

Together We Achieve More

Welcome to our very first Gardner CAC newsletter! We are absolutely thrilled to launch this space to share our updates directly with you. The last few years have brought unprecedented challenges, forcing many of our neighbors to navigate difficult times and step through our doors for the very first time. We know that asking for help can feel incredibly overwhelming. We are deeply grateful that the community trusts us to ease that fear, guide our neighbors through difficult times, and provide a safe, welcoming place to turn every single day. Thank you for walking alongside us as we work to make Greater Gardner stronger and healthier.

– Julie Meehan, Executive Director

Program Achievements

From January 1 to May 31:

- Food Pantry – 4,609 individuals received food
- Senior Medical Transportation – 234 rides provided
- Clothing Closet – 2,808 clothing items distributed
- Fellowship Table – 2,992 to-go meals served
- Senior Cafe – 814 dine-in meals served

Upcoming Programs

As school wraps up for the year and summer begins, we are already planning and preparing for our annual **Backpack Program**. Last year, we helped more than 350 local children start the school year off with the exact supplies they needed to succeed! Last year, one grateful parent shared just how much of an impact the program made on their household:

"It immediately relieved so much of our family's stress and ensured my child had a brand new backpack just like everyone else. My daughter loved the design and color, and walked into school feeling so proud!"

Thank you for helping us invest in the success and confidence of our community's children! Keep an eye out for the wish lists!

Partner Spotlight

This month, we are highlighting the **Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts**! CFNCM has been an invaluable ally to the Gardner CAC for years. Their incredible generosity funded the creation of this newsletter, food purchases, and countless operational needs over the years. We are incredibly grateful for their continued financial backing and deeply value the trust they place in our team and our community. Thank you for helping us make a difference!

Volunteer Spotlight – Terri Hillman

When people think about the Gardner CAC, they often think about neighbors helping neighbors. Few people embody that spirit better than Terri. For more than 25 years, Terri has been a dedicated volunteer with the CAC, making her our longest-serving volunteer. Over the years, she has generously shared her time and talents not only with the CAC, but with numerous organizations throughout the Gardner community. Her commitment to service has touched countless lives.

At the CAC, Terri serves as the Mayor's representative on our Board of Directors and faithfully records the minutes for Board meetings – in shorthand no less! Her attention to detail, reliability, and institutional knowledge have made her an invaluable part of our organization.

When asked why she volunteers, Terri's answer is simple: "It's important to keep both your mind and body active, to stay busy, and to be helpful when you can." That philosophy has guided her decades of service and continues to inspire everyone around her.

Terri says she loves the CAC because of the people. To her, the CAC is more than an organization—it's her home away from home. We are incredibly grateful for Terri's years of dedication, kindness, and leadership. Volunteers like her are the heart of our mission, and we are honored to celebrate her contributions to the CAC and our community.

Get Involved

Every act of support helps strengthen our community. Here are three quick ways to partner with the Gardner CAC:

- Volunteer
- Donate Needed Items
- Give Financially

