

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS 2024 OUR IMPACT



**FISHERMAN'S
MARK** SOCIAL
SERVICES

HELP WHEN HELP IS NEEDED



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with gratitude for your unwavering support and inspired by the strength of the community we serve. Thanks to your generosity, Fisherman's Mark continues to be a lifeline for so many, adapting to evolving needs while embracing new opportunities on the horizon.

One of our most significant milestones this year was completing a comprehensive needs assessment for our organization. This critical step gives us a deeper understanding of the challenges facing our community and the resources we need to meet them. With this foundation, we are moving forward with plans for a permanent home for the Free MARKet—a dedicated space that will allow us to serve our neighbors more effectively and sustainably for years to come. We look forward to sharing more details about this exciting project soon.

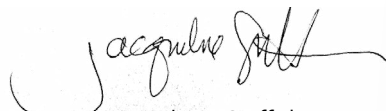
In a world where navigating systems can be complex and uncertain, especially for immigrants and underserved populations, we remain steadfast in our mission. We recognize that many of those we serve face unique legal and social challenges. That's why we are committed to providing tools and resources that empower individuals to know their rights, advocate for themselves, and access opportunities that lead to stability and security.

We are excited about what lies ahead and look forward to partnering with you on this journey. Together, we can continue building a community where every individual feels supported, valued, and empowered to thrive.

With gratitude and hope,



Jennifer Williford
Executive Director



Jacqueline Griffith
Chair,
Board of Trustees

2024 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Chair, Board of Trustees

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OUR MISSION

IS TO STRENGTHEN
OUR COMMUNITY.

With responsive programs and services that promote stability, health, and education, Fisherman's Mark is an advocate for positive change in the lives of our neighbors and their families.



Fisherman's Mark Social Services
60 Wilson Street | Lambertville, NJ 08530
(609) 397-0194 | www.fishermansmark.org

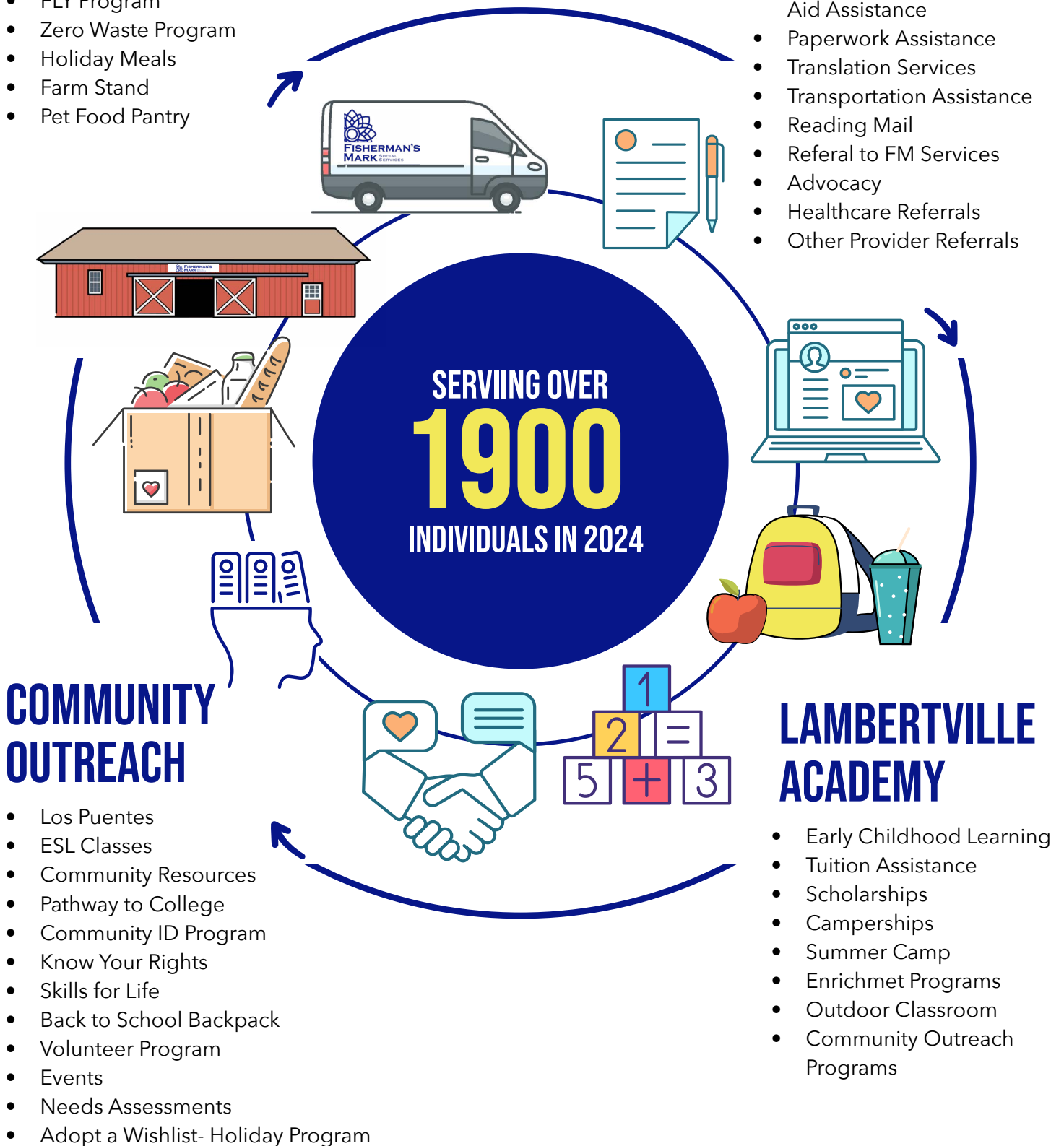
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

FOOD SUPPORT

- Free MARKET
- Mobile MARKET
- FLY Program
- Zero Waste Program
- Holiday Meals
- Farm Stand
- Pet Food Pantry

SOCIAL SERVICES

- Case Management
- State, Federal and County Aid Assistance
- Paperwork Assistance
- Translation Services
- Transportation Assistance
- Reading Mail
- Referral to FM Services
- Advocacy
- Healthcare Referrals
- Other Provider Referrals



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Los Puentes
- ESL Classes
- Community Resources
- Pathway to College
- Community ID Program
- Know Your Rights
- Skills for Life
- Back to School Backpack
- Volunteer Program
- Events
- Needs Assessments
- Adopt a Wishlist- Holiday Program

LAMBERTVILLE ACADEMY

- Early Childhood Learning
- Tuition Assistance
- Scholarships
- Camperships
- Summer Camp
- Enrichment Programs
- Outdoor Classroom
- Community Outreach Programs

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

CONNECTING PEOPLE, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY

Fisherman's Mark's Community Outreach programs connect individuals and families to essential resources that promote stability, well-being, and inclusion. Through partnerships with local organizations and direct programming, we address immediate needs while fostering long-term growth and opportunity.

Our outreach efforts include community-wide events, life skills workshops, and access to critical services like school supplies, health screenings, and safety initiatives. At the heart of this work is Los Puentes, a dedicated program supporting our Latino neighbors through services tailored to their unique needs. By offering programs such as ESL classes, cultural events, and legal rights workshops—often in Spanish—we ensure every individual feels welcome and supported.

Community Outreach is more than a service—it's a bridge to a stronger, healthier, and more connected future. The stories we share reflect the resilience, determination, and growth that happen when people and resources come together in a spirit of compassion and collaboration.

195

**BACKPACKS WITH
SCHOOL SUPPLIES
DISTRIBUTED**

244

CHILDREN

+67

**SENIORS RECEIVED
HOLIDAY GIFTS**

BRIAN'S NEXT CHAPTER

GAINING SKILLS AND PURPOSE

Brian, a 50-year-old participant in Fisherman's Mark's Skills for Life program, brings dedication to his role at the Free MARKET food pantry. Diagnosed with autism and an intellectual disability, Brian has been a client of the Princeton Child Development Institute (PCDI) since 1978, developing life skills that support his independence. His resilience and passion for helping others shine through his work.

At the Free MARKET, Brian takes pride in tasks like sweeping, stocking shelves, and grinding coffee—a skill he's recently mastered. These responsibilities connect him to the community and bring him joy. "It feels good," he says. "I like helping people." Josh, his support professional, highlights Brian's growing skills, improved focus, and enthusiasm for volunteering.

After losing his job during the pandemic, Brian embraced volunteering with determination, building confidence and preparing for future opportunities. Despite challenges, he finds purpose and joy in giving back, proving that with support and opportunity, growth and success are possible.

70
STUDENTS
ENROLLED IN
ENGLISH
AS A SECOND
LANGUAGE
CLASSES VIA THE
LOS PUENTES
PROGRAM

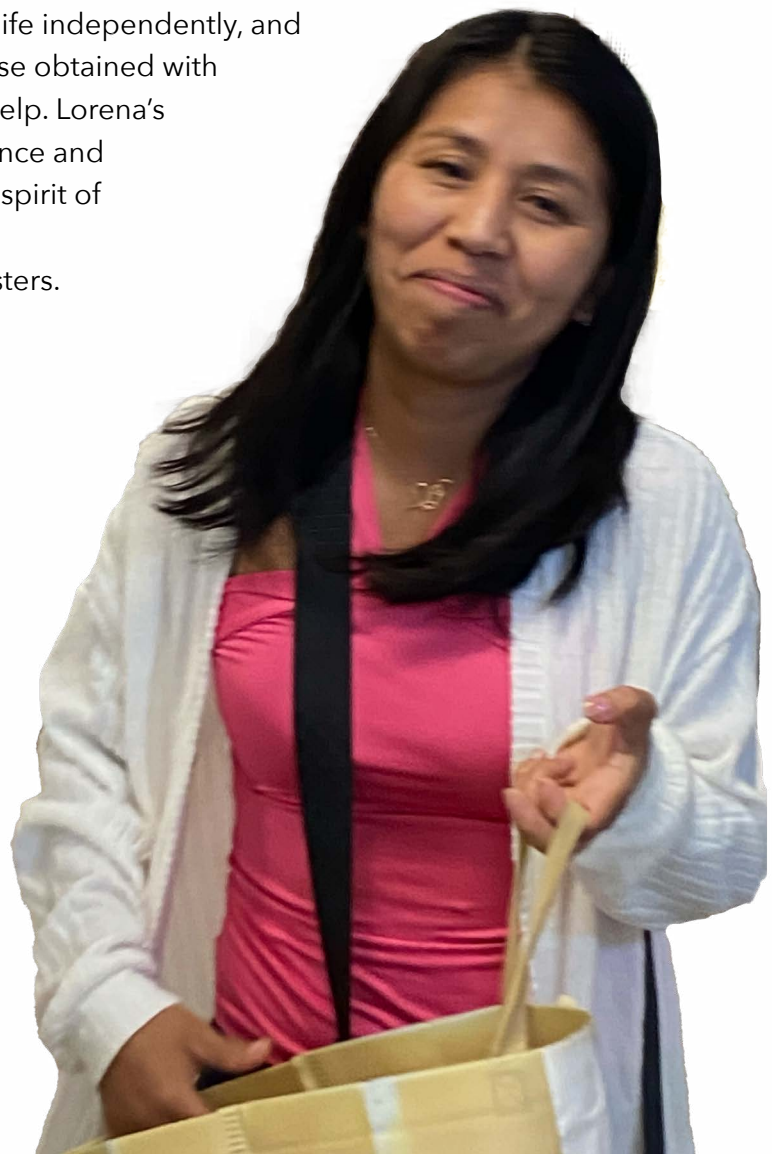
LORENA'S JOURNEY

TO CONFIDENCE AND GROWTH

Lorena's path to Lambertville began when she left Mexico, invited by a former classmate in New Hope who offered a glimmer of opportunity. Arriving with no English skills, no job, and no place to call her own, she faced immense challenges. Fisherman's Mark became her support system, helping her secure necessities for her newborn daughter, who had been malnourished. With our guidance, she received formula, diapers, and crucial assistance that extended to finding a safe apartment to rent. Our social services also connected her with programs like WIC and childcare assistance, easing her transition to stability.

Over the course of four years, Fisherman's Mark became more than a resource; it became Lorena's community. As her English improved, she started helping others—translating, filling out forms, and even assisting with pantry menus. With newfound confidence and a job at Nurture Spa in New Hope, Lorena gained self-sufficiency. She now navigates daily life independently, and holds a driver's license obtained with Fisherman's Mark's help. Lorena's story is one of resilience and growth, echoing the spirit of community that Fisherman's Mark fosters.

OVER THE COURSE
OF FOUR YEARS,
FISHERMAN'S MARK
BECAME MORE
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IT BECAME LORENA'S
COMMUNITY.





SOCIAL SERVICES

A LIFELINE IN TIMES OF CRISIS

At Fisherman's Mark, social services mean more than connecting people to resources—they mean walking alongside individuals through some of the most difficult moments of their lives. Many of our neighbors face challenges that can make navigating assistance programs seem impossible: language barriers, hearing or vision impairments, mental health struggles, and more. That's where we come in.

While we don't issue food stamps or housing vouchers, our Social Services manager helps program participants access critical programs, filling out forms, making phone calls, and connecting them with organizations like NORWESCAP, Family Promise of Hunterdon, Safe in Hunterdon, and local churches. When the system becomes too complicated, we advocate directly on our clients' behalf—ensuring their needs aren't overlooked or dismissed.

Our approach goes beyond one-time assistance. By building trust and fostering long-term relationships, we create a safe space where clients can return whenever they need help. This trust allows us to assist with sensitive issues like court representation, mediation with landlords, and communications with service providers—all critical steps in stabilizing lives during difficult times.

Helen's journey is one example of how personalized care and advocacy can create stability in the face of adversity. Her story of resilience and recovery is a powerful reminder that our work is about more than meeting basic needs—it's about restoring hope and possibility.

\$30K
IN EMERGENCY
ASSISTANCE FUNDS
DISTRIBUTED
*(rental assistance,
utilities, car repairs)*

630
CASE MANAGEMENT
HOURS RECORDED

1900
CLIENTS PROVIDED
WITH INFORMATION
RESOURCES AND
REFERRALS

HELEN'S PATH

TO STABILITY AND SUPPORT

Helen, a 63-year-old resident of Flemington, faced unimaginable hardships following Hurricane Ida. Living in Lambertville at the time, in a first floor apartment, she and her partner lost nearly everything to the floodwaters, which rose over a foot in their home. Amid the devastation, Helen also suffered the heart-wrenching loss of her beloved dog. Seeking help, she discovered Fisherman's Mark's and met Social Services Director, Chayln Fisher-Watson, whose warmth and understanding provided more than just essential resources—it offered comfort in a dark time.

Over the months, Fisherman's Mark became a lifeline for Helen. Struggling with PTSD from a traumatic experience in 2004 and managing ongoing health challenges, Helen often reached out to Chayln for support. "If I need help with something, she doesn't hesitate," Helen shared. From securing their housing deposit after a difficult transition out of a motel to writing a letter to allow her service dog to stay by her side without extra rent, Chayln's assistance was invaluable.

Life has continued to test Helen. In late 2023, she lost both her mother and her sister, who was also her best friend, just days apart. Coping with these losses while rebuilding her life after the flood has been incredibly challenging. Yet, through all of this, Helen found solace in the compassion of the Fisherman's Mark team. "If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't be where I am today," she expressed. "I cannot thank them enough. I owe them my life."

Helen's story is one of resilience, community, and gratitude—a testament to the vital role Fisherman's Mark plays in supporting individuals through life's toughest moments.



LAMBERTVILLE ACADEMY

LEARNING, GROWTH, AND COMMUNITY

As a nationally accredited early childhood education center, Lambertville Academy offers a rare blend of educational excellence and affordability. Under Fisherman's Mark's umbrella, the Academy provides a nurturing, enriching environment for children ages two through pre-kindergarten, with summer camp options for elementary students. Its innovative curriculum fosters academic, social, and emotional development while promoting creativity and self-confidence.

What sets Lambertville Academy apart is its commitment to accessibility. Thanks to Fisherman's Mark's scholarship program, approximately 15% of students receive tuition assistance, ensuring that financial hardship never stands in the way of a quality early education.

But Lambertville Academy is more than just a school—it's a caring community where every child is valued and supported. Wendy's journey is a powerful example of how the Academy's personalized approach and dedicated staff can transform lives. Her story of resilience and hope illustrates the profound impact that early education, combined with compassion and community support, can have on a family's future.

WE CELEBRATED THE
40TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE
LAMBERTVILLE ACADEMY IN 2024

15%
OF CHILDREN PROVIDED
WITH TUITION ASSISTANCE



WENDY'S NEW BEGINNING

A HOME AT LAMBERTVILLE ACADEMY

Wendy, a single mother to a 3-year-old daughter and a 5-year-old son, returned to the Lambertville area to build a new life for her family. After facing significant personal and financial challenges, Wendy knew she needed a supportive environment for her children, especially her daughter who had developmental delays, speech and hearing issues, and other early learning needs.

Wendy found what she needed for her daughter in the Lambertville Academy Early Childhood Education program. "It's been incredible for her. The teachers worked tirelessly to help her catch up, giving her the care and attention she needed to thrive." Wendy highlights the nurturing, family-like atmosphere, saying, "You know your kids are safe. It's like having a family member watch your child. They aren't just a number; they're treated as part of the community."

Despite financial difficulties stemming from her divorce, Wendy managed to enroll her children at Lambertville Academy, where her son enjoyed summer camp with the help of a partial scholarship. This support allowed Wendy to maintain her job for the State of New Jersey, ensuring stability for her family. Wendy is deeply grateful for the peace of mind that comes with knowing her children are cared for by dedicated educators. "I brag to everyone I know. If you have kids, you need to get them in there," she says, underscoring her confidence in the program.



“ YOU KNOW YOUR KIDS ARE SAFE. IT’S LIKE HAVING A FAMILY MEMBER WATCH YOUR CHILD. THEY AREN’T JUST A NUMBER; THEY’RE TREATED AS PART OF THE COMMUNITY. ”

-Wendy

FOOD SUPPORT

A YEAR OF GROWING IMPACT

In 2024, Fisherman's Mark's Food Support Programs provided more than just meals – they offered hope, stability, and a pathway toward resilience. Rising costs of food, housing, and basic necessities continued to push many in our community to the brink, yet our Free MARKET stood as a vital lifeline. Each day, individuals and families of all backgrounds lined up, united by a shared need for sustenance and support.

But our efforts didn't stop at the market's doors. Through innovative programs like FLY (Feeding Local Youth), Holiday Meals, and the Mobile Market, we extended our reach, ensuring that even the homebound and vulnerable youth never went without. Thanks to our Zero Waste initiative, fresh produce avoided the landfill and found its way back to plates, transforming potential waste into nourishment.

Behind every statistic is a story – stories of survival, resilience, and new beginnings. Like Lorena, whose daughter's health was restored through our consistent food support, and Maria, who found refuge and stability after fleeing hardship. Their journeys remind us that food sustains more than the body – it nurtures hope for a brighter future.

ANDREW'S STORY

FINDING STRENGTH IN COMMUNITY

Andrew, a 52-year-old carpenter from New Hope, faced unexpected challenges after being laid off. Caring for his two young daughters and helping his older daughter, a single mom, provide for her baby, Andrew turned to Fisherman's Mark for support. "The food pantry filled the gap so I could care for my family without feeling like I was begging," he shared.

The FLY summer lunch program provided meals for his daughters, while the Free MARKET supplied essentials like diapers, pet food, and household items, easing the burden on his family. At the same time, Andrew cared for his mother in hospice, managing the emotional and financial toll of her declining health.

"With the pantry's help, I could focus on my family," he said, urging others to ask for help when needed: "Take a helping hand because someday, you may be in a position to help others."

7859

FREE MARKET VISITS

1981

ZERO WASTE PROGRAM
MEALS SERVED

2840

LUNCHESES PROVIDED BY
FEEDING LOCAL YOUTH

1181

MOBILE MARKET DELIVERIES

MARIA'S QUEST

FOR SAFETY AND BELONGING

In June, Maria, her husband, and their young daughter left Chile, driven by the need to escape a series of escalating threats that endangered their lives. Her husband, a former politician with a background in communications, and Maria, a dedicated special needs teacher, faced a frightening reality: the violence reached its peak when shots were fired at their home. With their safety in jeopardy, they heeded the advice of family in the U.S. and moved to New Jersey, hoping for a fresh start and greater security.

Settling in Stockton, NJ, brought its own challenges. While her husband found employment at a local winery, Maria's ability to work was limited by the need for childcare. In her search for daycare options, she learned about Lambertville Academy and its potential for tuition assistance once her daughter turned two. This discovery led her to Fisherman's Mark, where she found invaluable support. The organization provided food assistance and a bike with a child carriage, allowing Maria and her daughter to get around safely and meet their daily needs. Additionally, a devoted Fisherman's Mark volunteer, John, has been assisting them with their asylum application process, offering guidance as they gather the necessary documentation.

Maria feels immense gratitude for Fisherman's Mark, describing it as a lifeline that has given her family hope and the means to navigate difficult times. She shares that the support and welcoming environment have made her feel more protected and capable of facing each week's challenges. To Maria, Fisherman's Mark stands as an example of community solidarity, offering what she wishes every country could provide—a place where people in need can find safety, sustenance, and compassion.

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VOLUNTEERS

THE HEART OF FISHERMAN'S MARK

Fisherman's Mark thrives because of the passion, dedication, and generosity of our volunteer team. They are the heartbeat of our organization, giving their time and talents to everything from assisting shoppers in the Free MARKET and organizing school supply drives to managing administrative tasks and tending to our landscaping.

In 2024, we were honored to present the **Linda Meacham Excellence in Volunteering Award** to Rene Marinich for her extraordinary commitment and leadership in reimagining our volunteer program. Her hard work and creativity have strengthened the foundation of volunteer engagement at Fisherman's Mark, ensuring that we can better serve our community now and in the future.

With over **125 dedicated volunteers**, our team works tirelessly to ensure that no task is too big or small. Their efforts fuel our mission, enabling us to support our neighbors in countless meaningful ways. Their commitment inspires us every day—and reminds us of the incredible power of community in action.

**TO OUR DONORS,
VOLUNTEERS, SUPPORTERS,
AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS,
WE COULD NOT HAVE DONE
THIS WITHOUT ALL OF YOU.**

Fisherman's Mark is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) social services organization based in Lambertville, NJ. For over 44 years, we have offered help where and when needed in Hunterdon County and beyond. Our doors are open to all who stand in need of assistance, whether senior citizens, veterans, single mothers and fathers, individuals with disabilities, or newly-arrived immigrants. Our staff and volunteers are guided by our core values of intergrity, belonging, empathy and inspiration.

6500
VOLUNTEER HOURS
RECORDED IN 2024

**“ IT HELPS ME MAKE A DIFFERENCE
WHEN SOMETIMES IT FEELS
LIKE INDIVIDUALS CAN'T
MAKE A DIFFERENCE.
IT LETS ME GIVE BACK. ”**

-Rene Marinich

