

North Gwinnett Co-Op Fight Hunger Build Hope



Fight Hunger Build Hope Campaign

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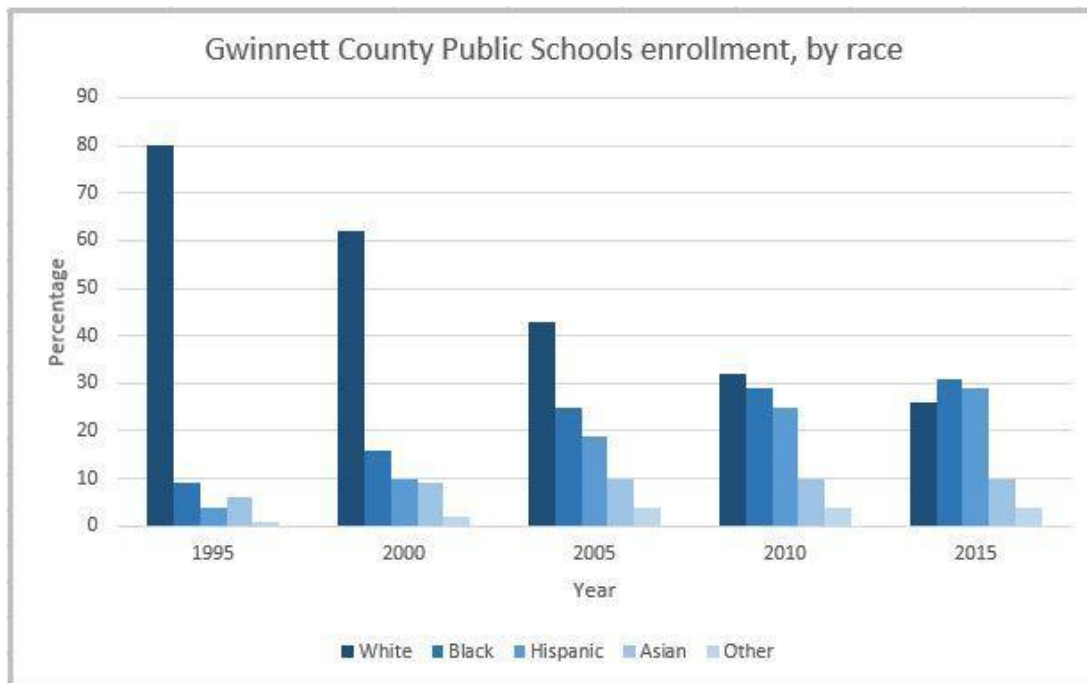
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Need

Gwinnett County is a growing metropolitan county located in the 12-county region of Metro Atlanta, Georgia. The United States Census estimates that there are 895,823 people living in Gwinnett County as of July 1, 2015. This is an 11.2 % increase over 2010. (United States Census Bureau, 2017) It is the second most populous county in Georgia. Overall, the county has a poverty rate of 12.6%. This rate has more than doubled since 2000 when the poverty rate was 5.6%. (United States Census Bureau, 2017)

In Gwinnett, the rate of child poverty is higher. In 2015 43,703 children representing 17.9% of the children in Gwinnett were living below the United States Poverty Level. (Kids Count Data Center, 2017)

The demographics in Gwinnett are changing. The once homogenous community has quickly become one of the most diverse counties in the state of Georgia. The increasing diversity can be shown by the changed Public County School enrollment percentages.



Atlanta Journal and Constitution *A look at the changing racial makeup of Gwinnett's schools* June 8, 2016.

The 2010 Census data shows that Georgia's poverty rate was the third highest in the country with Gwinnett County having almost 14% of its population living below the poverty. Gwinnett County also has the 3rd highest total homeless population in the state of Georgia, following the City of Atlanta (Fulton) and Chatham counties. (Georgia Department of Community Affairs, 2015 Report on Homelessness)

In 2016, 54% of all Gwinnett County school children were eligible for free or reduced lunches. That's almost 96,000 children, enough to fill over 1,370 school buses. (Yeswecangwinnett.com)

In the North Gwinnett communities of Buford, Sugar Hill and Suwanee these same trends are affecting the community's ability to serve the growing number of families in need. It is estimated that 16,000 children in North Gwinnett participate in the School lunch program. In 2015 the percentage of residents with income below the federal poverty level in Buford, GA was 24.7%. This means almost one in four residents are experiencing poverty in Buford. In Sugar Hill, it was 16% and in Suwanee it was 11%. (City-Data.com)

To meet the growing need, in 2017, the Co-Op served more than 16,000 people representing a growth of 13% over 2016. Of those served in 2017, 41% (5,959) were children, 37% (5,381) were adults and 22% (3,131) were senior citizens.

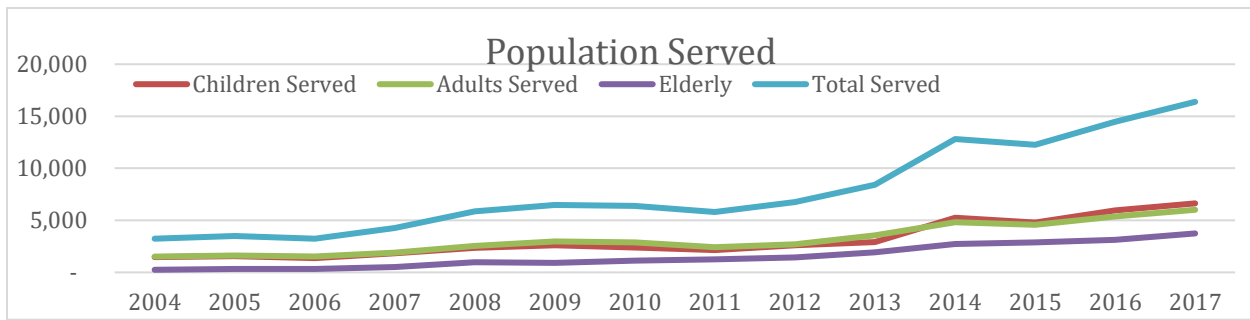
History

The North Gwinnett Cooperative (the Co-Op) was formed in 1991 as a ministry that provides, food, clothing, financial assistance and spiritual support to those in need in the Buford, Sugar Hill and Suwanee communities. Originally formed by Sugar Hill United Methodist Church and Sugar Hill Church, the ministry is now supported by additional churches, area businesses, civic organizations, schools and individuals who generously donate food, clothing and financial resources. The North Gwinnett Co-Op was fortunate to have the use of city buildings at no charge during much of its history. Due to the physical conditions of the free buildings and the restrictions on space and program ability, the Co-Op decided to purchase a permanent home in the community. Having a permanent home enables the community and clients to become more familiar with the agency, its location and its services. In 2012, the Co-Op purchased a building on Commerce Drive in Buford. Since settling into the new home, the organization has seen an increase in the number of clients being served by our agency.



The Co-Op is currently serving over 16,000 people a year.

North Gwinnett Co-Op Programs, Growth and Accomplishments



The Co-Op has carefully developed 10 programs to help mitigate both short and long-term needs of north Gwinnett families experiencing poverty.

Bread and Bakery Program – Through a partnership with three Publix Grocery Stores, the Co-Op provides Bread and Bakery items once a week to families with one adult at least 18 years of age. The only requirement to participate in this program is to sign in to receive the bread and bakery items. This program provided bread to more than 14,000 individuals in 2017.

Food Assistance Program – North Gwinnett residents who are experiencing poverty and food insecurity can receive two to three bags of groceries once every two months or sixty days. The amount they receive depends on the number of residents in the household. A family of 1 to 3 people receives one bag, a family of 4 to 6 receives two bags, etc. Seniors, age 60 or older, can receive their allotment of groceries twice a month. To participate in this program, the families/individuals are required to show Photo ID (license, passport, etc.), Proof of Residency (utility bill with current date or lease) and Birth certificates for each child. In 2016 this program provided 7,571 bags of food to low income families.

Summer Food Program – The families served by the Co-Op depend on the schools to provide their children meals throughout the week. During the summer months, this resource is no longer available. To ensure the children served by the Co-Op are not hungry during the summer months, the Co-Op created the Summer Food Program. The Summer Food Program allows families with children to pick up groceries from the Co-Op twice in June and July. These groceries include fresh fruits and vegetables, juice, meat and other fresh products. The Co-Op works with Gwinnett County and Buford City Public School Systems to identify and advertise to families who may need this service. In 2016, the North Gwinnett Co-Op distributed over 45,000 pounds of food through the Summer Food Program. This essential program ensures that students who are participating in the school lunch program have access to nutritious food during the summer, keeping them healthy and ready to learn.

Housing Assistance Program – The current Co-Op budget allows rent/mortgage assistance to two to three families per month. Families can receive this help only once. The family must show proof of income and need to receive assistance.

Utility Assistance Program - The Co-Op can provide a maximum of \$150.00 per client in a 12-month period. Clients must bring a current utility bill with client's name on the bill and have received a shut-off notice. The Co-Op can help with water, electricity and gas. The Co-Op does not aid with telephone bills, deposits or reconnect fees. If a utility bill is more than \$150.00 the client must pay the amount above \$150.00 before the Co-op will release a check for the balance due.

Medication Assistance Program – This program aids with prescription medication up to \$100.00 every sixty (60) days. Seniors age 60 plus can receive up to \$150.00 a month.

Second Blessings Thrift Store – Located in the Co-Op building, the thrift store accepts clothing and household donations from the community. All customers are welcome to shop in the thrift store and families who receive food and/or utility assistance also receive vouchers for free clothing. In 2016, the thrift store donated almost 16,000 pieces of clothing to low income families. Trained volunteers complete store sales while other volunteers sort donations. Proceeds from the store are used for client services. Customers find great deals in the thrift store and the proceeds provide much needed operational revenue in the amount of \$71,456 for the Co-Op in 2016.

Holiday Food and Gift Program – The Co-Op offers clients the opportunity to provide extra food for the Thanksgiving and Christmas Season. In 2016, the Co-Op provided 1,600 holiday meal boxes for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Each box contains \$30.00 worth of food and a \$20.00 gift certificate. This totals more than \$80,000 of in-kind donations that are distributed during the holidays. Once every other year families can have their children sponsored for Christmas gifts for up to four times in an eight-year period. Senior Citizens can apply every year. In 2016, the Co-Op provide 382 kids and 120 Seniors with Christmas gifts. Sponsors provided each child/senior with 4 to 5 gifts. The Co-Op also collaborates with the Toys for Tots program each year. Toys for Tots, along with other community toy drives, provide each child with an additional two to three gifts per child. We also work with local partners to host a holiday dinner for all our families. Activities include a warm holiday meal, photos with Santa and gift shopping in the thrift store.

Tutoring Program – The Co-Op provides one-on-one tutoring for up to 50 students each Monday night. Qualified volunteers work with each student for 30 minutes at a time in subjects that are difficult for the students. Volunteers work with students in English, Math and Science at the Elementary, Middle and High School Levels. One benefit to students is the use of the volunteer's laptop or iPad during the session. Often the students don't have access to a laptop

or iPad for online research or academic enrichment activities. Due to space constraints, the tutoring program currently has a waiting list of students.

Back Pack Program –The Co-Op offers free back packs filled with school supplies to children of families served by the Co-Op. The average cost per child is over \$100. Over community partners, help the Co-Op host the annual “Book Bag Bash” at the end of each summer. The children pick out their bag and enjoy face painting, games, police/fire cars/trucks and food. In 2016, the Co-Op distributed over 852 back packs. The Co-Op also delivers supplies to the school when needed.

Accomplishments

Recently the Gwinnett community has taken notice of the impact the Co-Op makes in the community. In 2016, the Co-Op received two awards.

2016 Good2Give Gala – Community Foundation of Northeast Georgia Awarded \$5,000 to five nonprofits – the Co-Op was selected as one of them

Best of Gwinnett 2016 – Gwinnett Magazine awarded the Co-Op a Best of Gwinnett award in the category of Non-Profit – Family Services.

The Co-Op was also a 2017 Gwinnett Chamber Impact Awards Nominee.

Mission and Goals

MISSION STATEMENT: Through support within our community, we bridge the gaps for critical needs of families or individuals and provide services to aid in finding a path to self-sufficiency.

VISION STATEMENT: To be an effective leader in aligning resources that strengthen families and individuals.

STRATEGIC ORGANIZATION GOALS:

In 2015 the board and staff completed the Co-Op’s first strategic plan. During that time, they discussed expanding both the number of people they served and the types of programs they provide. To achieve these goals the following bench marks will be met over the next three to five years.

Goal 1: Financial Goals and Facility Expansion

Step 1. Acquire Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding and other grants for related capital needs to support expansion, purchase the building next door and complete the renovation.

Step 2. Reduce the remaining debt of the facility that was purchased in 2012.

Step 3. Continue to increase awareness/sales of the thrift store, Second Blessings.
Increasing awareness of our store brings more donations, which means more access to free clothing for our clients. Increased awareness also means higher sales numbers.

Goal 2. Staff/Volunteer Expansion and Planning

Step 1. Currently the Executive Director is the only employee of the Co-Op. The board and staff have identified the hiring of Assistant Director as a key next step.

Step 2. Create a leadership succession plan for any future change in leadership.

Step 3. Increase number of volunteers to meet the needs associated with expansion of programs/services offerings.

Goal 3. Organization Goals

Step. 1. Develop operations and procedures that enhance and promote sustainable Board development, efficiency and results.

Step 2. Complete a risk management assessment and develop a comprehensive strategy and mitigation plan.

Fight Hunger Build Hope

The **Fight Hunger Build Hope** campaign is a \$3,250,000 property acquisition and renovation campaign that will increase the current 6,100 square foot warehouse facility to more than 14,000 square feet. The expansion will also provide the infrastructure for a partnership with the Atlanta Community Food Bank, which will greatly the lower cost of food purchased by the Co-Op. Lower costs and more storage space will allow the Co-Op to distribute more food and provide the resources to continue the Co-Op's service growth trends of 12 to 15% each year. The **Fight Hunger Build Hope** campaign will improve the ability of the Co-Op to improve current services, expand services and serve more people.

Finances

The Co-Op has begun a \$3.25 million capital campaign to support facility expansion. The purpose of the campaign is to raise funds to purchase the building next door and join the buildings together creating one large building.

To date the Co-Op has received 81% of the campaign total. The follows donations have been committed to the campaign.

Donor Category	Amount
Foundations	\$562,500.00
Individuals	\$80,200.00
Corporations	\$43,300.00
Churches	\$148,000.00
Government	\$1,695,000.00
Board Giving	\$83,500.00
Capital Fund Balance prior to January 2017	\$31,000.00
Total	\$2,643,500.00

North Gwinnett Co-Op Capital Campaign Expense Budget		
Item	Amount	Notes
Purchase of 4385 Commerce Drive	\$ 595,000.00	CDBG Grant will pay for the purchase of the building
Renovation of 4385 Commerce Drive	\$ 1,008,000.00	
Debt elimination of 4395 Commerce Drive	\$ 268,772.00	Current mortgage on 4385 Commerce Drive
Renovation of 4395 Commerce Drive	\$ 950,000.00	50k in loss income, 6,100 square feet @ \$120 per square feet, plus additional store equipment.
Campaign Expenses	\$ 78,228.00	
Capital Total	\$ 2,900,000.00	

North Gwinnett Co-Op Equipment Expense Budget		
Item	Amount	Notes
Computer, IT, iPad, Software and Equipment upgrades	\$ 25,000.00	
Security System	\$ 16,000.00	
IT Expertise	\$ 12,000.00	
Furniture/Shelving	\$ 25,000.00	
Installation of New Walk-in Fridge	\$ 10,000.00	
Equipment - Pallet Jack	\$ 2,000.00	
Equipment Total	\$ 90,000.00	

North Gwinnett Co-Op Operating and Programmatic Expansion Costs		
Item	Cost	Notes
Hire Assistant Director	\$ 40,000.00	12 Months' Salary
Store Manager	\$ 40,000.00	12 Months' Salary
Increase utilities	\$ 20,000.00	
Website upgrades for in-kind gifts to Thrift store	\$ 10,000.00	
Operating Reserve Fund	\$ 150,000.00	
Operating and Programmatic Expense Total	\$ 260,000.00	
Campaign Total	\$ 3,250,000.00	

Timetable

June 2017 to January 2018 – Purchase 4385 Commerce Drive

June 2017 to July 2018 – Lead Gift Phase of Campaign

July 2018 to December 2018 – Renovation to 4385

December 2018 to April 2019 - Renovation to 4395

January 2019 to June 2019 – Debt Elimination of 4395 Commerce Drive

Governance and Staffing

The Co-Op is led by a 21 volunteer Board of Directors. One hundred percent of the board supports the Co-Op financially.

President: Jan Wells, Peoples Bank & Trust

Susan Flowers, Community Volunteer

Vice President: John Marbury, Community Volunteer

Sean Foote, The Foote Welch Group

Secretary: Donna McMurry, Community Volunteer

Keith Mitchell, Sugar Hill United Methodist Church

Treasurer: Cayla Richardson, Community Volunteer

Curtis Northrup, City Council, City of Sugar Hill

Jeff Pruitt, Attorney at Law

Co-Founder: Carolyn Hill, Community Volunteer

Reiner Rietig, Home South Communities

Steve Agee, Attorney at Law

Don Saylor, Community Volunteer

Phillip Beard, City of Buford, Chair, Board of Commissioners

Benj Smith, Sugar Hill Church

Cindy Stegman, Community Volunteer

Caron Burnette, Community Volunteer

Executive Director: Kim Phillips

Denise Edwards, CPA, Westbrook McGrath Bridges Orth & Bray

Emeritus Board Members:

Geraldine Cates, Co-Founder

Sandra Fisher, Community Volunteer

Terry Cohron, Buford Ministerial Association

Staffing: The Co-Op has two full-time employees, Kim Phillips, the Executive Director and Kim Barry, the Assistant Director. The agency also has one contract employee that provides staffing to the thrift store on Saturdays. The agency is dependent on volunteers. Anytime the Co-Op is open there are an average of fifteen volunteers on-site to ensure the needs of clients are being met. Last year the agency recorded over 16,000 volunteer hours.

Partners

The Co-Op is fortunate to serve alongside many different agencies. The Co-Op works with other local Co-Ops to ensure they are serving the residents of our community. Because the Co-Op does not have federal funding for housing/rental assistance, they will assist two-three clients a month with housing assistance. If a client seeking housing assistance after the monthly budget is met, they will work with the Norcross or Lawrenceville Co-Op for those services. The Co-Op works closely with the Gwinnett County and Buford City school systems. Counselors will often contact the Co-Op for assistance for the families the schools are working with. Our closest collaboration comes at the beginning of the school year when the Co-Op provides over 800 new back packs full of school supplies to the children in the community. The Co-Op also delivers book bags and supplies to the school for children in need throughout the year. The Co-Op also works with the school systems to identify the children/families in need of summer food and holiday assistance. Lastly, the Co-Op also has strong partnerships with local churches. Gwinnett Church, 12Stone Church, Sugar Hill Church are just a few of the churches that the Co-Op collaborates with in the community. For example, Gwinnett Church supplied over 600 of the 852 backpacks that were distributed this summer and Sugar Hill Church provides the class room space for the work readiness program and volunteers on a regular basis.

The new space will allow the Co-Op to become partners with Atlanta Community Food Bank and receive greater discounts and greater amounts of food to distribute. Which will enable us to meet our goal of food distribution to once a month for families.

North Gwinnett Cooperative, Inc. - Partner List

CHURCHES:

12Stone Church	Gwinnett Church
Buford Ministerial Association	Island Ford Baptist Church
Buford Presbyterian	Lanier Holiday Chapel
Duncan's Creek Church	North Gwinnett Church
Epiphany Lutheran Church	North Point Ministries
First United Methodist, Buford	Sugar Hill Church
Free Chapel - Gwinnett	Sugar Hill United Methodist Church
Friendship Community Baptist Church	Sugarloaf United Methodist Church
First Baptist Buford	Suwanee First United Methodist Church
Gravel Springs Baptist Church	Victory Church - Hamilton Mill

CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS:

Gwinnett Business Exchange	Gwinnett Business Network
Alpha Kappa Alpha	Kares 4 Kids Partners, Inc.
Bogan Park Gold Wing Club	Kiwanis Club of North Gwinnett
Boy Scouts of America	Kiwanis Club of Suwanee
Buford Lanier Woman's Club	Phi Delta Kappa
Buford Rotary Club	Stonehedge Garden Club
Frontier Forest Bridge Club	Suwanee Youth Leaders
Girl Scouts of America	Woodmen of the World
Greater Atlanta Associates in Networking	

BUSINESSES:

Alexander, Almand & Bangs, LLP	Lemco, LLC
Alpha Fitness, LLC	Liberty Mutual
Atlanta Steam	Macy's, Mall of GA
Big Sky Education	McKeeson

CarMax Auto Superstores, Inc.	Mitsubishi Electric
Chattahoochee Bank of GA	Morgan Stanley
Citrix	No Excuses Crossfit
Coldwell Banker	Omega Fitness, LLC
Crossfit Gwinnett	Prime Time Leasing, LLC
DCS Parts Corporation	Publix
Dooson Industrial Vehicle	QTS
EJW Enterprises Inc.	Quantum National Bank
Enterprise Holdings	Reeves and Young
Ewing Motor Company	Samsung
FedEx Services	Sherwood's Drug Shop, Inc.
FunRacers, LLC	SJ Max, LLC
Gwinnett Forum	Thomoco
Gwinnett Urgent Care	Uline
IBM	Visions By KC Developing & Consulting
Innovatum, Inc.	William Glover, DDS
JCPenny, Mall of GA	Winfield Realty Group, Inc.
Keller Williams	WLR Properties, LLC
Kroger	

FOUNDATIONS/GRANTS:

Carmax Foundation	Jackson EMC Operation Round Up
Community Foundation of NE GA	JCPenny Grant Program
FedEx Services	National Christian Foundation
Georgia Power Foundation	North GA Community Foundation
Grainger Foundation	Peoples Bank and Trust
Hudgens Family Foundation	Wells Fargo Foundation

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES:

U.S. Post Office, Buford		City of Sugar Hill
City of Buford		City of Suwanee
Buford City Schools		Gwinnett County Public Schools

Service Delivery Impact

Fight Hunger Build Hope campaign will improve the ability of the Co-Op to improve current services, expand services and serve more people.

1. The renovation will more than double the square footage of the agency, allowing the Co-Op to double the amount of food that is stored and distributed.
2. The increased space will allow the Co-Op to partner with the Atlanta Food Bank and reduce the cost of food that is purchased.
3. Increase the food pantry space and install a new market-based system that will allow clients to select the food they take home. The market-based system has been proven to reduce food waste.
4. Create a ten-station computer lab for tutoring needs and job training
5. Build a large classroom to meet the demand for the free tutoring program that currently has a waiting list.
6. Increase thrift store space
7. Eliminate debt on the current building
8. Provide the staffing to support the expansion of services and number of people served.

Project Sustainability

The expansion has been strategically planned to reduce costs and improve the sustainability of the Co-Op. The elimination of the debt will allow the Co-Op to absorb the increase in the cost of staffing and help provide additional funding for the programs. In addition, the increase in square footage for the Second Blessings Thrift Store will enable the store to produce more revenue to support the programs of the Co-Op.

The Co-Op has a diverse array of donors and plans to continue to increase funding from many types of funders including individual, corporate, foundations, and local government sources.

Evaluation

The Co-Op strategic plan was created in Spring, 2016. The plan is updated and reviewed at each quarterly board meeting along with progress toward fundraising and project goals. The project will be evaluated by the board and staff of the Co-Op. Each building project will be completed by licensed contractors and subject to city and county inspectors. The Executive Director and Board Chair will manage the building process along with the help of board members who have construction and development experience. Once the construction is complete and all programs have moved in their new spaces, a facilities assessment will be conducted to ensure that all program needs are being met.

Campaign Progress

To date the **Fight Hunger Build Hope Campaign** has raised \$2,643,500.00 toward the \$3,250,000 goal. This represents 81% of the campaign goal. The Co-Op needs to raise \$606,500.00 to complete the campaign. 100% of the board and steering committee have contributed to the campaign and lead gifts have been established. The Co-Op is seeking support from the greater Atlanta community to help the Co-Op reach its goal of reducing the 14 million meal gap in Gwinnett County and eliminating food insecurity in the community.