovern and Carmine Osborne, and bingo with Rich Eitnrear and Noreen Campagna. DTE gave each attendee a special pair of socks, and we also raffled off nearly 60 door prizes. We would like extend our thanks to all who donated the gifts, making this day extra special.

Our Friends

By Michelle Deuling

Some people might wonder what puts the “community” in The Ladder Community Center. In 2019, I witnessed many acts of kindness here at The Ladder that will help clarify this.

One day I saw Dale and Pat Thebo working to finish up the cribbage boards they had repaired or replaced. (They hand-painted each little peg!)

Another time, Bill Ramey donated his hand-crafted wooden ornaments (not just a couple but over a hundred!) for The Ladder to use as gifts for other members and champions at Christmastime.

Then there are the many intricately crocheted doilies that Zella Simmons donated as bingo prizes and gifts for our champions.

We gratefully accepted many donations from Kim Stone, such as the afghans that were given out at the DTE-AgeWell Holiday Dinner, a pencil sharpener, printer paper, and zip-lock bags (plus, many other items that were on our monthly “Wish List”).

These represent just a few of the many individuals that are constantly donating something to The Ladder! We thank God for not just those listed here, but for each member that thinks of us and finds a way to be a part of our community!

2019 PARTICIPATION

273

Average visits per month by different registered members

1,193

Average total visits per month

60

Different groups used The Ladder for community events, with a total of **2,474 people**

51

Different groups used The Ladder for private parties, with a total of **1,869 people**

2,346

Total documented visits by guests

14,313

Total visits by registered members for 2019

Reflections in the Word

By Brian Beckman

Exodus 19:3-6

³Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, “This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: ⁴‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. ⁵Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, ⁶you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”

When I read this, I heard God speak to me: “Brian, this is what you are to say to the alumni of Shelby and the people of Oceana. You see what I have allowed to happen to Shelby and other communities throughout Michigan. But I built The Ladder and brought The Ladder staff into the fold so you could be bold and make disciples. Now if you want to see a change in Shelby, you must obey me and make disciples. Then, out of all these communities, you will be my treasured possession. Although all these communities are mine, you will be for me a holy community of saints. These are words you are to tell the alumni of Shelby, people of Shelby, and people of Oceana.”

Our Mission

The Ladder is dedicated to impacting families by guiding people to love and follow Jesus: read God’s word, live in step with the Holy Spirit, and make disciples.

2019 MEALS SERVED

6,542

Young at Heart Lunches (AgeWell)

1,777

Youth School year Suppers (School)

2,388

Youth School year Snacks (School)

767

Youth Summer Lunches (School)

159

Adult Summer Lunches (School)

11,63

Total Meals Served for 2019

Say
What?

HERE IS WHAT OUR MEMBERS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE LADDER....

It's a place to grow in the Lord because of a variety of different views that can be discussed that make me think about what I believe. - Dave, Young at Heart Member & Champion

"The most prominent thing I've learned at The Ladder is to always be respectful to other people." - Parker, Youth Member

"There are sincere people at The Ladder. They have changed my life!" - Thomas, Young at Heart Member & Champion

"I really enjoy the meals. The scripture and prayer before the meals help us have a better relationship with and understanding of the Lord." - Ruth, Young at Heart Member

"My favorite thing about The Ladder is the mentors that come to spend time with me." - Reid, Youth Member

"This place gives me a reason to get up in the morning!" - Ron, Young at Heart Member, Youth Mentor, & Champion

"My favorite thing at the Ladder would be... everything! The Lord sent me here, and I don't know what I'd do without it. Get to The Ladder as fast as you can!" - Pat, Young at Heart Member

"I've been learning more about God. The people are really nice. If you have a question, they are willing to answer." - Sebastian, Youth Member

DID YOU KNOW



- Has 59 active champions (volunteers) and one staff member who served 3,019 hours in 2019. The value of this is \$76,773 if we paid them.¹
- Has two staff members who worked 1,083 unpaid hours in 2019. The value of this is \$28,201 if we paid them.²
- People designate The Ladder as their birthday gift or memorial when they pass away.
- People with SilverSneakers and Prime fitness benefits under their health insurance plans qualify for free membership at The Ladder.
- The Ladder is qualified to receive Thrivent gifts and grants.
- When you shop at smile.amazon.com, Amazon donates to The Ladder.

Use this link: smile.amazon.com/ch/47-2123160

¹Independent Sector, Michigan 2019: \$25.43 volunteer value per hour

²Indeed.com Michigan hourly wages of comparable jobs: \$26.04 staff value per hour

Our Vision

The Ladder is a friendly, intergenerational and ethnically diverse community center aimed at knowing and serving our neighbors and uniting our community around Jesus, so that lives are transformed.

Give Generously

*Let your good deeds
shine out for all to see,
so that everyone
will praise your
heavenly Father.*

Matthew 5:16



A HUGE THANK YOU

to everyone who donated
items to The Ladder in 2019!
The value of these items totaled
\$10,706

Item Requests:

- #6 Peel & Seal Envelopes
- Postage Stamps
- Bingo Prizes
- White Cardstock (8.5x11)
- Cream Cardstock (8.5x11)

Monetary Investment Requests:

- Newsletter Sponsors (3 sponsors at \$100 each)
- Cost of Grounds Maintenance (any amount is welcome)
- Cost of Printer Ink (\$118-\$136 each)
- Cost of Shelving Unit (\$100)

Contact the Oceana County Community Foundation (231) 861-8335 to fund these items for The Ladder



- Wishes \$500-\$1,500: 4 iPads for The Pursuit
- Wishes \$1,500+: Parking lot replacement



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

TLCC is a 501(c)(3) organization in compliance with the IRS code. All gifts to The Ladder are deductible to the fullest extent allowed by the law.

Donation Options:

- One time gift \$ _____
- I/We want to invest monthly:
 - \$100 \$50 \$25 \$10 \$5 Other \$ _____

Please make checks payable to:
The Ladder Community Center (TLCC)