

Compassion Connection Helps To Meet Needs

128,861 pounds of food purchased in 2011
2400 boxes of food distributed
54 pounds of food in each box
217 families served each month

On the third Friday of each month, an average of 217 families walk through the doors of the Threshing Floor, a building

on the property of Trinity Christian Life Center, to pick up their monthly donation of food. The food items the families receive aren't just canned goods. While the products vary from month to month, families can generally receive not only canned goods but cereal, pasta, breads, meat, vegetables, fruit,

and a variety of desserts. Trinity Christian Life Center orders the food directly from the Red Cross and it is delivered to the church on distribution day each month. Volunteers begin arriving in the morning to help set up tables, unload the truck, arrange the food on tables, and prepare for the arrival of the guests. A few

volunteers will cook homemade soups, coffee, and desserts to share with the guests when they come to pick up their food. Volunteers also carry the boxes of food which could weigh over 50 pounds. This service is a great help to the participant families who are unable to carry their own boxes.

Compassion Connection began over ten years ago as a way to help feed families in the area. Families must fill out an application and meet income requirements to be eligible to participate in the program. There is a high demand to join and many families are on a waiting list.

The families who come each month are not only fed physically but are also given the opportunity to be fed spiritually. Volunteers are available to pray for people if it is requested and a monthly newsletter is distributed with each box.

Compassion Connection is funded by monthly donations given by members of Trinity Christian Life Center and members of the community. If you would like to contribute to Compassion Connection, please call Trinity Christian Life Center at 989-539-9731.

Road Commission Receives Failing Grade From Constituents

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE.

"In regard to overtime, the policy also states that "Due to a steady decrease in road funding and an increase in costs, the road commission will not clear county roads on weekend overtime. Snow removal equipment will continue to be available to help ambulance, fire and police vehicles respond to emergencies."

This policy was printed in all three area newspapers prior to the beginning of the winter season 2011-2012. Bushong stated that this policy has been the standard and has not deviated for the past several decades.

In response to the Thursday, January 12, 2012 storm, which began as rain and turned over to heavy snowfall in the afternoon, Bushong stated that this snowfall was very slow to accumulate, but was slow moving so it ended up dumping between four and eight feet of snow in the Clare County area. As temperatures plummeted from a high of 50 degrees on Wednesday, to roughly 15 degrees by Friday morning, January 13, the slow moving storm continued to dump on the county area. Conditions were slick and caused the closing of area schools and even the Clare County Courthouse.

The Road Commission worked until roughly 11 p.m. on Thursday night and returned to work at 4 a.m. on Friday morning. Per the county's contract with MDOT, state roadways were cleared first; this includes US 127, Business 127, M-61, M-115, and US 10. County backtops are next on the list to clear per Road Commission priorities, but weekend overtime was not allowed, per the Road Commission Winter Policy as indicated above.

So why all the complaints? Obviously the Road Commission's budget is a major issue, and revenue for the department has been dropping consistently while operational costs have increased. Since funding has decreased, replacement of retiring workers has not resulted in replacement with new employees. In fact, Bushong - who has been with the department for 23 years starting in 1989 - stated that the department now operates on less than half the crew it did back in the 1970s. Despite having the same policy in place for many years, such a decrease comes at a cost, and with the priorities of state roads over county roads, backtops over back roads and subdivisions, somewhere there must be a breaking point.

Bushong, however, claims that the cut in crew members hasn't

really been experienced as a loss of road clearing abilities, in fact stating that output has roughly stayed the same.

"We are able to get roads opened up quicker now with fewer men because of this newer equipment and the devotion and expertise of our work crew. We can't possibly open up all roads at the same time; we live in northern Michigan partnership between road agencies and the public."

Citizens calling to complain beg to differ, feeling that there has been a noticeable drop in service, especially to outlying areas. One of the department's critics, Cynthia Wagner, who lives in the Cranberry Lake area, stated that she has noticed a strong drop in service over the past several years. The Cleaver provided Wagner with information from the press release on the Road Commission's policy, but she was not moved.

"Who signed this policy? Who approved that? Was it our Commissioners? When was the last time this was signed, because I think they should reconsider their policy," Wagner told the Cleaver.

Wagner, who is retired, stated that she listens to a scanner a good portion of the time, and was tuned in this past Wednesday, January 18, during the "day after" clean up

from the ice/snow combination. Wagner stated that she heard one of the trucks radio the office with the question, "It's really getting slippery out here, should I start to put down the mix," to which it was responded that, "I'm not sure, what do you think?" and "If you start to put the mix down make sure you get the area where the accident was." Wagner believed they were talking about the deadly roll over on US 127 just south of Arnold Lake Road.

"If it's slippery, then put down the salt and dirt, it's that simple," Wagner continued, "Slippery roads are dangerous and they should be dealt with, not only for the safety and welfare of our local citizens, but also for visitors which this area relies upon for revenue."


Wagner also stated that since moving up to Harrison from Florida in the late 90s, she vividly recalls plow and salt trucks hitting the road on weekends, which, according to her, is contradictory to the statement in their winter policy.

Bushong had stated in an email response to the Cleaver that weekends are not totally out of the question and never have been in severe enough weather conditions, just not normal procedure. He also stated that, "We try to clear roads as quickly as we can within our

means." The department cooperates with local busing authorities such as the CCTC and First Student, who keep the department apprised of road conditions during inclement weather.

Citizens like Wagner feel that the county itself should revisit their policy and look for alternatives during bad road conditions, but if state revenue sharing and other forms of income continue to dwindle, there may be little recourse to their frustration.

Bushong reminded the Cleaver that clearing snow and ice from roads isn't the only job of the department, adding, "After winter-time, and spring arrives and snow melts, everything that was spent during the winter - it's gone - and we didn't provide one improvement to our road system. All we have done is made our roads safer and allowed people to travel, but it didn't realize one improvement. We have to balance the needs of people who want potholes patched and gravel roads graded."



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Harrison Ski Team Girls Take 1st Place

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE.

The following skiers were All Conference in Slalom Jordan Coon, Tina Price and Riley Romanowski. The following skiers received Honorable Mentions in Slalom Alyssa Price, Savanna Duggan and Dylan LaPorte. All Conference in Giant Slalom went to Jordan Coon, Tina Price, Riley Romanowski and Honorable Mentions to Alyssa Price, Savanna Duggan and Dylan LaPorte.

The Girls Skiers for the Conference meet are: Jordan Coon with 1st place finish in Slalom with a first run of 19.86 and a second run of 18.87 for combined runs of 37.83 and a 1st placed finish in Giant Slalom with a first run of 18.25 and a second run of 16.62 for a combined runs of 34.87. Tina Price takes 3rd place in Slalom with a first run of 20.71 and a second run of 22.38 for combined runs of 43.09 and takes 2nd in Giant Slalom with a first run of 19.98 and a second run of 16.94 for combined runs of 36.92. Riley Romanowski takes 4th place in Slalom with a first run of 22.12 and a second run of 22.20 for com-

combined runs of 44.32 and takes 6th place in Giant Slalom with a first run of 20.35 and a second run of 17.97 for combined runs of 38.32. Savanna Duggan takes 6th place in Slalom with a first run of 23.42 and a second run of 23.32 for combined runs of 46.74 and takes 9th place in Giant Slalom with a first run of 20.98 and a second run of 18.38 for combined runs of 39.36. Marisa Kulper takes 16th place with a first run of 26.63 and a second run of 28.21 for a combined runs of 54.84 and in Giant Slalom takes 17th with a first run of 24.41 and a second run of 19.47 for combined runs of 43.88. Alyssa Price takes 17th place in Slalom with a first run of 27.15 and a second run of 28.65 for combined runs of 55.80 and takes 7th place in Giant Slalom with a first run of 21.00 and a second run of 17.77 for a combined runs of 38.77.

JV Girls Christian Meylen skied in Slalom with a time of 30.04 first run and a 35.53 second run for combined runs of 65.57 and in Giant Slalom her 1st run was 27.22 and second run 22.96 for combined runs of 50.18. Andi Martinez Slalom runs were 28.48 first run

and 37.49 second run for combined runs of 65.97 and in Giant Slalom her first run was 25.98 and her second run was 21.03 for combined runs of 47.01.

Boys Skiers for the Conference meet Hosted by Harrison are: Dylan LaPorte taking 6th place in Slalom with a first run of 19.69 and a second run of 18.61 for combined runs of 38.30 and in Giant Slalom Dylan takes 7th place with a first run of 16.13 and a second run of 17.98 for combined runs of 34.11. Beau Niezguski takes 8th place in Slalom with a first run of 20.82 and a second run of 19.14 for combined runs of 39.96 and in Giant Slalom Beau takes 8th place with a first run of 15.66 and a second run of 18.46 for combined runs of 34.12. Ben Taylor takes 13th in Slalom with a first run of 21.18 and a second run of 20.22 for combined runs of 41.40 and in Giant Slalom Ben takes 23rd with a first run of 17.22 and a second run of 21.41 for combined runs of 38.44. Josh Wilson takes 15th in Slalom with a first run of 21.72 and a second run of 21.50 for combined runs of 43.22 and in Giant Slalom Josh takes 24th with a first

run of 17.54 and a second run of 21.41 for combined runs of 38.95. Thomas Sofka takes 18th in Slalom with a first run of 22.23 and a second run of 21.94 for combined runs of 44.14 and in Giant Slalom Thomas takes 20th with a first run of 16.75 and a second run of 20.40 for combined runs of 37.15. Kalib Clark takes 22nd in Slalom with a first run of 38.44 and a second run of 20.00 for combined runs of 58.44 and in Giant Slalom Kalib takes 6th with a first run of 15.86 and a second run of 17.98 for combined runs of 33.84.

The next Ski Meet for Harrison is January 30, 2012 at Crystal Mt for the Manistee Invitational.



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