

GrassrootGivers News

Fall 2016

Issue 1

A Day of Simple Giving



Our 10th Annual Day of Simple Giving will be held Saturday November 5, 2016 from 10am to 1pm. Check out page 2 for details, all are welcome!

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Community Store



Changes are coming to our Community Store as we move from the locker room to the lap pool! Details begin on page 3

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Meet Our VISTA



Grassroot Givers is welcoming our new AmeriCorps VISTA for 2016/2017

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GrassrootGivers
Fall 2016



Events Calendar

10/22 National Make a Difference Day

11/05 “A Day of Simple Giving,” 10am-1pm at St. Sophia’s Greek Church

11/11 Veterans Day



Our Little Free Libraries are popping up all over the Capital Region! These miniature libraries provide people throughout Albany the opportunity to take a book home, or to share with the rest of the community

Collections/ Skills Needed

As a small nonprofit, we depend on volunteers to help us directly support individuals, nonprofits, academic programs, literacy projects and other agencies serving those in need.



Do you have a special interest, skill or area of expertise? We invite individuals, families, coworkers, businesses, religious groups, seniors, civic clubs and scouts to share their talents.

**For more information, contact us at
info@grassrootgivers.org or visit us at
grassrootgivers.org**

A Day of Simple Giving

As the summer of 2016 draws to a close, we are beginning to look ahead to our annual community service event "A Day of Simple Giving." This year, A Day of Simple Giving will be held **Saturday, November 5, 2016** from 10am to 1pm. It will be held at St. Sophia's Greek Church, 440 Whitehall Road in Albany.

The purpose of "A Day of Simple Giving" is to address the needs throughout the Capital District. At the event, volunteers move between "Donation Stations," to take part in activities including assembling gift bags of household goods, baking cookies for community dinners, and making other practical items for local families, homeless shelters and over 50 regional nonprofits. Donation stations in the past have included layering dry soup ingredients, writing thank you cards to our troops and creating personal care kits. At the end of the day, over \$26,000 worth of basic necessities are ready to go out into the community.

Each year, diverse and dedicated members of the community come together to help make the day a success. We are grateful for all of the volunteers in the Capital District that have dedicated their time and talents. These volunteers represent groups as diverse as religious organizations, local fraternities, and the Girl Scouts, among others. We look forward to continuing our partnerships with them in 2016 and beyond.

There are many ways to contribute to the success of the event. If you or your organization are interested in holding a collection drive, supervising a table or attending the event or if you would like more information about "A Day of Simple Giving", please contact us at [info@grassrootgivers.org!](mailto:info@grassrootgivers.org)





Community Store

We will soon be moving the Community Store from its current location (former men's locker room and shower) and joining the Book Project in the front lap pool. We have spent over a year working on the facility, as well as researching and evaluating our model. We continue to support over 600 visitors each month. We are excited about opening a beautiful, welcoming space for our customers. Individuals and families will be able to come and choose exactly what they need, free of charge.

In order to best serve the community, we believe we need to continuously evaluate our work and ask ourselves if we are doing the best we can to fulfill our mission. Several months ago, we met with Siena College's Community Engagement Office and other regional nonprofits to discuss some of these important topics:

- As a community, are we achieving our most important goal - to give with dignity?
- Is our model of charitable giving helping those in need move toward sustainable independence?
- Are the traditional methods of giving working in the Capital Region?

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Poverty in Our Region

The data found in the column to the right provides us with insight to the struggles faced by many individuals and families in the Capital District. All data is from Census.gov and is based on the City of Albany



Book Project

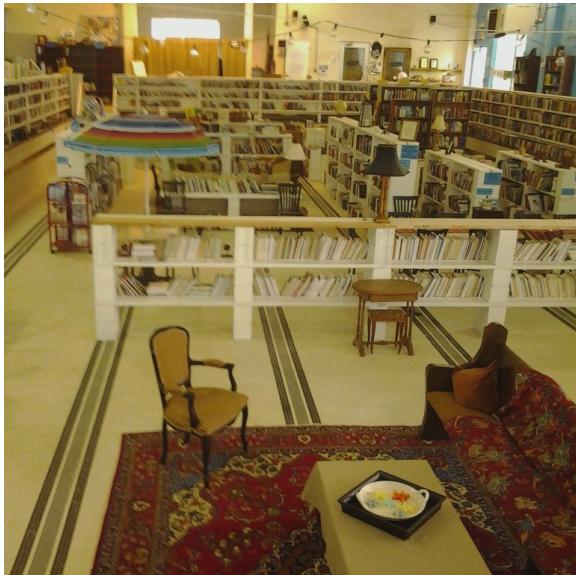
At the Book Project, our goal is to put books into the hands of people who don't have access to owning them. To this end, we have given out over 90,000 books since opening our doors in 2011 and the number is increasing each year. We distribute these books directly to our clients and also indirectly through the many nonprofits in the area, as well as to teachers in all of the City of Albany public schools. We know that access to books is an essential part of giving children in poverty the opportunity to achieve and, indeed, excel. Equally important is sparking a child's interest in reading, putting them on the path to academic success and, hopefully, a lifelong love of learning.

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Education & Poverty in Albany

Education Level	Poverty Rate
<High School Graduate	42.8%
High School Graduate	27.9%
Some College/ Associate's	13.5%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	8.5%

Factfinder.census.gov



One of the most unique aspects of our organization is the fact that our Book Project and Community Store are located in a former swimming pool

Meet Our New VISTA

Those of you who have been around Grassroot Givers since the beginning of August may have noticed a new face working at a desk at the end of the pool. I would like to introduce myself—my name is Adam, and I will be serving as the Community Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator for



Grassroot Givers as a part of the AmeriCorps VISTA program. Whether you are a volunteer, a partner, a client, a donor, or anyone else who happens by our pool, don't hesitate to come by as I always enjoy meeting new people! The image you see to the left is the neat view of our pool from my desk.

I look forward to a successful year serving with Grassroot Givers. The dedication of our team, the generosity of the Albany community, and the creative and unique character of our organization are nothing short of inspiring.

Community Store—continued from page 3

- Are our donor's monetary donations and the community at large working together and partnering so we can get the best return on our investments?

Two books that have been inspirational to this conversation:

Toxic Charity by Robert Lupton - In his book Lupton describes how our good intentions can have unintended, dire consequences when it comes to charitable giving. He offers a model that focuses on empowering individuals to strengthen their own communities.

The second book is *Dignity* by Donna Hicks, Ph.D. *Dignity* offers an important perspective on the value of dignity in all of our lives. This book specifically relates to work we do each day through the Community Store and Book Project.

Once we move our community store to the lap pool, we will employ a new cooperative-type model, one that examines the client's basic needs and seeks to empower them by giving them a stake in the store. Shoppers will be surveyed on their initial visit and asked what they need to make their lives more successful; in exchange for basic necessities, many shoppers will trade volunteer hours at the store, if they are able to work. Emphasis will be placed on helping clients to move forward.

Book Project—continued from page 3

Recently, we began a small pilot program designed to do both, right in our own building. We began engaging trained volunteers, most of whom are current and former teachers, to read aloud weekly to the GWU Child Development Center students, made up of both a toddler and a 3 and 4 year old class. We also send home goodie bags of 5 books per week with the students, aiming to create and add to the child's home library.

So far, the program has been a success, if the enthusiasm of the child is any measure! We all look forward to our weekly story time and book bags and we anticipate a long partnership with the GWU Day Care program.

