

# CONNECTIONS

A quarterly publication of the Christian Community Service Center

First Quarter 2020

## 40 Years of Shared Ministry Makes a Difference

This year is CCSC's 40th anniversary, a significant milestone for the organization because it represents 40 years of service to the community. It would not be an exaggeration to state that hundreds of thousands of Houstonians facing crises have found tangible help and solace within our doors.

CCSC was incorporated as a nonprofit corporation on February 27, 1980 by the State of Texas. While the programs have adapted to changing community needs, our mission remains the same: to be the church's response to poverty



CCSC founder Dean Robinson at the 1993 dedication of the 3434 Branard building.

and to see the face of Christ – the sacred – on each person walking through our doors. CCSC's 40 member churches come together to alleviate poverty, despite differences in dogma or their various perspectives on issues facing society. This common commitment strengthens the organization.

At this year's Azalea Gala in April, we will honor The Reverend Larry Hall, who has been a strong supporter of the ministry since it was one year old. Yes, that's right: Larry has been a clergy advocate of CCSC's work for 39 of its 40 years.

CCSC's relationship with its clergy and covenant churches is fundamental to our mission and culture, so we'll close by sharing some quotes from the clergy.

In Christ,

*Michelle Shonbeck*

Michelle Shonbeck, Executive Director



Reverend Tommy Thompson, Executive Director Michelle Shonbeck, and former CCSC Board Presidents Fred Russell and Lance Olinde accepting the CORE (Center for Organizational Research and Effectiveness) Award in 2000 at the University of Houston.

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"CCSC helps us do what Jesus calls us to do – to extend care and compassion to the whole family of God. Through CCSC we are able to better use our resources and to better serve our neighbors."

– Reverend John Wurster, St. Philip Presbyterian Church

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"It is wonderful to work with the CCSC staff."

– Father Phil Lloyd, St. Theresa Catholic Church

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"We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with CCSC for so many years. The work of CCSC is fundamental to the gospel going forward to our city and it is one of the most unifying aspects of Christian Ministry inside the loop! Thank

*Cover story continued on page 3*

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Gifts received October through December 2019

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Christian Community Service Center (CCSC) is to serve the poor, hungry, disabled and otherwise needy while respecting their religious, ethnic or cultural differences. CCSC was created out of faith and founded in the belief that we are called to help all God's children heart to heart and hand in hand.

Cover story continued from page 1

you Michelle, staff and the numerous volunteers that make the machine of CCSC run so smoothly. Greater things are yet to come...

– Dr. Roger Patterson,  
West U Baptist & Crosspoint Church – Bellaire

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“What a privilege it is to pastor one of the churches that founded CCSC. This organization has been serving the least and the lost for almost forty years! Because of this, in CCSC St. Andrew’s has a reliable partner in serving those who find themselves needing help. CCSC has varied and vibrant programs to aid those in need: everything from food and clothing, to back to school supplies and glasses for youth and children, to employment resources like Martha’s Way and JobNet. CCSC’s consistent and compassionate track record in administering these programs gives St. Andrew’s staff and volunteers great confidence in referring those who come to us.

– Reverend Jeff Smith, St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church

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“CCSC enables larger more expansive ministry because churches come together collectively to accomplish a larger work. Our partnership with CCSC has allowed our local congregation to do far more together with others than we could do on our own. It’s like every dollar and every hour given is multiplied in God’s hand ‘far more abundantly than all that we ask or image.’” (Ephesians 3:20)

Peace,  
– Dr. Michael Dunn, Pastor,  
First Christian Church (Disciples)

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“CCSC has been a wonderful partner in ministry to St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church for 40 years. As a founding congregation, we have valued the wonder and power of the Holy Spirit working together through all of us to meet the needs of our neighbors. We have been able to grow spiritually as a community through this critical service in common.”

–The Reverend Lisa Hunt, St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church

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“It is always both tempting and natural for congregations to get very insular in their thinking. In an age of congregational change and denominational shrinkage, the ties that bind us seem to be rapidly fraying. Being a member of CCSC helps our



*Pastor Clint Reiff, of Rice Temple Baptist Church, giving the blessing at the 2019 groundbreaking of the new J. Dean Robinson Building.*

congregation realize both that we can be a blessing in the lives of people we will never know, people who really need our help, AND that God’s good work in the world knows nothing about theological differences or tribal identities. That is healthy. It is helpful. It is encouraging. And it is hopeful!”

– Reverend Kerry Nelson,  
Senior Minister Faith Lutheran Church

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“When I moved to Houston ten years ago to serve the Bering Drive Church of Christ, I went to CCSC to learn about this ministry that we have worked alongside for years. In my thirty years of ministry, I have never encountered a more effective organization than CCSC in their strategic care for the poor. Our church thanks God often for our opportunity to do the work of Christ with CCSC.”

– Dr. Jeff M. Christian, Bering Drive Church of Christ

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“On behalf of St. Martin’s parishioners, clergy and staff, please accept our heartfelt congratulations on the 40th Anniversary of Christian Community Service Center (CCSC).

Our partnership with this wonderful agency is such a blessing. From assisting the marginalized who come to us to providing rewarding volunteer opportunities for hundreds of our Church members, CCSC is a compassionate, effective and efficient organization.”

In Christ,  
– The Rev. Jonathan Adams  
Associate for Pastoral Care and Outreach  
St. Martin’s Episcopal Church

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## Meet 2020 CCSC Board President Gordon Arnold



This is not Gordon Arnold's first rodeo. Ten years after first serving as Board President, Gordon is reprising the role.

"I've stayed involved because CCSC continues to ask for my help in ways that I think I can contribute," said Gordon, a native Houstonian and life-long member

of St. Luke's United Methodist Church.

"Two decades ago, Michelle Shonbeck gave a talk at a breakfast club I am in," Gordon remembers. "I was looking for a place that had a good record for community service and good stewardship of the time and money volunteers invested, so I volunteered." The rest, as they say, is history.

Over the years, Gordon has served on CCSC's Board, Finance Committee, Personnel Committee, Endowment Board (including as chair), Visioning Committee (as chair), and the

Discernment Committee to decide how to proceed following CCSC's flooding.

A graduate of the University of Houston Law Center, Gordon is the managing partner of Arnold & Saunders, LLP. He and his two daughters, a sophomore at University of Massachusetts Amherst and a senior at Episcopal High, share their home with two dogs and two cats.

Gordon sings in the St. Luke's Chancel Choir and serves as a Stephen Minister. He also facilitates at the nonprofit Bo's Place, in its program for families who have suffered recent loss.

Looking to the future, Gordon would like to see CCSC continue to grow its programs. "The coupling of Emergency Services with other long-term programs is critical. The more a program gives hope to parents and children the more effective, in the long term, the program can be," he said. "And the type of hope that is needed is that the program is giving better chances to the children than they would have without it. All of CCSC's programs, directly or indirectly, give that hope."

### *Grow, Gather & Give!*

Thanks to the hard work of these wonderful women, last November's Grow, Gather & Give! event was not only FUN, it raised a net total of \$61,737 for CCSC.

*The Committee (left to right):  
Patti Emerson, Amber Shedd, Suzanne Shelby, Co-chair  
Rebekah Rivera, Mary Goodman,  
Co-chair Carol Postle, Dena Robinson,  
Karen Hook King, Sarah Bell and Carolyn Messner.*



### VOLUNTEER NEEDS

If you like being part of a team and want to serve your community by helping in a food pantry, CCSC's Emergency Services would love to sign you up to work in their reception areas weekly. Opportunities are available on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays. These volunteer positions involve computer work, training is provided. Contact Erin Donohue at [volunteer@ccschouston.org](mailto:volunteer@ccschouston.org)

### Does Your Company or Former Company Match Volunteer Hour Donations?

Many companies offer employees, retirees, and sometimes employee or retiree spouses, a matching-gift benefit that can double or even triple your donation to a qualifying charitable organization like CCSC. Some will even make a matching contribution for your volunteer hours! Each company has its own method for you to submit a matching-gift request. Check with the Human Resources department to find out how you can maximize your donations to CCSC.

## EMERGENCY SERVICES—CENTRAL

Many community members are living paycheck to paycheck with little to no savings and seeking financial help at Emergency Services for varied reasons. In early 2020, the program has already assisted:

- a client recovering from brain surgery
- a single mother who recently lost her job
- a student completing his last semester in college

Often, a single payment of \$300 or less is all that is needed to help a community member overcome an unexpected, difficult

circumstance. During a recent follow-up conversation, one client remarked, “(CCSC) got us back on our feet.” On behalf of that client, thank you to the donors, volunteers and staff who create a respectful and welcoming environment where financial services may be accessed.



## EMERGENCY SERVICES—SOUTHWEST

John, a 62-year-old disabled U. S. veteran living solely on his military pension, found himself homeless for longer than one year. In late 2019, John successfully found a safe place to call home, yet he still occasionally struggles to make ends meet. By visiting Emergency Services-Southwest for food packages to help stretch his budget, John avoids having to choose between buying prescription

medications, paying rent, and having enough to eat. During a client interview, John expressed his strong desire to never return to homelessness and CCSC is honored to help him maintain that goal. Each day, CCSC’s Emergency Services programs are visited by community members like John who not only access tangible basic necessities but also gain peace of mind and encouragement along their journeys.

## JOBNET

One frustrating aspect of a job search is receiving no response from prospective employers after interviews. You think you did well, but what does the interviewer think? A new workshop at JobNet, “Interview Tips from an Employer,” gives insight into

the mind of the employer. After 40 years hiring technical and field staff in the oil and gas industry, volunteer Brian Taylor is sharing inside tips for creating a great impression during an interview.

## MARTHA’S WAY

Martha’s Way is proud to participate in United Way THRIVE, a nonprofit collaborative focused on building family financial stability. Recently, Martha’s Way collaborated with two fellow THRIVE partner organizations, Memorial Assistance Ministries and The Alliance, to offer financial education

workshops designed to enhance Martha’s Way participants’ knowledge of tracking expenses, banking, and saving. These workshops built on existing content in the Martha’s Way curriculum. Martha’s Way had 38 clients participate. We look forward to offering additional workshops in 2020.

## JINGLE BELL EXPRESS

Christian Community Service Center celebrated its 40th Jingle Bell Express program in December by providing Christmas cheer to 2,843 children in need. A hallmark of this program is its engagement of clients—providing more than 900 parents the opportunity to personally select toys and books for their children, ranging from infancy to age 15. In addition to toys and books, the program addresses hunger and food insecurity by providing a grocery package to each family. Jingle Bell Express is made possible by the commitment of its volunteers: 700+ volunteers provided approximately 3,000 hours of support to the 2019 program.

CCSC is grateful for the many member churches, community groups and local businesses that donated high-quality gifts and financial support to Jingle Bell Express. Special thanks go to our host site, Bellaire United Methodist Church and to the volunteer committee that led program efforts over several months. You shared the spirit of Christmas in a generous, substantial way!



## A Time To Build Update

With the gracious support of foundations, corporations, organizations, member churches, and individual friends of CCSC, the *A Time To Build* Capital Campaign is moving closer to its \$14 million goal.

We are excited to report that, as of January, not only has \$11.5 million dollars been raised but so has the steel skeleton of the new J. Dean Robinson Building!

We anticipate the beam signing event, where all will have a chance to grab a Sharpie and write a blessing on a beam, will take place in late March.

For more information on the Capital Campaign and how to get involved, please contact CCSC Development Director Sharon Current at 713-961-3993 or [scurrent@ccschouston.org](mailto:scurrent@ccschouston.org)



## CCSC WISH LIST

CCSC's Wish List reflects unbudgeted items that would be very handy "extras" to help carry out the organization's mission. Thank you for your help!

### EMERGENCY SERVICES – CENTRAL

Utility Cart for Food Pantry– 1 needed	\$140
Gallon-size Ziploc Bags (continuous need)	\$5/box
Can Openers for Food Pantry Clients (continuous need)	\$1/each

### EMERGENCY SERVICES – SOUTHWEST

Gallon-size Ziploc Bags (continuous need)	\$5/box
Can Openers for Food Pantry Clients (continuous need)	\$1/each

### CSC GARDEN

Heavy Duty Light-Weight 25 ft. Water Hose	\$85
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### YOUTH SERVICES

Collapsible Utility Wagon for Events (4 needed)	\$70/each
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## Donor Privacy

To CCSC's Donors,

Many contributors to nonprofit organizations are asking about donor privacy, mailing lists, and fundraising policies. CCSC has never sold, shared or rented our mailing list, nor will we.

We request funds because of immediate program support needs. We pledge diligent stewardship of your gifts as well as deep gratitude for your support of CCSC.

## THANKS TO IN-KIND DONORS

A donation of goods or services is an excellent way to help Christian Community Service Center achieve its mission. Here is a list of CCSC's recent in-kind contributors. (If we missed your group, please let us know so we can recognize you in the next newsletter.)

*A special "Thank You" also goes to all churches and organizations that provide CCSC with gifts from organized food, clothing, hygiene, and/or shoe drives on a regular basis.*

Baker Botts, L.L.P.  
Bethany Christian Church  
Brookfield Office Properties  
Catholic Life Insurance  
The Church of St. John the Divine  
Faith Lutheran Church

Haltmar Family  
Houston Ballet  
Kolache Shoppe  
Lamar High School  
Momentum BMW  
National Charity League, Post Oak Chapter  
Panera Bread #4114  
River Oaks Baptist School  
St. John's School  
St. Philip Presbyterian Church  
St. Philip Presbyterian Church: Kids  
Against Hunger

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church & School  
Studio RED Architects  
West University United Methodist Church

*Thank you to those who donated in-kind goods to CCSC's Jingle Bell Express program:*

Bellaire United Methodist Church  
Crosspoint Church  
Kiwanis Club  
St. Luke's United Methodist Church  
Woodshop



# MEMORIAL AND HONOR GIFTS

Gifts received October through December 2019

## IN MEMORY OF:

**Adrienne Parker**  
Mrs. Alice U. Smith  
**Al Kister**  
Mrs. Emily Kister Barre  
**Anne Janes**  
Mr. Ed Janes  
**Betty and George Robertson**  
Dr. Patricia Robertson  
**Betty Robertson**  
Mr. David A. Robertson  
**C.J. Yeoman**  
Ms. Nancy Adkins  
Mr. Frederick Benn  
Friend of CCSC  
Ms. Karen Holloman  
Ms. Rae Jukkola  
Mrs. Colleen McCampbell  
Mr. and Mrs. William Steiner  
Mr. Georgia Weiss  
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Wootton  
Ms. Ann Yeoman  
**Cecilia Garcia**  
Ms. Joyce Ann Hays  
**Charlie Christopher, C.S.B.**  
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Callahan  
**Debbie Miller**  
Dr. Carol B. Stelling  
**Donna Armstrong**  
Ms. Jane Abshire  
**Dorothy Constantino**  
Ms. Violetta Maldonado  
**Fabian S. Arista**  
Mrs. Virginia Arista  
**Gilbert Brown**  
Mrs. Gene Brown

**Henry Halbach**  
Judge Joseph J. Halbach, Jr.  
**Jack W. Ewing**  
Mrs. Ruth Ewing  
**Jane Ramsey**  
Mr. Ben Ramsey  
Jill Toney  
Ms. Kathy Ellis  
**Kathryn and Virgil Swenson**  
Mrs. Marty Olson  
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Mr. and Mrs. Robert Blome  
Mrs. Margaret Ferro  
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Ms. Janet Hewett  
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Mr. and Mrs. Timothy Hughes  
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Mr. and Mrs. Michael Mason  
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Mr. and Mrs. David Persilver  
Ms. Barbara K. Runge  
Mrs. Barbara Spell  
Ms. Emily Templin  
Mr. and Mrs. Reginald Troclair  
Dr. and Mrs. Leonard Thalmueller  
Friend of CCSC  
**Mickey Strobel**  
Ms. Barbara L. Strobel  
**Randy Gorham**  
Mr. Andrew Weaver  
**Vic Moellering**  
Mrs. Barbara Moellering

## IN HONOR OF:

**Mr. & Mrs. Adam Orr**  
Mrs. Whitney Anderson  
**Alex and Dorothy Constantino**  
Mrs. Kathryn Precourt  
**Rev. Al Sinsac**  
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Callahan  
**Anne Holloman**  
Ms. Jane Eixmann  
**Arthur Miller**  
Ms. Holly Forney  
**Barbara Hatton**  
Dr. Robb Moses  
Betty Owens Geary's Birthday  
Mrs. Jane Szalkowski  
**Cheryl Longuet's Birthday**  
Mrs. Mary Jane Ryan  
**Donna Anderson's Birthday**  
Gary and Cynthia Lewis  
**Emily Griffin**  
Mrs. Mary Henderson  
**Father Vince Dulock, CSB**  
Mr. David P. Fowler  
**Jane Flinn**  
Ms. Sharon Current  
**John and Polly Collier**  
Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Springmeyer  
**Joy Hall's Birthday**  
Friend of CCSC  
**Judith Anderson**  
Mrs. Whitney Anderson  
**Ms. Judy Bolling's Birthday**  
Mrs. Jane Szalkowski  
**Kay & Fred Russell**  
Ms. Susan Schulz  
**Kay Russell**  
Ms. Ellen Marchand  
**Mr. & Mrs. Lance P. Olinde, Sr.**  
Mr. and Mrs. Lee Gross  
**Larry and Carolyn Judd's 50th Wedding Anniversary**  
Mr. and Mrs. M. T. Crump  
**Rev. Larry Hall**  
Friend of CCSC  
**Madison Trafton**  
Dr. Michael Metzger  
**Margie Donahue**  
Dr. and Mrs. Thomas P. Earthman  
**Martha Harper**  
Mr. and Mrs. John Perry  
**Martha Harper**  
Mrs. Meg Caldwell  
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Elwood  
Ms. Charlotte McClain  
Ms. Roberta Todd  
**Nancy Cole**  
Ms. Sharon Current  
**Natalie M. Faust**  
Ms. Roberta Moore  
**Mr. & Mrs. Orion Campbell**  
Dr. and Mrs. Thomas P. Earthman  
**Dr. Ourania Preventz**  
Dr. Benjamin Cheong  
**Pat Weatherspoon-Hall**  
Ms. Jeannine A. Smith  
**St. Philip Presbyterian Church Staff**  
Rev. John Wurster and  
Mrs. Deborah Burks  
**Mr. and Mrs. Warren Fisher**  
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Palmer  
**Wroxton Small Group - St. Luke's**  
Mr. and Mrs. John Farrell

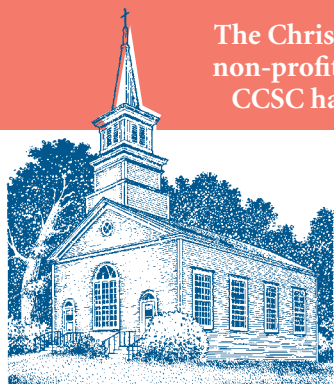
## CHRISTMAS WISHES FOR:

**Bebe Burns**  
Mr. Samuel Burns  
**Mr. & Mrs. Bob Burns**  
Dr. and Mrs. William Lee  
**Carol and Charles Lucas**  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Estill  
**Chris and Lori Givens**  
Mr. and Mrs. James Konen  
**Dorothy and Nancy Cameron**  
Mrs. Virginia Rorschach  
**Douglass L. Simmons**  
Ms. Sheryl Curtin  
**Greg and Colleen Freeman**  
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Szalkowski  
**Harvey and Lisa Simon**  
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Szalkowski  
**Jane & Lee Larkin**  
Dr. and Mrs. William Lee  
**Jim & Beth Wiggins**  
Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Lewis  
**Dr. John W. Caudill**  
Mr. John Donovan  
**Loren M Goens's Birthday & Christmas**  
Rev. Ray Winston Goens, Jr.  
**Marcia James**  
Dr. and Mrs. William Lee  
**Mary Bratton**  
Dr. and Mrs. William Lee  
**Mr. and Mrs. Richard G. Rorschach**  
Mrs. Virginia Rorschach  
**Mr. & Mrs. Robert Estill**  
Dr. and Mrs. William Lee  
**Rob Landes**  
Mr. and Mrs. John Farrell  
Roddy Young  
Mr. and Mrs. John Farrell  
**William Sing**  
Mrs. Erin Biscone



## Shop & Donate

Earn money for CCSC while you shop by connecting your Kroger Card to CCSC through Kroger's Community Rewards program (or reconnecting it for this year after August 1st). Visit [www.KrogerCommunityRewards.com](http://www.KrogerCommunityRewards.com) and follow the instructions. CCSC's organization number is 80790. THANK YOU!



The Christian Community Service Center (CCSC) is an award-winning, community-based non-profit organization serving the southwest Houston community. Incorporated in 1980, CCSC has grown to encompass a coalition of 40 churches united in service to the needy.

Bellaire United Methodist Church  
Bering Drive Church of Christ  
Bethany Christian Church  
Christ the King Lutheran Church  
ChristChurch Presbyterian  
Covenant Church  
Faith Lutheran Church

First Christian Church  
First Evangelical Lutheran Church  
First Seventh Day Baptist Church  
Grace United Church of Christ  
Holy Ghost Catholic Church  
Houston International Seventh Day  
Adventist Church  
Kindred Church  
Pathways Church  
Pilgrim Lutheran Church  
Rice Temple Baptist Church  
River Oaks Baptist Church  
Sharpstown Baptist Church  
Southwest Presbyterian Church  
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church  
St. Anne Catholic Community  
St. John the Divine Episcopal Church

St. Luke's Presbyterian Church  
St. Luke's United Methodist Church  
St. Mark's Episcopal Church  
St. Martin's Episcopal Church  
St. Matthew's Episcopal Church  
St. Michael Catholic Church  
Saint Paul Presbyterian Church  
St. Philip Presbyterian Church  
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church  
St. Theresa Catholic Church  
St. Thomas' Episcopal Church  
St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church  
WatersEdge Community Church  
West End Church  
West University Baptist Church  
West University United Methodist Church  
Westminster United Methodist Church

**Christian Community Service Center**  
**P. O. Box 27924**  
**Houston, TX 77227-7924**

Connections, CCSC's quarterly newsletter, is designed to keep you in touch with CCSC's mission, ministries, events, member churches and volunteers.

**www.ccschouston.org**

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## CCSC's Garden Brings Fresh Fruits, Vegetables to the Food Pantries



Many of CCSC's clients live in "food deserts" where quality produce is largely unavailable or unaffordable. CCSC's Garden, on the property of the Gethsemane campus of St. Luke's United Methodist Church, operates year-round to bring CCSC's clients fresh fruits and vegetables in addition to the well-balanced food packages (of mostly non-perishable items) given out at our two food pantries.

Those served by the food pantries are always appreciative of the Garden's offerings as fresh vegetables are not often a viable financial option for those on limited budgets.

Like all CCSC programs, the Garden is staffed by volunteers. In 2019 about 17 ongoing and 38 temporary volunteers harvested 6,102 pounds of fruits and vegetables from the Garden.

Volunteers Elizabeth Castro and Ron Smith served as the primary Garden Leaders with staff support from Emergency Services-Southwest Manager Pat Weatherspoon-Hall.

Volunteers work in the Garden on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings and carry out a variety of tasks including planting, weeding, hauling compost/dirt, harvesting, assembling equipment and more.

If you would like to volunteer to help out in the CCSC Garden, please contact Erin Donohue at [volunteer@ccschouston.org](mailto:volunteer@ccschouston.org) or 713-961-3993.



Photos courtesy of John Reynolds