



# THE BETHEL BEACON

FEBRUARY 2025

## FROM MANG SONNA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In the first part of last month, we were busy preparing ourselves to welcome refugees who were supposed to fly to Kansas City from different parts of the world. Their travels were booked and confirmed, and we met with their jubilant family member(s) who could not wait to hold them in their arms. We were thrilled to see the smiling faces of those who waited for their loved ones to join them. Arrangements were made to welcome the new refugees so they don't walk out of the airport alone. But the executive orders from the president changed everything suddenly, and every smile turned into tears. The refugees, their US families, and my staff are devastated by the suspension of the refugee resettlement program. An upbeat refugee who was **waiting for his wife to join him on January 23rd** lost all hope! We cried with him as none of us knew when the refugee resettlement program would resume.

Apart from the refugee program, all the other programs are in full swing. The sewing class has started with 14 new students. They are poised to unlock their full potential, embracing new skills in a space they lovingly describe as a haven of happiness and inclusivity, where everyone feels valued and supported. The after-school program students have come back, and our students are happy to see their friends and the Bethel staff. Our high school students look forward to visiting Judson University in Elgin, IL to have a first-hand experience on a college campus from February 15-17 to learn about college, attend classes, and sleep in the students' dormitory. We are thankful to the pastors of Area 5 of the Great Rivers Region for inviting our students to join the trip.

Thank you for your continued prayer and financial support of the Bethel ministry. We need you more than ever as funding has gone down.

*You are invited!*

Join us as we celebrate 114 years of service to our community!

*Bethel Neighborhood Center Birthday Gala*

**Friday, April 4, 2025**  
6:00pm-6:30pm - Facility Tour  
6:30pm - Dinner

Registration Information & QR: \$100 Per Ticket

Location:  
Bethel Neighborhood Center  
14 S 7th St. KCK 66101  
Contact Mang Sonna @  
msonna@bethelcenter.org

### ~ Bethel 114th Birthday Gala! ~

The Bethel Neighborhood Center has stood as a pillar of hope and support to the underserved and food-insecure families in our community for over 114 years!

We are celebrating our 114th Birthday with a **Gala and Silent Auction on April 4th at 6:30 p.m.**

The proceeds from this event will be used to support our After-School and Summer Programs. There were 138 students (Grades 1-12) who benefited from these programs in 2024. We are anticipating higher enrollment in 2025.

Please contact our office for information about how to sponsor, donate silent auction items, or secure your seat at the Gala. We are thankful to community partners like you who help us keep moving forward and fulfilling our mission.

We hope to see you there!

## HIGHLIGHTING BETHEL VOLUNTEERS



Cathy Bull  
Oak Grove Assembly  
Roeland Park, KS

Cathy Bull has been a volunteer Instructor for the *Beginner Sewing Class* since October 2021. Cathy said that she loves watching the students learn new skills and advance from simple to more complex projects. It's an exciting time for the students at the end of the Program Period. They each receive a Certificate of Accomplishment, the sewing machine they learned on, fabric and a sewing kit.

### A STRONG START BY HAU LEIVANG, PD

The year began with a rough start as Kansas City faced "Snowmageddon," impacting our programs. But as the snow cleared, so did the energy and laughter of our students returning to Bethel. We are excited to welcome back every student from last year and see new interest, especially in our middle school program, with some new families picking up our after-school enrollment forms.

This year, we are prioritizing academic support by helping students complete homework while also fostering one-on-one relationships. Many of our students face challenges at home, and we aim to provide the structure and mentorship they need to thrive. In today's divided world, it's more important than ever to engage with young people, listen to their concerns, and make them feel valued. Bethel strives to be that safe space where every child feels heard and supported.

To continue this mission, we need volunteers—whether for tutoring, mentoring, or simply being a positive presence. If you're passionate about making a difference, join us in shaping a brighter future for our students and community.

### To Donate or learn more about us...

Bethel Neighborhood Center



14 S 7th St  
Kansas City, KS 66101

[www.bethelcenter.org](http://www.bethelcenter.org)  
913-371-8218



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## JANUARY PANTRY UPDATE

Our food pantry remains a vital resource for families facing food insecurity in our city. In January, we served 230 households, providing food to 468 adults, 140 seniors, and 347 children, including 68 babies who received diapers and baby wipes. The need in our community remains high, and we strive to be a beacon of hope during these challenging times.

Thank you, donors, volunteers, and partners for enabling us to serve with dignity and compassion. Join us in making a difference—through donations, volunteering, or spreading the word. Together, we can help and support those struggling financially but are on their way to self-sufficiency in our community.

### BE IN THE KNOW!

#### February 15-17

High school trip to Chicago

#### Wednesdays at 6 PM

Community Meal & Fellowship/Worship

#### Monday, February 17

President's Day - Bethel closed.

#### April 18

Good Friday - Bethel Closed

## PRAISE & PRAYER REQUESTS

- Praise God for helping us to overcome the challenges at work and in life - big and small.
- Praise God for the opportunity to serve as the hands and feet of Christ in our community.
- Praise God for those who volunteer to help with our seniors, sewing class, food pantry, and after-school programs.
- Pray for God's favor on America, wisdom and guidance for our new president and his administration.
- Pray for our Bethel board, staff, and volunteers, that they may serve with a renewed commitment and clear sense of purpose.
- Pray for the health and safety of all those whom we serve, as well as for continued community support and engagement to continue the work of Bethel Neighborhood Center.