

Happy New Year!



# Delaware Regional Dream Center 2025 Impact Report

Delivering Hope For the Healing.

[www.dreamcenterde.org](http://www.dreamcenterde.org) | [@dreamcenterde](https://twitter.com/dreamcenterde) | (302) 286 - 7406

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# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

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Dear Friends,

2025 has been a year of remarkable growth and impact despite the shifting of the economy and government setbacks.

Together, we reached more families as we expanded our Hunger Relief Program to over 4,300 participants. We launched our new after-school Dream Readers program for 4th and 5th-grade students.

We continued our twelve outreach events to help build stronger communities, and started our 2nd year of Living Free counseling classes for those struggling with life-controlling issues.

Your trust and generosity fuel our mission every day as we look to open a STEAM lab in the spring of 2026 to further connect students to the future of learning.

Thank you for standing with us.



*Matthew Morrison*, MAS, BSN, RN  
Executive Director



# OUR MISSION & VALUES



**Mission:** To provide community outreach to individuals by coordinating services and referrals that fulfill life's basic needs. We motivate individuals to achieve a higher standard of living.

**Values:**

- Integrity
- Respect
- Empowerment
- Generosity
- Excellence

**Vision:** Our goal is to build a House of HOPE so, we can help HEAL the Hurting.







# YEAR AT A GLANCE

- **190,263** lbs of food distributed
- **4,312** participants in our Hunger Relief program
- **18** participants in our Living Free program
- **12** community outreaches
- **+2,000 meals** for Thanksgiving
- **20 students** in our after-school Dream Readers program
- **648 volunteers** from **12** different **organizations** served **2,035 hours**





# KEY PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

At the Dream Center, we are committed to addressing critical needs within our community by focusing on three key areas: adequate food, health, and quality education—three of the seven essential categories identified for household stability in Delaware’s ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) population.

In 2025, our core programs directly responded to these areas of need:

**Hunger Relief:** Provided nutritious meals to families facing food insecurity and crisis.

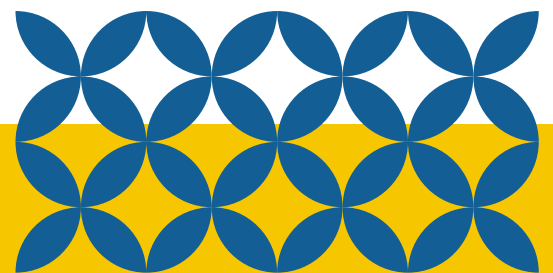
**Community Outreaches:** We serve our community through holiday and seasonal outreach events: Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, Hope Day, and Back-to-School.

**Living Free:** Offered a 12-week support group for individuals impacted by life-controlling mental health challenges and substance abuse.

**Dream Readers:** Delivered a reading enrichment program for 4th and 5th graders, promoting literacy and academic success.

**Each of these programs is designed to not only meet urgent needs but to foster long-term stability and empowerment for individuals and families.**

In the following pages, we’ll share key data and community survey insights to offer a clearer picture of the realities many Delaware residents are facing and how your support is making a difference.



# HUNGER RELIEF: WHERE WE SERVE

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## Bridging the Gap in Delaware

In Delaware, hunger is rarely about food supply—it's about access. While grocery store shelves may be stocked, thousands of families still struggle to afford basic nutrition due to rising costs, low wages, and limited resources.

### According to ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) data:

- 14 of the 20 most common jobs in Delaware in 2023 paid less than \$20/hour.
- Between 2010 and 2023, the number of ALICE households grew by 27%.
- 52% of Delaware residents live below 200% of the federal poverty line, disqualifying many from SNAP and other safety nets.
- At the same time, housing and basic living costs continue to outpace wages in low-income jobs.

This economic squeeze means more working families—especially those with children and seniors—are falling through the cracks.

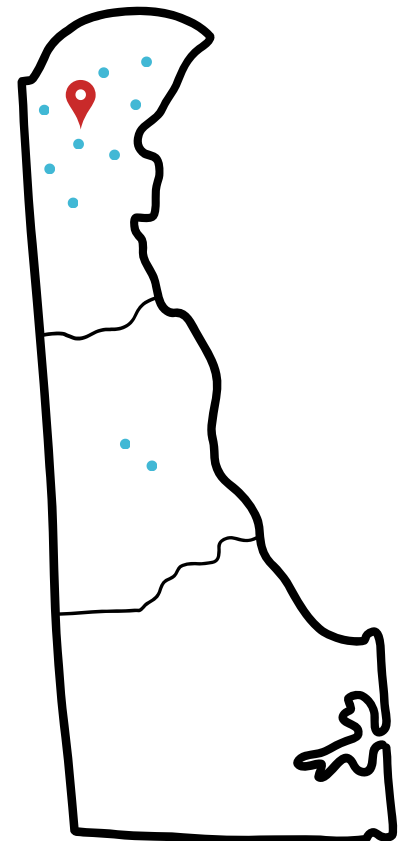
## Our Impact: Hunger Relief Program

To meet this growing need, our Hunger Relief Pantry expanded service in 2025, **serving 4,300 individuals—a 41% increase from 2,543 participants the year before.**

But with recent federal assistance programs and farm bill cuts, our resources were drastically reduced.

As a result, we had to **scale back 75%** from distributing food weekly to just once a month.

Still, we remain committed to filling the gap between food access and food insecurity, ensuring Delaware families don't face hunger alone.





# COMMUNITY OUTREACHES

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- **Opioid Narcan Awareness** - We've attended **two events at Jessup Street** with Nemours.
- **Thanksgiving** - We gave away **500 frozen turkeys & Boxes of Hope** filled with Thanksgiving fixings.
- **Christmas:** We partnered with **Parkview Assembly of God** for its **Live Nativity** event, where **over 500 people** attended to enjoy free toys, crafts for children, and delicious desserts, along with warm apple cider and cocoa for all.
- **Easter** - We gave away **720 Easter baskets**.
- **Hope Day** - Over **600 attendees joined** the celebration.
  - **74 fantastic volunteers** served with heart
  - **750 hamburgers & hot dogs grilled** and shared
  - **770 grocery bags distributed** to families
  - **48 health screenings provided** by caring professionals
  - **36 free haircuts offered** on-site
  - **12 community service organizations connected** with neighbors
  - **40 families received beautiful portraits**
- **Back-to-School** - We provided **728 backpacks filled with school supplies** across **five schools** and **three community events**.





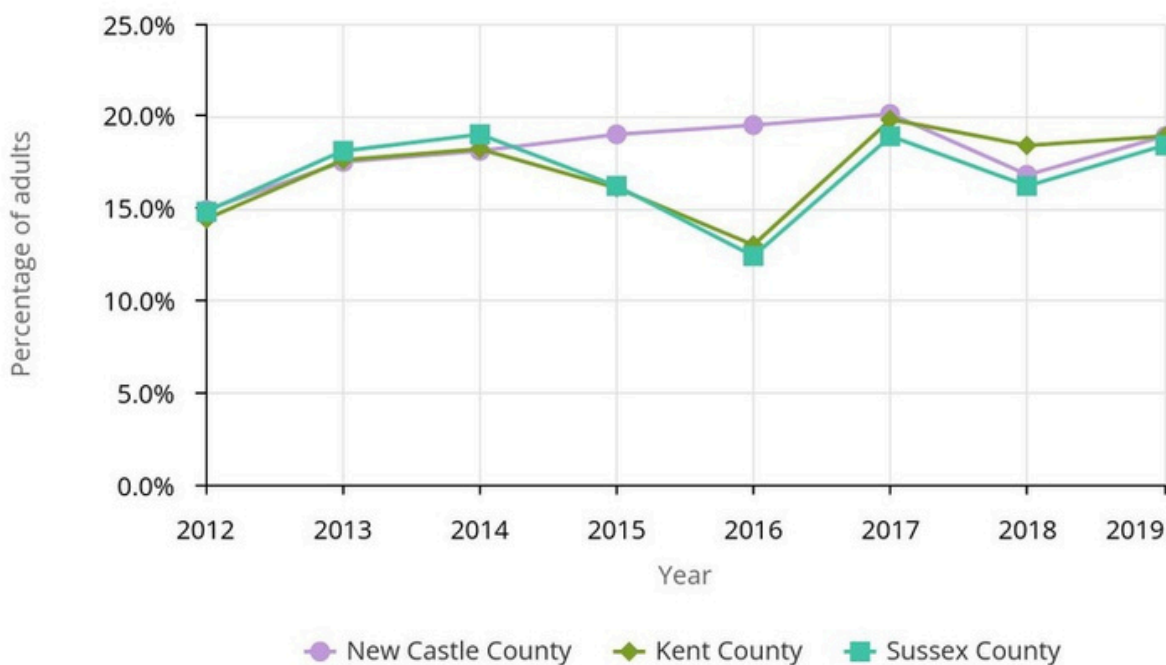
# MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE ABUSE

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Delaware is grappling with growing challenges in mental health and substance use, which often overlap.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, many individuals who develop substance use disorders are also diagnosed with mental disorders—and vice versa. In fact, about half of those who experience a mental illness in their lifetime will also experience a substance use disorder.

**Depression in Delaware** percentage of adults



- **Drug Overdose Deaths:** The state's age-adjusted overdose death rate reached 54.1 per 100,000 residents in 2021, reflecting a 69% increase from 2016 to 2021.
- **Depression in Adults:** In 2023, 20.1% of adults in Delaware reported experiencing depression, representing a 19% increase since 2018.

These trends highlight the urgency of integrated support systems. The overlap between mental health and substance use means that addressing one without the other risks leaving people vulnerable.

**Our Response: Living Free Program began in January 2024 and is now in its 2<sup>nd</sup> year.**

Through our **12-week Living Free** support group, we aim to offer a safe space for participants to address life-controlling mental health challenges and substance use simultaneously, recognizing the deep interconnection between the two. By doing so, we aim to reduce stigma, build resilience, and help participants access additional resources and care.

# EDUCATION GAP & OUR RESPONSE: DREAM READERS IN ACTION



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Over the past 15 years, students in the Red Clay School District—especially in grades 3 through 8—have experienced a significant decline in average reading and math scores (2009 → 2024). This downward trend reveals a growing educational gap that poses long-term challenges for children’s academic success and future opportunities.

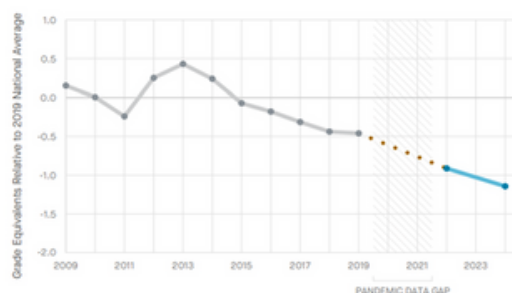
- **Reading:** **Down** 0.68 grade levels
- **Math:** **Down** 0.55 grade levels
- **Absenteeism:** **Increased** by 7% (2019–2023)

**Because of this, our Dream Readers Program** targets students in grades 4 and 5, focusing on early intervention to strengthen reading skills before deficits compound. We believe that improved literacy is a foundation for confidence, academic progress, and life outcomes.

## Why We Focus on Grades 4–5

- This is a pivotal time when students transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.”
- Bridging gaps early can help prevent stagnation or decline in later grades.
- Supporting reading proficiency now helps to counteract the wider systemic decline in test scores across all grades.

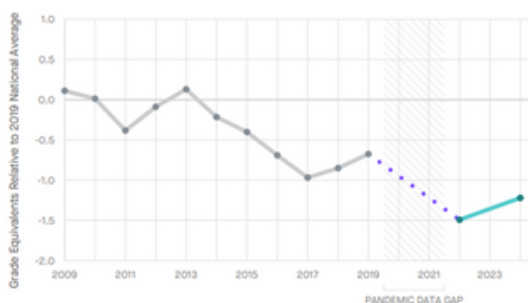
Reading Performance, Grades 3–8, 2009–2024



Average Reading Scores and Trends in Scores in Grade Level Equivalents Relative to the 2019 National Average

2019 Average	-0.46
2022 Average	-0.91
2024 Average	-1.14
2019–2022 Change	-0.45
2022–2024 Change	-0.23
Since 2019	-0.68

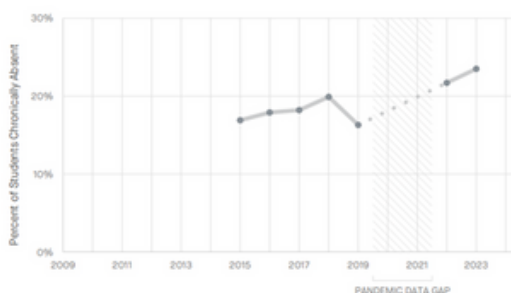
Math Performance, Grades 3–8, 2009–2024



Average Math Scores and Trends in Scores in Grade Level Equivalents Relative to the 2019 National Average

2019 Average	-0.68
2022 Average	-1.49
2024 Average	-1.22
2019–2022 Change	-0.82
2022–2024 Change	+0.27
Since 2019	-0.55

Absenteeism, Grades 3–8, 2009–2024



Absenteeism

2019–2023 Change	+0.07
Since 2009	N/A

Absenteeism data courtesy of [Nat Malkus, American Enterprise Institute](#)

# IMPACT STORIES



*"Yesterday, I drove a senior who is an amputee to the Dream Center's Thanksgiving dinner gifting. I can't tell you how impressed I was with the kindness shown to us. The volunteers are to be commended for giving up their time to help those less fortunate, especially in the rain. Thank you for supporting my friend, and so many others enjoy a Thanksgiving meal. We are blessed."*



"After my divorce, I became the sole provider for my five kids while attending nursing school, and no matter how hard I worked, I couldn't always afford enough food. When I found the Dream Center, I found more than just groceries, I found hope, support, and a community that reminded me we're not alone."

**Food Pantry Recipient**



"We have witnessed Living Free transform lives by helping people shift from patterns of delusion, secrecy, and isolation to a life of truth, trust, and connection. We encourage everyone to make the effort and experience the life-changing benefits. When individuals confront the issues that control their lives, Living Free offers the path to freedom."

**Living Free Recipient**



"Your food drive was very organized today. I only waited an hour. Thank you to the volunteers, the Police, and all the members of the Dream Center, Forever Grateful" ❤️

"I got a ride to the drive-through food pantry yesterday. Thank you for helping me feed my family. I'm feeling blessed."

"Thank You, Dream Center, to the Pastor and all the volunteers, you are a Blessing! Merry Christmas."



# PARTNERS & COLLABORATIONS







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## We thank our partners:

- University of Delaware Rugby Team
- Naaman Network
- Food Bank of Delaware
- DSAMH
- Leon Weiner & Associates and Arbor Apartments
- GOLO
- Nickel Electrical Companies
- Dupont Tralee Park
- Discover Card
- **Hospitals:** Nemours, St. Francis, and Christiana Care Hospital
- **Schools:** Heritage, Brader, Jennie Smith, Gallaher, Brookside, ASPIRA
- Hodgson Vo-Tech and Howard High School of Technology

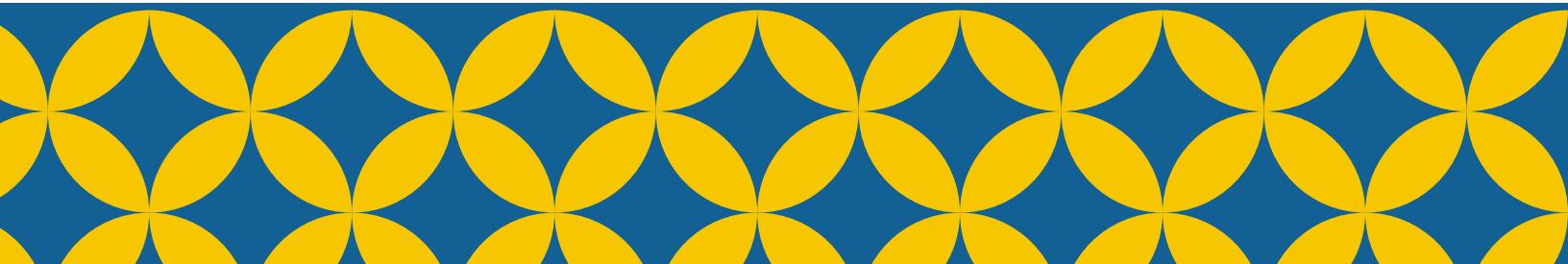
## AND MORE...





# COMMUNITY RECOGNITION

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# COMMUNITY RECOGNITION

In 2025, the Dream Center continued to be a strong voice in the community, both locally and statewide. **Executive Director Matt Morrison represented the organization in several key forums:**

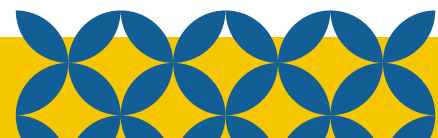
- Featured guest on the **Parent Camp Podcast**, sharing insights on our mission, partnerships, and mental health support.
- Participated in the **DO MORE 24 Livestream** with Christopher Bruce to promote giving and community impact.
- **Joined Senator Lisa Blunt Rochester** and other leaders to discuss the impact of potential federal funding cuts on Delaware nonprofits.
- **Collaborated with Senator Chris Coons**, congresswoman Sarah McBride, senator Lisa Blunt Rochester, and other advocates to bring attention to recent SNAP cuts, reaffirming our commitment to food access.
- The Dream Center **attended as an honorary guest at the Residence Inn** ribbon-cutting ceremony to represent our Delaware nonprofit and share community resources.

**We also took part in statewide advocacy efforts with the Food Bank of Delaware and partner agencies at Legislative Hall**, calling for increased funding for SNAP and Medicaid.

Our efforts were recognized with several honors:

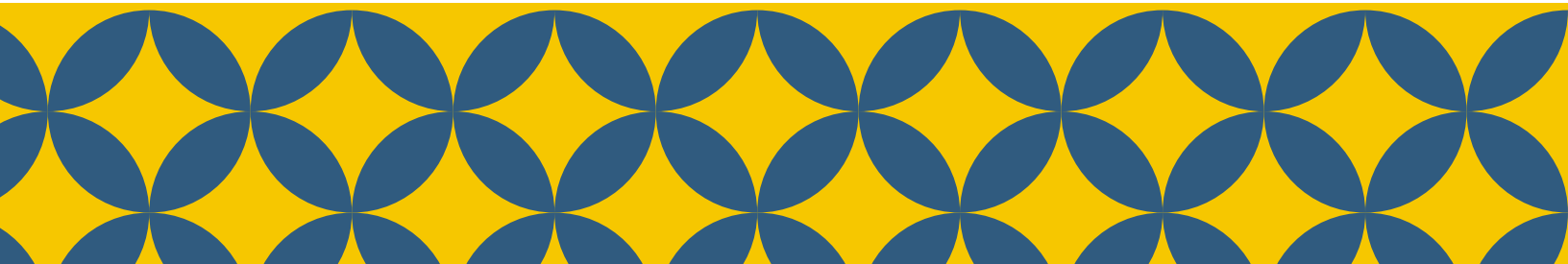
- Executive Director Matt Morrison received the **2025 Star Performer Award** from Aspira Academy.
- Volunteers Sharon, Stephanie, and Pam were awarded the **2025 Governor's Volunteer Service Award**.
- We earned the **Platinum Seal of Transparency** from Candid.org, affirming our accountability to donors and funders.
- We received a **Positive Points Program certificate** from Arbor Apartments.
- Special thanks to **Jennifer Brooks from GOLO** for hosting a cooking demo to ASPIRA staff showing how easy it is to turn a simple GOLO meal into something healthy, tasty, and full of personality.

These recognitions reflect the power of partnership, advocacy, and community support as we work together to create lasting change.





# VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS





# VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS

- Hours contributed: 2,035

“Volunteering here has been life-changing.”  
– Dream Center Volunteer.



# SOCIAL MEDIA OVERVIEW

## DELAWARE REGIONAL DREAM CENTER 2025

As a nonprofit, social media plays a key role in driving our mission forward; helping more people discover our work, engage with our programs, and get involved.



Facebook

2.3k

Total Followers



LinkedIn

78

Total Followers



Instagram

79

Total Followers



Youtube

12

Total Followers



1

Video Uploaded



Google SEO

60

Calls



3,684

Profile Views



Google Review

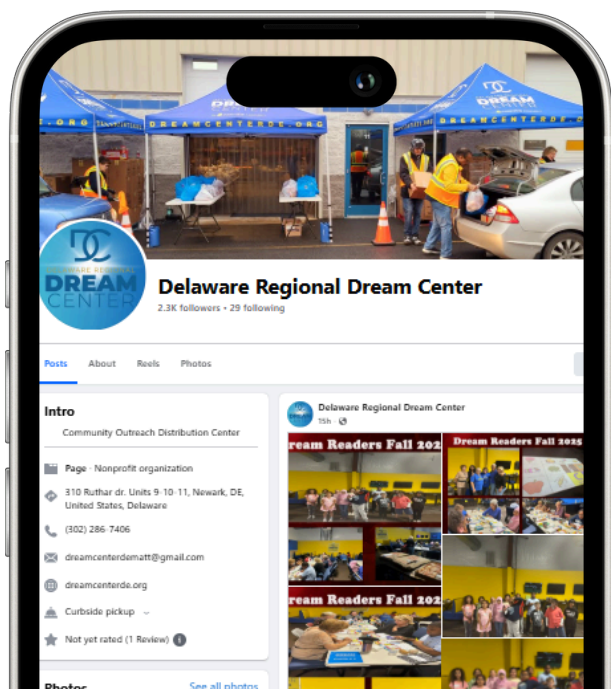
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Reviews



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Stars



Facebook remains our most effective platform for connecting with our audience and sharing updates.

This year, we expanded our reach by launching a YouTube channel, with plans to continue building a library of videos and community resources.



Platinum  
Transparency  
2025

Candid.

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

- **Income Sources:**
  - 45% donations
  - 40% grants
  - 10% events
  - 5% other
- **Expenses:**
  - 60% programs
  - 30% operations
  - 10% fundraising



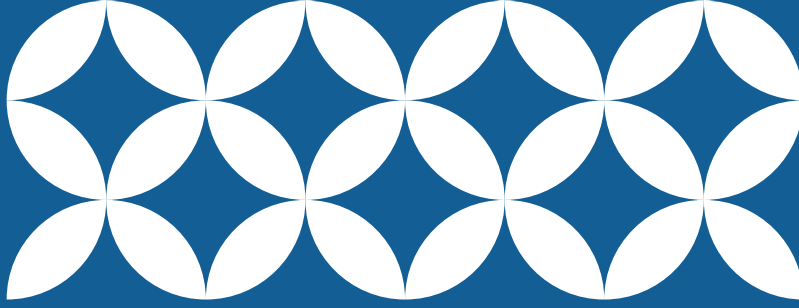
# LOOKING AHEAD

## In 2026, we aim to:

- Develop plans for a new location.
- Launch a STEAM lab.
- Increase Boxes of Hope Distribution x2 per month.
- Train volunteers in food inventory and warehousing.



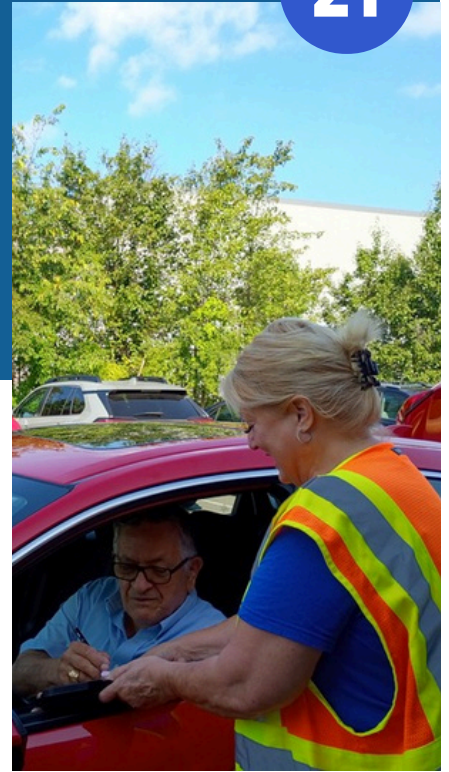




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**Thank you!**

# Be part of the change.



*Your support transforms lives. Join us in building brighter futures, as we are a beacon of light that facilitates Hope for healing.*

*"Together, we can make a difference that lasts forever."*



*Scan to change a life.*



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