Ways To *Give*

Give Online

Make a secure one-time gift or set up a recurring monthly donation (EFT or credit card) to provide steady, reliable support for our neighbors.

Scan Me!

Mail A Check

You can mail your check in the enclosed envelope directly to our team. *Please make checks payable to **The Other Way Ministries**:*

The Other Way Ministries
839 Sibley St. NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Donate Goods & High-Needs Items

We rely on physical donations to keep our programs running smoothly. Whether it's stocking our food pantry or providing seasonal support, your in-kind gifts make an immediate difference.

Check our website's high-needs list at **theotherway.org/donate** or call ahead to see what items our community needs most right now!

Have You Thought About Planned Giving?

Maximize your impact at **The Other Way** today and into the future with a Planned Gift that suits your preferences and circumstances. By making a planned gift, you're inspiring others to do the same!

Let us know how we can help you take the next step to give in any of the following ways:

- Donor-Advised Fund
- Gifts of Appreciated Stock
- IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution
- Gifts from your Estate or Will

A New Tax Benefit for Donors!

In 2026, most taxpayers will be able to deduct charitable gifts, even if they don't itemize. It's a great time to support the missions and organizations you care about! You can deduct up to $1,000 (individual) or $2,000 (married filing jointly). Please consult a tax advisor for details about your individual situation or visit **IRS.gov**.

Stay *Connected!*
(616) 454-4011
@TheOtherWayMinistries
@TheOtherWayGR
@TheOtherWayGR
@The-Other-Way-Ministries



Impact In *Action*

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

GALATIANS 6:2

Fall Newsletter 2026

A Letter Of Gratitude & Need From Our *Executive Director*

Every fall, as the days get shorter and the air gets colder, I think about the neighbors who walk through our doors. This year, there are more than ever.

In 2019, our pantry served about 150 visitors a month. Today, that number has **grown to more than 900**. Including their family members, we estimate **we are feeding over 2,500 individuals each month**. The room we use was never meant to be a pantry.

Our neighbors call it ***the living room of the Westside***. In reality, it's a tiny grocery store, often with a long line. Rent and groceries keep climbing. People are working hard and still coming up short at the end of the month. And with the Christmas season ahead, heating bills, kids home from school, and a refrigerator to fill, that gap only gets wider.

It's hardest on the little ones. **We're the only licensed childcare center on the Westside serving infants and toddlers from families who need help affording it**, and the Westside is meeting only about 5% of the need. Our waitlists for childcare and youth programs keep growing, and parents tell us plainly: without us, they'd have to quit their jobs.



Want To Get Involved?
You Can Help Kids In Need Have A *Merry Christmas!*

For 35 years, **The Other Way** has helped local families experience the magic of the holiday season with dignity and without financial strain through our Christmas Store.

Last year we served over 150 families (including 404 kiddos) who otherwise would have gone without presents on Christmas morning. Thanks to generous donors like you, we are able to provide up to $100 in shopping credit per child, empowering parents to hand-pick the gifts their kids are wishing for most!

Please reach out to **sray@theotherway.org** or call **(616) 454-4011 x5220** if you have any questions on how to get involved!

Scan To Learn More & Register To Donate Gifts!



My experience at the **Christmas Store** meant everything to me. It was a huge blessing when things were really tough and it took so much pressure off of me mentally and emotionally. I loved how welcoming everyone was. ***You make a huge difference in our community!*** I am beyond grateful for all of you!! Thank you, and yes I cried while typing this!!

Isabel, Parent

The Other Way Ministries — Christmas Store SHOP WITH DIGNITY — *Over 35 Years!*



We see the safety nets for people in our community being systematically taken away. We were really impressed upon the importance of caring for our neighbor, and in such a tangible way as providing food. We know the weight that food expenses carry on households and we are thankful for the attention and inclusivity shown by **The Other Way**. We know local people are hurting and we want to be part of easing their burdens.

Kara Hoffman, Donor

I'm amazed when I come here how open people are to share their stories... It's rewarding for me to volunteer because I find it helpful to help people, but also, hopefully, there's an impact.

Gary, Volunteer



Volunteer Your Time

Hands-on support is vital to our mission. Join us by serving in our pantry, in our youth programs, or contact us to see how you can get involved in helping our incredible neighbors.

Sign up at: theotherway.org/volunteer

For almost 60 years now, what keeps us going is following Jesus in the way of love: showing mercy, seeking justice for everybody, and treating every person who walks through our doors with the dignity they already have. Someone like Jenni-Rae, who came to our pantry for food, and now volunteers to help our neighbors find housing while she finishes college. Or Gary, who comes down to volunteer and work with neighbors every week because its "helpful to help people."

This is what a place built on real relationships looks like.

None of it happens without you. Every meal on the shelf, every child provided for, and every teenager with somewhere to belong is because you show up, again and again, for neighbors you may never meet. **Thank you for being part of our story**.

The stories in these pages are only a small slice of what your generosity makes possible. As we step into the Christmas season together, I want to thank you and humbly ask for your help in continuing to show that **there is always an Other Way forward**.

Sincerely,

Scott Bloem, Executive Director
The Other Way Ministries



Individually & Collectively *We Practice:*

- *Following Jesus In The Way Of Love*
- *Integrity In All Aspects Of Our Ministry*
- *Honoring The Dignity Of All People*
- *A Ministry Of Hope Extending Mercy & Seeking Justice*

The Living Room Of The Westside

Jenni-Rae's Story

Jenni-Rae was struggling when she moved to the Westside to live in the GVSU dorms in 2022. Navigating bankruptcy, college coursework, and strict income rules that left her ineligible for food stamps, she struggled simply to keep food on her table.

She was utilizing the campus pantry, but it wasn't enough. Searching for nearby support, Jenni discovered **The Other Way** just a short walk up the road.







> **I found out I was in the zip code and could come a couple of times a month,** Jenni recalls. **I was like, 'Oh my goodness, they actually have milk and things so I don't have to eat all canned food!'**



Beyond the grocery assistance, Jenni found a welcoming community. Connecting right away with staff, she felt moved to give back. **"I didn't want to just be a taker,"** she says. **"I told them, 'When school slows down in the summer, I'm going to come back and help because you guys are helping me.'"**

True to her word, Jenni began volunteering during her summer breaks. Later, while pursuing her bachelor's degree in social work, staff members advocated for her to complete her official internship right here. During her internship, Jenni turned her own lived experience into empathy for others, guiding her neighbors through the daunting search for affordable housing while facing housing insecurity herself.

Today, she continues to manage and update a comprehensive community housing board for neighbors in need.

> **They really meet you where you're at,** Jenni shares. **They don't judge you. It's called 'the living room of the Westside' because it feels like home. Hundreds of families get helped out of that small building.**