

# BELOVED COMMUNITY NEWS

Gaithersburg Beloved Community Initiative (GBCI) at Asbury Methodist Village (AMV)



## What is GBCI?

The Gaithersburg Beloved Community Initiative (GBCI) is a nonprofit founded by Asbury Methodist Village (AMV) residents that nurtures intergenerational relationships and promotes social justice through programs with youth, families, and older adults in the city of Gaithersburg. GBCI's goal is to realize Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of a "Beloved Community," where individuals from diverse backgrounds can have equal opportunities to live healthy, fulfilling lives. Our volunteer-led programs cover early education literacy and art programs, mentorship, English conversation classes, and more. Together we collaborate with residents at Asbury, community partners, and passionate individuals in Gaithersburg to create better outcomes for marginalized communities. GBCI's offices are located at Asbury Methodist Village.

Above Photo: Susan Ward reading with a student in GBCI's 1st & 2nd grade Literacy and Mentoring program at South Lake Elementary

***"It is wonderful to be back to a one-on-one ratio of child to mentor this year. Watching a child grow in skill and confidence is a special experience. I look forward every week to seeing him and I believe***

---

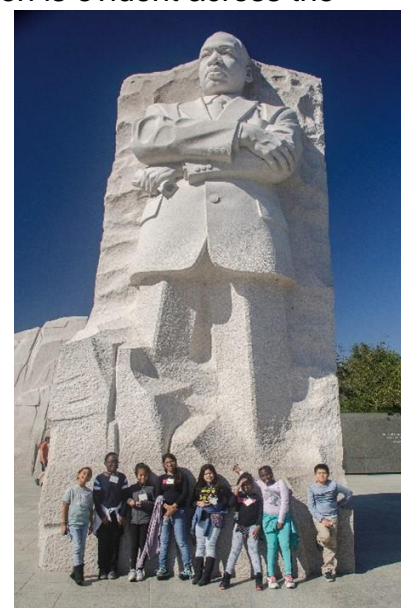
## GBCI Launches a Year-Long Celebration of Innovation and Impact!

In these uncertain times, we are reminded of Martin Luther King Jr.'s last book, ***Where Do We Go From Here – Chaos or Community?*** The relevance of its central question is evident across the world today.

For nearly 15 years, Dr. King's concept of a "Beloved Community" has inspired GBCI's work. His vision is of a society founded on justice, equal opportunity, and love for one's fellow human beings—a society where differences are celebrated, and conflicts are resolved peacefully.

In January 2026, GBCI will celebrate 15 years of intergenerational programs at Asbury and within the larger Gaithersburg community. Throughout 2025, leading up to this milestone, we will facilitate a year-long series of discussions and events where we, as a community, will reflect, dialogue, and revisit the question: "***What does it mean to build a 'beloved community?'***" Over the year, each of GBCI's programs—mentoring, early steps, English conversation, and neighborhood action—will talk about the concepts and ideas behind building a beloved community.

Additionally, in 2025, we will organize small group discussions on campus and within the larger community to hear what building a beloved community means to each of us.



Above Photo: GBCI Mentoring Students visiting the MLK Memorial in Washington, DC as part of the Mentoring Field Trip in 2017.

For more information:

Rebecca Cole, Director  
301.216.4090  
rebecca@gaithersburgbelovedcommunity.org

Spence Limbocker, Board Chair  
301.216.5780  
limbockers@gmail.com

Hal Garman, Founder  
301.987.6436  
hgarman1@gmail.com

The insights gained from these conversations will guide GBCI in shaping its plans for the next 15 years.



Above Photo: Asbury residence discussing what it means to be a beloved community.

The January GBCI monthly meeting marked the first program in our 2025 discussion series. Participants broke into small groups to explore two key questions:

- 1. What do we think a beloved community looks like?**
- 2. What can we do to make this vision a reality?**

The discussions were rich with stories, ideas, and inspiring visions for Gaithersburg and Montgomery County. Common themes included:

- Importance of cooperation and collaboration.
- Mutual respect, welcoming, and acceptance of all.
- A Non-judgmental community, treating everyone as equals and with dignity.
- Constantly listening to others from diverse backgrounds.
- It is where everyone feels safe, included, and free from stereotypes.
- Importance of community and listening to others.
- Being part of a team and investing time in building relationships.
- It's not about doing something for people; it's about doing something with people.
- A community where everyone has access to what they need to succeed and thrive.

As the table conversations started, the energy in the room instantly grew. It was clear that everyone enjoyed the conversations, the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas, and the opportunity to hear from others. If you missed the first gathering in this series, we'd still love to hear from you!

📩 **What does building a Beloved Community look like to you?**

📩 **What can we do to make this vision a reality?**

We invite you to share your ideas and reflections by emailing:

✉️ [info@gaithersburgbelovedcommunity.org](mailto:info@gaithersburgbelovedcommunity.org). Over the next several months, GBCI is planning similar discussions on the AMV campus and the larger community. We hope you will join us!



## Little Chefs in Action! Early Steps Kids Whip Up a Tasty Green Fruit Salad with Ms. Eileen!



*Above Photo: Asbury Resident, Eileen Brittain teaching the Early Steps little chefs to make green fruit salad on St. Patrick's Day.*



*Above Photo: Mixing fruit is FUN!*

On Monday mornings about fifteen parents and their babies and toddlers aged 0-5 arrive at the Hefner building at Asbury for the GBCI Early Steps program. Early Steps, an early literacy program for young children and their parents focuses on young students building vocabulary and literacy skills in preparation for pre-school and kindergarten, while collaborating with parents to share tools and strategies of incorporating literacy and learning in our everyday routines. This GBCI program is run by a handful of Asbury resident volunteers and five parent facilitators who live in the local community and once had their children in the program.

On March 17, the theme of the day was "The Healthy Food I Eat" and the young students had a special opportunity to learn from Ms. Eileen! With a creative way to celebrate St. Patrick's Day and learn how to make a healthy recipe, all were invited to be "chefs" for the day as Ms. Eileen introduced new vocabulary for GREEN fruits (Apples, Honeydew Melon, Grapes, and Pears) to make GREEN Fruit Salad! The students learned the first letter of each fruit, what the fruit looked like, and everyone followed the recipes Steps 1-5 to create their own fruit salad, including washing your hands, adding a spoonful of each green fruit, mixing it up, and finally to ENJOY! Yum, Yum!



*Above Photo: Mom and daughter "chef" learning Steps 1-5 to make green fruit salad.*

We are grateful to the Early Steps volunteers who share their ideas and creative activities for learning with the group. It surely provides for exciting days like this one where growth and learning happen in a FUN way. Thank you, Eileen!

For more information:

Rebecca Cole, Director  
301.216.4090  
rebecca@gathersburgbelovedcommunity.org

Spence Limbocker, Board Chair  
301.216.5780  
limbockers@gmail.com

Hal Garman, Founder  
301.987.6436  
hgarman1@gmail.com

# Announcements

## Volunteer Needed for Art and Literacy Mentoring Program



GBCI is looking for passionate volunteers to be mentors in our Art and Literacy Mentoring Program at South Lake Elementary School! This engaging program takes place on Wednesday afternoons from 3:30 to 5:00 PM and provides a meaningful opportunity to support 3rd-grade learners. To be a mentor, you do not need any experience in art, teaching, or even working with children. All you need is a desire to build a relationship with a younger person, and the love and care to support their growth and development.

For more information, please contact Sarahi Segura, GBCI Program Manager at ☎ 301-216-4849 or ✉ [sarahi@gaithersburgbelovedcommunity.org](mailto:sarahi@gaithersburgbelovedcommunity.org).



## Make a Difference: Donate Household Essentials for Refugee Families

**The New Neighbor Interfaith Alliance (NNIA)** is being approached by various Social Service agencies to assist in outfitting apartments for newly arrived refugee families from multiple countries. We appreciate your kind donations. **All items should be either new or in good – excellent condition.**



New Neighbors Interfaith Alliance



📍 If you can spare any of the items listed below, please contact Candy Warner, 📄 Villas 572 at Asbury Methodist Village, ☎ 301-216-5874 ✉ [candydennis@verizon.net](mailto:candydennis@verizon.net)

### 📌 ITEMS NEEDED

#### 🏠 Household Supplies 📦

✓ Twin and Queen size sheet sets	✓ Crib sheets
✓ Twin and Queen size blanket and quilts	✓ Bath and hand towels & wash clothes
✓ Dish towels	✓ Pillows
✓ Broom and dustpan	✓ Mop and bucket
✓ Iron	✓ Smart TVs

#### 🪑 Furniture 📺

✓ Small chests, shelving units or another small unit appropriate for clothing storage (48" or shorter unit)	✓ Dining table to seat six chairs
✓ Lamps (Table or floor lamps, no wall lamps)	✓ Crib

✓ TV consoles	✓ Night Stands
✓ Coffee tables	✓ Shoe rack

### Cleaning Supplies

✓ Sponges & Cleaning rags	✓ Paper towels
✓ Toilet Paper	✓ Bathroom & Kitchen cleaner
✓ Dish Soap	✓ Shampoo
✓ Soap	✓ Toothbrushes
✓ Toothpaste	✓ Smart TVs

### Kitchen Items

✓ Tableware – especially forks and spoons	✓ Large pots (6qt. and 8qt)
✓ Frying Pans (large and medium)	✓ Baking/casserole dishes
✓ Mixing/serving bowls	✓ Can openers
✓ Scissors	✓ Kitchen knives
✓ Cooking utensils (spatulas, wooden spoons)	✓ Electric Kettle
✓ Instant pot or pressure cooker	✓ Thermos

Thank you so much in advance for your generosity in donating these items. Your support will make a world of difference for refugee families, providing them with the essentials they need to rebuild their lives. We deeply appreciate your kindness and commitment to making a positive impact!

For more information:






Rebecca Cole, Director  
301.216.4090  
rebecca@gaitthersburgbelovedcommunity.org

Spence Limbocker, Board Chair  
301.216.5780  
limbockers@gmail.com

Hal Garman, Founder  
301.987.6436  
hgarman1@gmail.com



# UPCOMING EVENTS!

-  **Friday, March 31, 2025- 9:00am-3:00pm-** GBCI Mentoring Field Trip to Smithsonian National Museum of American History. *Still looking for adult volunteers, if interested contact Sarahi Segura 301-216-4849*
-  **Friday, April 11, 2025- 9:30 AM-** GBCI April Monthly Meeting, Hefner Auditorium at Asbury  
*\*note change in monthly meeting date due to Good Friday on 4/18\**
-  **Monday, April 21, 2025- 9:00 AM- 3:00 PM-** GBCI Mentoring Program Asbury Fun Day at Asbury, Earth Day theme. *Still looking for adult volunteers, if interested contact Sarahi Segura 301-216-4849*
-  **Friday, May 16, 2025- 9:30 AM-** GBCI May Monthly Meeting: *Meet the GBCI Staff*
-  **Friday, June 13, 2025- 9:30 AM-** GBCI June Monthly Meeting:  
*\*note change in monthly meeting date\**