

# WHAT WOULD MARCUS DO

ISSUE 3 | VOLUME 4 | NOVEMBER 2025

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



### THE HEART OF THE HOLIDAYS

As the days grow shorter and the first true winter chill settles over the Hilltop, there is a distinct change in the atmosphere. The hum of summer lawnmowers has been replaced by the quiet glow of holiday lights, and our focus naturally shifts inward—toward our homes, our families, and our shared history. At What Would Marcus Do (WWMD), the holiday season is our most sacred time of year. It is a season that demands we look beyond our own front doors and ask: How is my neighbor doing?

#### The Legacy of "Showing Up"

Marcus Payne's life was a testament to the idea that community isn't just where you live—it's how you love. During the holidays, that "neighbor-love" becomes our North Star.

For some on the Hilltop, this is a season of abundance. For others, it is a time of increased pressure—the stress of heating bills, the challenge of providing a "magical" Christmas for children on a tight budget, or the heaviness of spending the holidays alone.

#### A Season of Collective Impact

This year has been one of incredible growth for WWMD. Because of your support, we've been able to turn "What Would Marcus Do?" from a question into a roadmap for action.

- Our M.P. Empowerment Academy graduates are entering the New Year with new financial tools.
- Our Neighborhood Pop-Ups have bridged the gap for families facing temporary hurdles.
- Our Scholarship Program continues to open doors that once seemed locked.

None of this happens in a vacuum. It happens because you—our donors, volunteers, and neighbors—decided that the Hilltop deserves the very best of us.

#### Carrying the Light Forward

As we gather around our respective tables this month, let's carry the warmth of the holidays with us into the New Year. Let's resolve to keep our eyes on the street and our hearts open to the needs of those around us.

The holidays eventually end, and the lights eventually come down, but the spirit of the Hilltop remains. Thank you for being the light that keeps our community bright.

Wishing you a peaceful holiday season and a courageous New Year.

### FEATURED ARTICLES

FROM OUR CEO

EVENT RECAP

THANK YOU

A GENTLE MESSAGE OF HOPE

RESOURCES



*The M.P. Empowerment Academy 2025 Spring*



# About Us

What Would Marcus Do is a non profit organization with a mission to Provide Hope and Resources to the Hilltop Community and abroad. This mission is accomplished by WWMD providing various services throughout the Hilltop Community



## OUR SERVICES

We support our community with year around services. Our goal is to simply meet their basic needs with a smile.

In doing so we believe we are able to be a beacon of hope to those in need.

While our focus is predominantly on the Greater Hilltop Area we service all areas of central Ohio.

Services we provide includes but are not limited to:

- Resource Navigation
- Neighborhood Pop ups
- Neighborhood Clean ups
- Laundry Services
- The Marcus M. Payne Scholarship
- Holiday Drives
- M.P. Empowerment Academy

## OUR WHY...

On September 11, 2021 - As the world paid tribute to the attack on 9/11 our family suffered the major loss of our Marcus. He was robbed and gunned down in Victorian Village making him the 141st Homicide of 2021 in Central Ohio.

While we mourn his loss, we also celebrate his life, his love for family, friends, and providing support to those in need. Our goal is that this becomes an avenue to bring hope and resources to our community along with bringing a greater awareness to Gun Violence in the city of Columbus.

What Would Marcus Do  
5820 Sullivant Ave. #152 Galloway, OH 43119 Phone: 614.969.7765  
E: info@wwmd614.org | W: wwmd614.org



## A Message from our CEO



*A Season of Gratitude: Reflecting on Our Hilltop Family*

*To our Neighbors, Partners, and Friends,*

*As the year draws to a close and the holiday lights begin to glow across the Hilltop, I find myself filled with an overwhelming sense of gratitude. This is the season where we pause to say "thank you"—not just for the milestones we've reached, but for the people who made them possible. At What Would Marcus Do (WWMD), the holidays are a time of dual reflection. We look back at a year of growth, and we look forward to the promise of a fresh start.*

*The Gift of Community*

*In November, as we gathered for Thanksgiving, I was reminded that the greatest resource on the Hilltop isn't something you can find in a pantry or a bank—it is each other. Whether it was a neighbor helping an elderly resident clear their walkway or the way this community rallied to support our youth programs, your spirit of "neighbor-love" is what keeps Marcus's legacy alive.*

*Carrying the Light into Christmas As we move into the heart of the Christmas season, our focus turns to the spirit of giving. For many, this time of year brings warmth and celebration. For others, it can be a season of quiet struggle.*

*When we ask, "What Would Marcus Do?" during the holidays, the answer is simple: He would make sure no one felt alone.*

*Following that lead, WWMD has spent this month ensuring that the "magic" of the season reaches every corner of our neighborhood. From our holiday resource distributions to our mentorship check-ins, our goal is to be a source of light for those navigating the winter chill.*

*As you celebrate with your loved ones, please know that you are a vital part of our story. We are honored to serve this community and excited to continue this journey with you in the coming year.*

*May your holidays be filled with peace, your homes with warmth, and your hearts with the same hope that defines the Hilltop. Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, and a Blessed New Year!*

*With deep appreciation,*



President & CEO

# 2025 NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

Words can't describe how thankful we are for the support of the community and our vendors that showed up! Special thanks to The City of Columbus - City Hall cityofcolumbus. Also thanks to Father Law and St. Aloyouis Church, Bishop James Gaiters and Grace Apostolic Church Official Bishop Cathy Scott and The Way of Holiness Apostolic Church for your support this year. We served 100 students school supplies with at total of 312 people in attendance. Each year gets better and better and we are grateful.





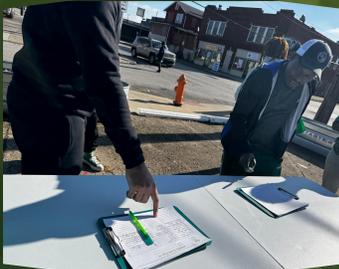
2025

# Thanksgiving Donation Drive

## THANK YOU

WE APPRECIATE ALL WHO SUPPORTED  
OUR 3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL TURKEY DRIVE

This year we were able to give out 75 Thanksgiving meals including:  
Dressing, gravy, cranberry sauce, green beans and pie



# Meet Our Team



**Mark Payne Sr.**  
**Logistics**

Mark E. Payne Sr. Father of Marcus M. Payne and Hilltop native, has devoted his life to service. From serving our country in the United States Army to serving as an employee of The City of Columbus for over 36 years.

Mark Sr. embodies the meaning to serve our community and abroad. His skill set encompasses leadership, problem solving, and “out the box” thinking methods.

Being the proud father of 9 children and grandfather to 7, the past 34 years has taught him the art of patience, creativity, support, assessing needs and more. All these traits personify the mission and vision of our foundation WWMD.

His now and forever goal is very simple; to aid his family and community into becoming the best they can be, all while keeping his Son Marcus’ name alive.



# *Navigating Grief During the Holidays*

## *The Empty Chair*

The holidays are often painted as a time of "unlimited joy" and "constant connection." But for many on the Hilltop, the festive lights can cast long shadows. When you are grieving—whether it's the loss of a loved one, a job, or a sense of security—the holidays can feel less like a celebration and more like a hurdle to be cleared. At What Would Marcus Do (WWMD), we understand that grief doesn't take a holiday. In fact, it often works overtime.

### The "Weight" of the Holidays

Grief is not a linear process; it's more like the tide. Some days it's a quiet ripple, and other days it's a crashing wave. During the holidays, specific "triggers" can make that wave feel overwhelming:

- Traditions: Doing things the "same way" can highlight who is missing.
- Social Pressure: The expectation to be "merry" can lead to emotional exhaustion.
- The New Year: Entering a new chapter without a loved one can feel like leaving them behind.
- Shutterstock
- Explore

### What Would Marcus Do?

Marcus's legacy is rooted in the idea of carrying one another's burdens. He knew that strength isn't about hiding your pain; it's about finding the courage to share it. If Marcus saw someone struggling through the season, he wouldn't tell them to "cheer up." He would sit with them and bond without just writing them off. He would acknowledge the loss.

Honoring your grief means honoring your love. Here are a few ways to navigate the coming weeks:

- Create a "New" Tradition: If the old ways are too painful, find a small way to honor the person you lost. Light a specific candle, visit a favorite spot on the Hilltop, or make a donation in their name.
- Set Your Boundaries: You do not have to attend every party or say "yes" to every invitation. It is okay to protect your peace and say, "I'm just not up for it this year."
- The "Check-In" Rule: If you know a neighbor is grieving, don't wait for them to call you. A simple text or a small plate of food left on the porch says, "I see you, and you aren't alone."

### You Don't Have to Walk Alone

Grief can be incredibly isolating, making you feel like you're the only one in the world who isn't celebrating. But the Hilltop is a community built on shared experiences.

If the holidays feel too heavy this year, please remember that WWMD is here. We are more than just a resource for physical needs; we are a community of people who look out for one another's hearts.

### ***A Message of Gentle Hope***

To those of you navigating the "empty chair" this season: Your feelings are valid. You don't have to perform happiness to be part of this community. We hold space for your sadness just as much as your joy. Be gentle with yourself. Take it one hour at a time. The Hilltop is standing with you.

# RESOURCES



NOV.

## RESOURCES FROM OUR HILLTOP NEIGHBORHOOD LIAISON

### Free Thanksgiving Meals

St. John's Church Thanksgiving Dinner: No reservation required. Open to All  
Friday, November 28th: 10:30am – 1pm  
640 S. Ohio Ave, Columbus, OH 43205  
Contact: 614-252-6428

Columbus Dream Center: No reservation required. Open to All  
Friday, November 28th: 11am – 12:30pm  
38 W Greenwood Ave, Columbus, OH 43201  
Contact: 614-547-3138 for more details.

TownHall Short North: No reservation required. Open to All.  
Monday, November 24  
th: 10am – 4pm – Call to confirm  
792 N High St, Columbus, OH 43215  
Contact: 614-639-8600

Ohio State University - Thanksgiving Dinner  
For students, faculty and staff who are unable to go home for the holiday.  
Wednesday, November 26  
th: 12pm  
Archie M. Griffin Ballroom – Ohio Union: 1739 N. High St, 43210  
Contact: 614-292-6101

Charity Newsies – Thanksgiving Dinner  
Thursday, November 27  
th: 3pm – 6pm  
4300 Indianola Ave. Columbus, OH 43214  
Contact: 614-263-4300 - Call to confirm

Broad Street Presbyterian Church - Free Thanksgiving Meal  
Tuesday, November 25  
th: 3pm – 6pm  
760 East Broad Street, 43205  
Contact: 614-221-6552

Community Development for All People - Thanksgiving Dinner  
Thursday, November 20th: 1pm – 4 pm  
946 Parsons Ave, 43206  
Contact: 614-445-7342

The SOAR Foundation | Thanksgiving at the Park  
Sunday, November 16th: 1pm – 3pm  
1100 Rhoads Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43206  
Enjoy free food, toiletries, and haircuts.  
Contact: 614-453-4830

614 Youth Prevention Agency | Thanksgiving Dinner  
Thursday, November 20th: 12pm – 4 pm  
946 Parsons Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43206  
First come, first served dinner for up to 200 people.  
Contact: 380-213-0176

Northwest United Methodist Church – Thanksgiving Meal Open to All.  
Sunday, November 2nd: 12pm  
5200 Riverside Dr, Columbus, 43220  
Contact: 614-451-2825 to reserve your spo



NOV.

RESOURCES FROM OUR HILLTOP NEIGHBORHOOD LIAISON

## Free Thanksgiving Box Giveaways

NSI Food Pantry - Free Thanksgiving Box Giveaway  
September 29th – November 7th Thanksgiving Food Basket Sign-up  
Saturday, November 22nd: 9am – 2pm: Thanksgiving Food Basket Pickup  
(You must sign up in advance for this distribution.)  
\*Address Verification & children's birthdate verification required.  
1950 N 4th St, Columbus, OH 43201  
Contact: 614-297-0592

WARM Thanksgiving Blessing - Thanksgiving Blessing (Bag)  
Saturday, November 22nd

Westerville Area Resource Ministry ([www.warmwesterville.org](http://www.warmwesterville.org))  
150 Heatherdown Dr. Westerville, Ohio 43081  
Contact: 614-899-0196 ext. 215 or [tim@warmwesterville.org](mailto:tim@warmwesterville.org)

Highland Youth Garden - Free Thanksgiving Market  
Saturday, November 22nd  
10am – 11:30am  
85 S Highland Ave, 43223  
Contact: 614-653-8263

Columbus Nupes – Thanksgiving Turkey Giveaway Until supplies last.  
Saturday, November 15th: 8:30am – 2 pm

Champion Middle School – 284 N. 22nd St, 43203  
Limit 1 turkey per household. No more than 2 turkeys per vehicle. ID required.  
Contact: @Cbusnupes on Instagram

New Covenant Church – Thanksgiving Turkey Giveaway  
Saturday, November 15th: 10 am – 12 pm  
3400 Kohr Rd, 43224  
Contact: 614-475-167

## Thanksgiving Dinner at Community Recreation Centers

Please note: Open to all. Supplies are limited.

- ❖ Nov. 13th: 5:30pm - Espy Sports Complex 1755 E Broad St, 43203
- ❖ Nov. 15th: 12pm – Far East Com. Center 1826 Lattimer Dr, 43227
- ❖ Nov. 19th: 12:30pm – Thompson Com. Center 1189 Dennison Ave, 43201
  - ❖ Nov. 19th: 5pm - Howard Com. Center 2505 N. Cassady Ave, 43219
  - ❖ Nov. 19th: 5pm - William H. Adams Com. Center 854 Alton Ave, 43219
- ❖ Nov. 20th: 11:30am - Marion Franklin Com. Center 2801 Lockbourne Rd, 43207
  - ❖ Nov. 20th: 5pm – Douglass Com. Center 1250 Windsor Ave, 43211
  - ❖ Nov. 20th: 5pm – Feddersen Com. Center 3911 Dresden St, 43224
- ❖ Nov. 20th: 5pm – Glenwood Com. Center 1888 Fairmont Ave, 43223
- ❖ Nov. 20th: 5pm – Barack Com. Center 580 E. Woodrow Ave, 43207
- ❖ Nov. 20th: 5:30pm - Linden Com. Center 1350 Briarwood Ave, 43211
- ❖ Nov. 20th: 6pm - Blackburn Com. Center 263 Carpenter St, 43205
- ❖ Nov. 21st: 5pm – Holton Com. Center 303 N. Eureka Ave, 43204
- ❖ Nov. 21st: 5pm – Driving Park Com. Center 1100 Rhoads Ave, 43206
- ❖ Nov. 21st: 5pm – Milo Grogan Com. Center 862 E. 2nd Ave, 43201
- ❖ Nov. 21st: 5pm – Sullivant Gardens Com. Center 755 Renick St, 43223
- ❖ Nov. 25th: 12pm – Scioto Southland Com. Center 3901 Parsons Ave, 43207
  - ❖ Nov. 25th: 4:30pm – Dodge Com. Center 667 Sullivant Ave, 43215
  - ❖ Nov. 25th: 6pm – Woodward Park Com. Center 5147 Karl Rd, 43229
  - ❖ Nov. 25th: 5pm – Brentnell Com. Center 1280 Brentnell Ave, 43219

# Community RESOURCES



**DEC.**

**RESOURCES FROM OUR HILLTOP NEIGHBORHOOD LIAISON**

## Homeownership for All – December 9

Both aspiring homebuyers and long-time homeowners are facing big challenges today. Things like high interest rates, rising taxes, predatory actors, and large home repair needs affect everyone. Even in the face of these problems, we have power. Join Bloom614 and Housing for all on Tuesday, December 9 at 5:30PM at the Center of Entrepreneurial Development (1890 East Main St, 43205) to navigate these barriers together. For more information and the link to register, see the attached flyer.

## Franklinton Public Realm Action Plan Open House – December 10

Join us on Wednesday, December 10 from 5:30-7:30PM at Franklinton HS (89 Avondale Ave, 43222) for the final Franklinton Public Realm Action Plan meeting to see how community input shaped the plan and how you can stay engaged moving forward.

## Highland Youth Garden Winter Garden Club Open House – December 13

We invite families, both returning and new, to join us for an Open House on Dec 13<sup>th</sup> from 12-2PM. This is a fantastic opportunity to meet our educators and explore the garden.

## West Broad Street Holiday Trash Pick Up – December 13

Join us on Saturday, December 13 from 10AM-12PM for a quick pick up to get Broad Street cleaned up for the holidays. Nothing fancy, just a litter pick up. All supplies provided. Bring the entire family – all are welcome! Take a break from the shopping and hassles that go with it and spend a couple of hours giving back to the community. We will meet at Highland West Gardens (29 N Wheatland Ave).

## IMPACT Emergency Assistance – Winter Crisis Program

The cold weather is upon us, and IMPACT's Winter Crisis Program is here to help you stay warm and safe! The Winter Crisis Program helps income-eligible Ohioans that are threatened with disconnection, have been disconnected, or have less than a 25 percent supply of bulk fuel in their tank maintain their utility service. Don't wait – schedule your appointment today by calling us or [Click Here](#) to visit our visiting our online scheduling system.

## IMPACT Free Weatherization Services

IMPACT's FREE Weatherization Services can help you improve comfort, reduce energy costs, and keep your home efficient all season long.

Contact your trusted community partner today to see if you qualify!

Email: [weatherization@impactca.org](mailto:weatherization@impactca.org)

Phone: 614-252-2799 prompt 4

Click Here: <https://www.impactca.org/hwap-intake-form>

## Community Shelter Board Warming Centers

See the attached flyer for more information on available warming stations from now through March 31. More locations and options will be added in January 2026.

# Community

# RESOURCES



DEC.

RESOURCES FROM OUR HILLTOP NEIGHBORHOOD LIAISON

## 2025 Holiday Resources

See the attached flyer for more information on Holiday meals and giveaways. Note the following upcoming Community Center events: Westgate – December 12 at 6PM; Glenwood – December 18 at 5PM; Sullivant Gardens – December 19 at 5PM; Dodge – December 19 at 4:30PM; Holton – December 19 at 5PM

### Columbus Water & Power Utility Discount Programs

Columbus Water & Power offers a Utility Discount Program for low income and senior citizens. If eligible, power customers can receive a one-time credit of \$50 and a 25% discount on their power usage. Eligible water customers can receive a one-time credit of \$65 and a 25% discount on water usage. Seniors 60 and older can also qualify to have their service charges waived.

### Free After-School Snacks with Columbus Metropolitan Library

Columbus Metropolitan Library has partnered with Children's Hunger Alliance (CHA) to provide free after-school snacks for children ages 1-18 at select library locations throughout the community. A typical snack consists of a fruit, vegetable, protein, grain, and milk.

### Free Legal Advice Clinics with Festa

Legal Aid of Southeast and Central Ohio has partnered with Festa to host monthly Free Legal Advice Clinics at the Upper Arlington Lutheran Church (3500 Mill Run Dr, Hilliard, 43026) from 5:30-7:30pm. Dates are included on the attached flyer.

### December Southeast RREACT Outreach Calendar

Recovery is possible. The Southeast Rapid Response Emergency Addiction Crisis Team (RREACT) is committed to helping individuals impacted by addiction in Franklin County. They offer outreach services, including but not limited to access to detox, medication assisted treatment, Narcan training and distribution, Peer Recovery Support, linkage to primary, dental, and mental health care, case management, individual and group therapy, and obtaining benefits. For more information, call 614-360-0199. Their December outreach calendar is attached.

### Local Businesses and Organizations - Become a Partner with the APPS Job Readiness Program (AJRP)

AJRP is an empowering workforce development initiative designed for youth ages 14-23. Participants gain real-world, paid experience with City departments and local businesses.

AJRP is currently seeking local organizations to employ youth in the 2026 summer program. Partners are dedicated to empowering young individuals by providing essential skills, fostering confidence and building resilience. Please note that the City funds all participants' salaries!

[CLICK HERE](#) to learn more and fill out the Partnership Interest Form!

### Franklinton and Hilltop USA November Newsletters

Check out the December issue of the Franklinton Development Association's (FDA) monthly newsletter, which features local resources and community calendar with events coming up in the Franklinton area. You can read the newsletter [here](#) or printed copies are available at the FDA.

You can also read the Hilltop USA newsletter [here](#).

### West Side Vaccination Clinic – 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday every month

Protect yourself and your loved ones. Get vaccinated. Low-cost or no-cost vaccines for children and uninsured adults will be available at the Westgate Community Center (455 S Westgate Ave) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month from 1-4pm. No appointment needed. Children under 18 must be with a parent or guardian. Questions? Call 614-645-7559 or email [shots@columbus.gov](mailto:shots@columbus.gov).

### Connecting the Dots – Office Furniture for Nonprofits

Most companies are buying new items and need to either dispose of or recycle their current furniture. Over time this causes a huge impact on our local landfill. Connecting the Dots is a unique solution to this common problem. We pick up gently used items and offer them for free to local nonprofits, asking only that they cover the cost of labor. This service for nonprofits ensures they will love where they work too! For more information, contact Raine Dearing at [rdearing@kbiinc.com](mailto:rdearing@kbiinc.com).

### The Hope Gathering

The Hope Gathering is a recovery-based, inclusive community that acts as a bridge between the streets and faith. We are a people who desire to work on our recovery while strengthening our relationship with our Higher Power. We work the Twelve Steps. All personal beliefs and values are welcome.

Join us every Wednesday at 6:30pm at Glenwood United Methodist Church, 2833 Valleyview Dr., Columbus, 43204. (Transportation provided). For more information, visit our website at [www.hopeddealercommunity.org/hope-gathering](http://www.hopeddealercommunity.org/hope-gathering).

# Become a WWMD Financial Supporter



**BECOME AN**  
*Elite Supporter*

Visit our website [wwmd614.org](http://wwmd614.org)

What Would Marcus Do is a non profit organization with a mission to Restore Hope and Resources to the Hilltop Community and abroad. This mission is accomplished through:

- *Resource Navigation*
- *Community Clean Up, Pop Ups*
- *Holiday Drives*
- *The Marcus M. Payne Scholarship Fund*
- *The M.P. Empowerment Academy and more.*

Your financial contributions assists with the continuance of this mission. All donations are tax deductible.

**BECOME A SILVER SUPPORTER**

Make a  
**\$250**

One Time Donation  
Status valid for 1 Calendar Year

**BECOME A GOLD SUPPORTER**

Make a  
**\$500**

One Time Donation  
Status valid for 1 Calendar Year

**BECOME A PLATINUM SUPPORTER**

Make a  
**\$1,000**

One Time Donation  
Status valid for 1 Calendar Year

**BECOME A EMERALD SUPPORTER**

Make a  
**\$1,500**

One Time Donation  
Status valid for 1 Calendar Year

## BECOME A MONTHLY SUPPORTER

# MAKE A \$32.00

*Reoccurring Donation  
in honor of Marcus' 32<sup>ND</sup> Birthday  
Status valid for 1 Calendar Year*

*Other Monthly Donation Options include:*

**\$5.00 \$10.00 \$25.00**  
**\$30.00 \$50.00 \$100.00**



Make your  
tax deductible contribution today online

For more contribution options call us at  
614-969-7765



*In Loving Memory of  
Marcus Marquis Payne  
May 25, 1994 - September 11, 2021*