

# Making A DIFFERENCE

Small projects with big results  
doing good, feeling good the  
little nonprofit that could.

BY MARGARET CRANDALL



Executive Director,  
Elizabeth Workman

From the outside, Goods For Good looks like a quiet, empty school building that could use some TLC. But inside, it's neither quiet nor empty. In the front room, Executive Director Elizabeth Workman is playing a version of nonprofit Whac-A-Mole: Making space on long tables for a children's book drive project, answering volunteers' questions, laughing as one of them parades around in a donated evening gown, taking photos for social media and future newsletters – all while simultaneously working on the projects she's planned for the next few months.

In the back rooms, volunteers are sorting through hundreds of bags and boxes of donated clothing, tossing unusable stuff into "re-donate" and "yuck" piles, while folding and storing the usable items that will go to shelters for migrants, pop-up events for resettled refugees, and into orders that come in from nonprofit partner groups. "Who was looking for women's shorts in size small?" someone calls out. "I'll take those!" another responds. "Have more men's shoes come in yet? We're getting low on size 9."

Goods For Good projects range from coordinating meal preparation for local shelters, creating "We Care" gift bags for isolated seniors, collecting fans for local low-income residents without air conditioning, and much more. Since 2020, Goods For Good has worked with more than 37 nonprofit partners, provided more than \$270,000 in donated goods, and helped serve more than 49,000 people.

None of this could have happened without the 1,300 volunteers who have pitched in to help.

"This all happened organically," says Workman. "When the pandemic hit, I started cooking food for a shelter, then a couple of friends helped me the next time, and after a few months, we had 40 people cooking on a regular basis. It

grew so fast that pretty soon I was fielding calls from local nonprofits needing support in various ways. That first year we had something like 600 people cooking for four shelters, collecting toys and games for quarantined low-income kids, assembling Covid health kits for families and seniors, and making Birthday-in-a-Box gifts for kids in area shelters."

Kent resident and preschool teacher Lauren Regardie has been volunteering through Goods For Good for several years. "At first, it was me and my family creating things like the Halloween Boo-in-a-Box and Birthday-in-a-Box gifts, and preparing lunches for people living in shelters," she says. Then she enlisted the help of her three-year-old students. "I brought the 'We Care' gift bags into my classroom, and we filled them with items their parents donated, things like mugs, tea, hot chocolate, warm hats, and fuzzy socks. The kids had so much fun making the cards and decorating the bags." She appreciates that Goods For Good also has ways for children to get involved. "It was special to teach kids at such a young age about giving back, about helping other people."

"I learned about Goods For Good from the Palisades listserv," says Barb Power, a Palisades resident. "I looked at their calendar and signed up for a shift organizing the clothing pantries at the migrant center, where I had a great experience. That day a teenage girl, who had probably just arrived, needed some clothes and selected a few items from the pantry. We saw her after she had showered and put on her new clothes. They fit her well, and she was so happy. It was quite a moment, so I've volunteered for Goods For Good three times now."



Powers has also signed up to be a Goods For Good Ally, so that Palisades neighbors can drop off their donations at her home instead of driving to Goods For Good HQ. She's already seeing a positive response from the neighborhood. "I posted on the listserv about accepting donations, including fans for people with no air conditioning, and within 24 hours I've had one person contact me to tell me they're bringing me fans, another person who has dropped off clothes, and someone else even made a donation from their Donor Advised Fund," she says. "It's really rewarding to see how many people want to support this and want to help people in need."

Want to get involved? Goods For Good can always use more individual and family volunteers, and students can help out and earn community service hours. Financial contributions are welcomed year-round, with an annual appeal in November. Through the Ally program, volunteers can serve as neighborhood points of contact, collection sites, and spokespeople for Goods For Good projects. And if you've got a car and some time, drivers are always needed to transport goods to and from partner organizations.



Learn more at [goodsforgooddc.org/](https://goodsforgooddc.org/).

