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The Foodbank, Daybreak deepen roots in region with expansions

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Despite challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic, Dayton nonprofits are moving forward with expansions.

Leading the way with developments is **Daybreak Inc.**, a local youth services organization offering employment training, educational support, transitional housing and emergency shelter services. The organization is working on its Opportunity Zone building expansion, featuring a 3,000-square-foot drop-in center for local homeless and at-risk youth ages 16-24.

The lower level of the building will provide daily services to meet visitors' basic needs, including a computer lab and shower facilities. Counselors will also be available on site.



PROVIDED BY JOAN SCHIML

Daybreak, a youth social services organization, operates multiple facilities in Dayton's Midtown neighborhood. Pictured is the organization's emergency shelter at 605 S. Patterson Boulevard.

The project is "on time" and is expected to be completed in the late summer, according to Joan Schmil, chief development officer at Daybreak.

Another project the organization is pursuing is David's Place, which will be located in the former drop-in center space located at 605 S. Patterson Blvd. The initiative, focused on supporting at-risk and homeless LGBTQ+ youth, primarily consists of space renovations. The project will keep many of the existing features, such as a gathering space with a kitchenette, desktop computers, a showering facility and more.

Instead of projects facing impacts during the pandemic, its services have been impacted. Schmil said services have gone up through the pandemic and its been operating with a compromised system, meaning it's taking longer to process clients and move forward with support plans. But, that hasn't phased the organization's outlook.

"It's been taking longer to help than usual, but we're happy to continue to meet these demands and expand our services," Schmil said. "We're not just going to let our people leave without support."

Similar to Daybreak, **The Foodbank** in Dayton has seen an uptick in demands, along with seeing improvements to its own service lines.

It's been a busy summer for the organization, serving as a primary source of food for the hunger relief network in the Miami Valley. Before the pandemic, The Foodbank saw about 200-250 households each day. Now, its average has grown to 500 households.

"A lot of our partner agencies shut down in the pandemic, so our drive-through was a critical turning point for accessing emergency food assistance," said Lee Lauren Truesdale, chief development officer of The Foodbank. "We're anticipating a continuation of what we've been seeing so far."

With the increase of visitors, the organization faced a new challenge early on in the pandemic. It saw a decline in donations from retail and grocery stores since more people were buying food at higher volumes. As a result, the organization had to buy food wholesale through other sources. Truesdale said that challenge has leveled out and the organization has seen a steady stream of food for the past few months.

In terms of new developments, the organization is implementing a new inventory system in September that will allow The Foodbank to go paperless. All orders and donations will be processed electronically, which will streamline its processes and allow for a new inventory system to take place.

As the organization looks forward, it'll continue hosting mass food distributions to support the community. The Foodbank typically projects a high number of donations during the winter and holiday months, but this year will likely look different.

"Donor fatigue is real and the recovery from the pandemic is going to take a long time," Truesdale said. "We know we can sustain ourselves moving forward, and we'll continue to have our community rely on us for longterm assistance."

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