



2022 Projects and Accomplishments

In 2022, CASC expanded our presence in South County by connecting more widely with organizations and members of the community, and by inviting and working with volunteers in support of our projects. We developed new programs and projects in response to community needs, and continued to support, and in some cases, enhance our ongoing and annual projects.

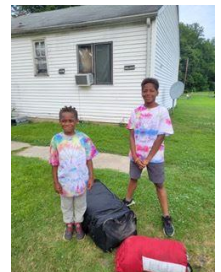
New in 2022

Camp: A Week of Possibilities

In an effort to provide an opportunity for some South County children to benefit from an experience that might not be otherwise available to them, CASC developed the “Camp: A Week of Possibilities” project. Through this project, ten children from South County, ages 8 thru 11, were able to attend week-long overnight camps during the summer. At camp, kids swam and canoed for the first time, excelled at games, and gained craft skills. Best of all, they formed new friendships. Follow-up meetings and activities were held throughout the following school year, to further develop the social and emotional skills fostered by the camp experience. Both the children and their parents reported that they LOVED the camps!

This program would not have been possible without the generosity of Anne Arundel Women Giving Together and the Community Foundation of Anne Arundel, the Rotary Club of South Anne Arundel County, mini-scholarships from Camp Letts and West River Methodist Camp, and private donations.

Two campers wearing shirts made at camp



Pajama Day Project



CASC received a call: Pajama Day was coming up; some students at a local elementary school would be unable to participate; could we help? The guidelines were simple: provide pajamas for boys and girls, in the sizes and numbers requested; bring the pajamas to school, unwrapped or in gift bags with tissue; and please, not all the same pajama!

CASC made requests of members of the community, and generous donations were received from the Lothian Ruritan Club as well as from friends and neighbors. Three weeks later, 93 students received pajamas and were able to participate in “Pajama Day” 2022 in style!



South County Community Needs Meetings

A guiding principle of our organization is to build programs and projects in response to needs expressed by members of the community. Meetings and outreach events are conducted for this purpose. Early in 2022, CASC began inviting members of the community to monthly virtual “Community Needs Meetings.” In these meetings, community members shared information about their needs and representatives from community organizations provided information about available services. New connections were made and collaborations developed at each session.

South County Resource Guide

This project was developed in response to a need expressed by a participant in our South County Community Needs Meetings: for a handout to inform residents of services available to neighbors in need in South County. The objective was to provide, in an easily accessible format, information that would direct people to the services they need. With the assistance of volunteer community members, CASC developed a trifold listing resources to contact during a crisis or an emergency. For needs of a less critical nature, neighbors can access the Resource Guide website and find contacts for over a dozen specific needs, including food, housing, transportation and more. The trifold includes directions for accessing that website, including a QR code for access via mobile phones.



Hurricane (and other emergencies) Preparedness Presentation

As hurricane season approached, CASC responded to an offer from the Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management to sponsor a presentation on emergency preparedness. Coordinating with the Deale Library, CASC arranged for an evening session for members of the community to learn about state and county agencies working in three areas: homeowner and flood insurance (Maryland Insurance Administration); emergency preparedness (Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management); and concerns related to sea level rise (Anne Arundel County Office of Planning and Zoning, Long Range Planning Section). One of the session attendees found the presentation extremely relevant and invited the representative from the Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management to provide a similar presentation to another South County community group.



Ongoing and Annual Projects

Project FEAST

(Food is Equitable, Accessible and Sustainable...For Tomorrow)

This project was developed with the goal of responding to issues related to “food insecurity” and the associated health outcomes as experienced in communities within South County. Our first initiatives in this project centered around growing edible plants in homes and communities where space for a garden is limited.



Container Gardening

In this, the third year of the Container Gardening project, CASC continued to encourage new and returning gardeners to grow vegetables at home. Returning gardeners received seeds, plants, plant food and gardening supplies. New gardeners received full kits containing two grow bags, potting soil, two starter plants, a trowel, a watering can and growing instructions. Several of the repeat gardeners have participated for all three years of the project!

Bountiful (Weekend Food) Backpacks

For the third year, CASC’s Food Access and Nutrition Committee participated in the Bountiful Backpacks program at Our Lady of Sorrows Church. This program provides bags of food for a number of students at Tracey's Elementary School. CASC members assisted with packing bags and delivering food to the school on a weekly basis.



SCAN Food Pantry

SCAN operates a federally-subsidized food pantry that has been in existence for over 40 years in South County. Clients must meet criteria and can receive food once each month. CASC maintains a bin at the Edgewater Library to collect nonperishable food donations. When the bin is full, CASC collects the food and delivers it to SCAN.



A Citrus Collaborative

Through the Lothian Ruritan Club's annual citrus sale, neighbors can purchase fruit not only for themselves, but can also designate purchases as a donation to SCAN and other local food pantries. This year, boxes of donated fruit again exceeded

the capacity of SCAN's refrigeration facilities. The CASC Food Access and Nutrition Committee worked with the Lothian Ruritan Club to distribute excess boxes of donated fresh Florida oranges and grapefruits to churches and other organizations for their pantries and food distribution events. In addition to SCAN clients, fruit was distributed through food distribution events at local churches, schools and community centers.

Photo credit: <https://foto.wuestenigel.com/wp-content/uploads/api2/halves-of-fresh-citrus-fruits-with-branches-and-green-leaves-top-view.jpeg>



Monthly Food Calendars and Resource Lists

Continuing with the project established during the early days of the COVID pandemic, CASC prepared and published two documents monthly, identifying food resources available to residents of South County. Relevant events and sites are identified from state, county and local sources and compiled into both a calendar and a more detailed resource listing. The calendar identifies, by date, emergency food distribution events taking place in South County, including locations and times. The resource list provides additional details about the events on the calendar, and includes additional emergency food resources not applicable for a calendar listing. Both documents are posted on the CASC website, on the CASC Facebook page, and are emailed to an extensive list of faith organizations, community groups and individuals.

Weekly Information Sharing – Community Connections

As a known source for outreach to the South County community, CASC receives information from numerous agencies, organizations and individuals regarding events and opportunities of possible interest to our neighbors, including requests for volunteers to assist at food pantries, food distribution events, and with programs such as the STAIR reading program at local elementary schools. Weekly, CASC prepares and emails relevant information to an extensive list of South County contacts. Recipients are encouraged to share information and flyers with their communities.



Community Outreach and Collaboration

CASC regularly receives invitations to collaborate with other organizations on projects benefiting residents of South County. Such collaborative projects have been undertaken with local elementary schools, the library, and state and county agencies. CASC regularly includes community members in projects. Community financial support, donations, and volunteer assistance were critical to the success of projects such as the Pajama Day project, the Summer Camp by the Bay project, the South County Resource Guide project and the Citrus Collaborative project.

Conclusions

Flexibility was again important for CASC in “moving forward – working together” during 2022. As schools and other spaces reopened more fully and hybrid events became a norm, new project opportunities were identified and put into place late into the year. Staying true to our mission and operating within our guiding principles, we were able to connect and collaborate with members of the community, offer and support programs that benefit South County residents, and promote low-cost, sustainable initiatives while adapting to a changing environment.

Looking ahead to 2023, we anticipate expanding our on-going projects as well as developing projects and programs that respond to new challenges and opportunities within South County. We hope to broaden our impact on the community and to engage community members in projects that serve the needs of our neighbors in South County.