



2024 Participation, Projects and Accomplishments

In 2024, Community Alliance of South County (CASC) expanded our presence in South County by building on our connections within the community and by working with volunteers in support of our projects. We expanded our role in several ongoing projects, and built on relationships to develop plans for two new projects that will be initiated in 2025. We continued to support and enhance our ongoing projects, and partnered with organizations and individuals in support of their community service programs. We took steps to improve as an organization by opening our planning sessions to include new voices and by continuing our membership in Maryland Non-Profits and the Non-Profit Development Center.

New in 2024

S.T.A.I.R. (Start The Adventure In Reading)

As in the past, members of our organization recruited new tutors and also volunteered as tutors with this program. In 2024, we expanded our contribution to the program when two of our members served as co-coordinators for S.T.A.I.R. Annapolis at Tracey's Elementary School.

Back-To-School Community Event for Southern Feeder Schools

CASC joined other community organizations at two back-to-school information events in August. Members of our Board greeted students and family members and provided games, toys and snacks while sharing information about community services such as the SCAN Food Pantry and the Call N' Ride transportation service.



Confer on plans for new initiatives in South County

In January of 2024, we conferred with a South County resident in her efforts to establish the South County Seed Collective. And in April of 2024, we conferred with Blue Crab Community Fridges as they sought to establish a presence in South County.

Community Naloxone Training

In October, we collaborated with several community groups in a true "working together" effort, a community information and training session on Naloxone interventions for opioid overdoses. Held at the Deale Library, the program was presented by staff from Bay Community Health. Community members in attendance learned procedures for administering the lifesaving medication, and received samples of the product.



Connection with Community School Managers

In late summer, we were introduced to the two Community School Managers who were developing programs at two local elementary schools and began working together on programs and events. In early November, members of our Board provided a driving tour of the areas of South County in which their students live, and provided background on various communities and neighborhoods.



Planning For New Projects

During the second half of 2024, we worked with community members to develop plans for two projects to be launched in 2025.



The Giving Yellow Bag project, to be launched in January, was proposed by a South County resident. CASC members welcomed the project idea and helped take steps to prepare the project for a pilot rollout in 2025. This project engages community members to donate, collect and deliver needed items for local health and educational organizations.

A second project was planned for introducing hydroponics in the classroom. Working with a local Community School Manager, CASC developed plans to establish a demonstration garden in several third grade classrooms to engage students in the process and science of growing edible plants hydroponically. This project will begin in the spring of 2025 and will be expanded in the fall.



Ongoing and Annual Projects

Tracey’s Elementary School “Spring Fling Thing”



CASC members greeted students and family members with games, toys and snacks while sharing information about community services such as the SCAN Food Pantry and the Call N’ Ride transportation service.



Summer Kick-Off at Deale Library

CASC joined the library’s event and brought puzzles and games for kids and families at the kickoff of the Library’s summer reading program.



“Sneak a Peek” Back to School Event at Shady Side Elementary School



At the invitation of the school Principal, CASC Board members again participated in the back-to-school celebration at Shady Side Elementary school. Hoping to ease anxiety about school and generate excitement for the new school year, CASC members distributed Hackey Sacks and healthy snacks to the children, and provided information about the Call N’ Ride and other services to parents and family members.

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. In 2024, CASC invited members of the community to several 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.



Camp: A Week of Possibilities – Third Summer

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 in 2022 and expanded it in 2023. In 2024, with prior grant funding unavailable, private donations enabled us to fund five children, ages 8 thru 11, from South County, to attend week-long overnight camps during the summer. At camp, kids swam and kayaked for the first time, excelled at games, and gained craft skills. Best of all, they formed new friendships.

Produce Partners

As part of the *Produce Partners*, CASC members continue to manage a community-wide effort to collect excess produce from local growers and vendors and distribute it to residents in underserved neighborhoods in South County. Another true community effort, *Produce Partners* involves volunteers from church groups, civic organizations, local growers and vendors, and individuals.



Bountiful (Weekend Food) Backpacks

For the fifth year, CASC members 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 Support

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 Deale Library to collect nonperishable food donations. When the bin is full, CASC collects the food and delivers it to SCAN. CASC members also volunteer, and recruit volunteers, for the pantry.



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, supplemental food distribution events taking place in South County, including locations and times. The resource list provides details about the events on the calendar, and includes additional food resources not applicable for a calendar listing. Each month, up-to-date versions of 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 which benefit residents of South County. CASC has worked with local elementary schools, the county library, state and county agencies, and local organizations including the South County Assistance Network (SCAN), the Ralph J. Bunche Community Center and STAIR Annapolis. Community financial support, in-kind donations, and volunteer assistance were critical to the success of our projects.





Conclusions

Expanded community collaboration continued to be critical for CASC as we pursued our projects with the goal of “moving forward – working together” during 2024. CASC’s prior work in the areas of food access and nutrition, transportation and connectivity and youth and education support led to new opportunities for partnering with individuals and organizations in South County. CASC’s consistent presence as “information hub” for South County enabled us to reach new audiences, gain new supporters, welcome new volunteers, and serve a wider community.

Looking ahead to 2025, we anticipate launching two new programs as well as expanding our on-going projects. We recognize the need to respond to changing needs and challenges in South County and will remain flexible in our approach to supporting the community. We hope to broaden community participation in our projects, will continue to look to the community to help define needs and develop solutions. As an organization, we hope to create a more dynamic media presence and will see to expand participation on our Board.