A Message from our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

2019 was an exciting year for Baxter as we celebrated 50 years of building community from the corner of Bemis and Baxter. Five decades have allowed us to continue to live out our mission statement, “A Christian Response to Human Needs.”

Baxter has been and continues to be a place where “human beings” are treated with respect and dignity recognizing the racial and economic inequities within structures and systems that were part of our early years are still in need of transformation today. Baxter’s trusted place in our community and significant history within our city continues to inspire our love for our community and passion for justice and restoration which has been in our DNA throughout our 50 years.

Some of our 2019 highlights include:

Special hosted events which raised over $50,000 toward our BAX50-$500K Initiative and introducing more people to our work.

A record breaking Opening Doors Celebration in November raising $135,000!

Our legacy BAX50 Quilt which will be permanently on display at Baxter thanks to the beautiful response from so many of you!

Our first ever Herschell Turner Legacy Basketball Camp in June bringing over 125 kids for a day of gaining basketball skills and meeting Herschell Turner, Baxter’s first director!

Creating a pathway for our future with our next 3-5 year strategic plan thanks to the support of the Frey Foundation who underwrote the work of our consultant Bill Johnson.

Exceeding our BAX50-$500K goal raising almost $540,000

We also received a “Category VI LEGACY GIFT” from the Secchia Family Charitable Trust of $500,000 over this next decade- 2020-2030.

We are so very grateful to each of you for walking alongside us.

With deep appreciation from all of us,

Melanie Beelen
Executive Director (1996-2020)
Defining Our New Normal

Like everyone else, COVID19 has brought our world to a halt, turned it upside down and we now are trying to figure things out.

Starting this year out, we thought that by a couple of months ago we would have had this Celebratory Annual Report in your homes and in your hands.

Instead, we’ve been learning more about PPEs and Social Distancing - while defining our “New Normal” (it seems like now, those 3 terms are what is normal).

Here at Baxter we had to put some things on hold, like our Growing Roots Luncheon. We’ve also canceled events such as our Annual Fix Up Day. We reimagined what our Annual Edible Plant Sale looked like - more giveaways, less sale and we implemented online pre-orders for the first time ever. And now that the Stay Home, Stay Safe - Shelter in Place order is lifted, our Child Development Center will reopen for face-to-face education. (We’ve been doing some pretty cool things virtually.)

What hasn’t changed at Baxter is being a ready and available resource for our Neighbors.

We have REMAINED OPEN.

Our Marketplace is serving families daily to supply food, cleaning supplies, masks - and a familiar space. Our Health Clinic remains open to help field questions, see patients, take care of prescription refills and most importantly put our Neighbors at ease during a time that is so unsure. We have also partnered with the Kent County Health Department as a site host for COVID19 testing.

This is will be remembered in history as the time when we had to stay apart. Our goal at Baxter is to make it the time in which we came together...the underlying beauty of times like these is how community is able to come together and rise above circumstance.

We Are Baxter!

Sonja Forte
Chief Operations Officer
There are so many ways to volunteer at Baxter. No matter what your gifts and talents are, you can invest in others’ lives with us. Let’s explore together if you could how you can come alongside us!

Volunteers play an important part of Baxter’s service to the community. From doctors and dentists in our Clinics, helping hands organizing and restocking Marketplace shelves, to those who get their hands dirty weeding and planting in our greenhouse and garden, volunteers keep us moving forward.

Whether you are an individual or a group looking for a one-time or recurring volunteer opportunity, there’s something at Baxter for you!

Contact us at volunteer@baxtercommunitycenter.org to learn how to become involved.

Baxter Community Center relies on individual and business gifts to support its services, staff and facilities. A one-time or monthly gift goes a long ways toward providing a safe place to go, grow and know for our neighbors.

To find out more about the impact of your contribution and the many ways to give, visit bit.ly/givebax.

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Baxter Community Center is a 501(3)c organization. Your donation is tax deductible.
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