



Bluffton
Self

Help
PATHWAYS TO PERSONAL SUCCESS

Strengthening the Fabric of our Community

For more than 30 years, Bluffton Self Help has been providing basic needs and financial support to our community. And though our roots are in serving the generationally impoverished, our future is in supporting our families who are economically at-risk. With expanding services that include educational programming and leadership, we serve as advocates for those in need throughout our local community and beyond. With direct access to necessary resources, a deep understanding of our community needs, and significant relationships to create change, we provide those in need with a pathway toward self-sufficiency.

Our mission

To empower and advocate for Lowcountry neighbors to improve their lives through education and training, basic needs, and guided access to a network of community resources.

Our vision

Communities where everyone has equal access to essential tools and resources to support their journey towards personal success.

Neighbors helping neighbors - 2022 Community Impact



194

families received
Emergency Financial
Assistance



858

households received
431,428lbs of fresh and
nonperishable groceries



168

neighbors worked one-on-
one with Client Advocates
through 674 meetings



413

Lowcountry residents
attended Preparation classes
to improve their lives

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Our Founder



In 1986, Bluffton's Ida Martin opened a nearly empty refrigerator in the home of a single mother with five children and immediately filled it and that's how her dream for a better future for her community began.

Martin got on the phone with leaders of Bluffton churches that were providing charitable services to bring their work under one umbrella. That small act of kindness also began to fill a hole in the Bluffton community. People needed help, but there was no single organization to pull it together.

At that time, nearby Hilton Head Island had a wonderful organization whose mission was to provide assistance to islanders in need, but nothing was available to help Bluffton residents when they had a financial crisis.

Ida Martin recognized a great need that was not being met for working families and senior citizens in the area, and so began Bluffton Self Help, which was chartered a year later in October of 1988. The name Bluffton Self Help fit the organization's mission, and it fit the woman who got it going and helped it keep pace with Bluffton's

incredible growth, particularly over the past several decades. As the town and surrounding area boomed, so did the need for emergency financial help, food, and clothing.

Initially working out of her garage, Mrs. Martin obtained resources from family and friends and sometimes went door to door. Clothing was donated and food was obtained by driving to the grocery stores on Hilton Head Island and picking up outdated food items.

From her garage, Bluffton Self Help moved to the barely 900 square foot old police station on Highway 46 in Old Town Bluffton, and eventually to over 6500 square feet in Sheridan Park.

Martin retired as director in 2005, but never left the organization, continuing to serve on the board and help connect the group to the community. One of Mrs. Ida Martin's key strengths was her ability to recognize that no matter how down and out someone might be, they still deserve our respect and care as one of God's children.

"She reminded us that as Bluffton has grown and developed, there is another Bluffton that is still there that needs help," said John Orth past vice board chair. "She told us not to give things away just for the sake of giving them away but give them with a piece of your heart so the dignity of the person getting them is preserved."

Her work did not go unnoticed. In 2012, she received the Alice Glenn Doughtie Good Citizenship Award from the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce and was placed on the town of Bluffton's Wall of Honor.

Most notably, in 2011, she received the Presidential Citizens Medal from President Barack Obama at the White House. The nation's second-highest civilian honor recognizes Americans who perform "exemplary deeds of service."

The Need

50,000 households in Beaufort and Jasper counties are struggling to get by.



Nearly 6 in 10 households...

in Beaufort County and 3 out of 4 in Jasper County are economically at risk.



More than 38%...
of the housing units in the Bluffton area are overcrowded, inadequate quality, or unaffordable.



Simply learning English...
for the non-English speaking, could cut their numbers living in poverty in half.



Elevating educational levels...
of our workforce could greatly increase their income potential.



More than 21,000...
of these neighbors are food insecure and live in poverty.



44 million (23%)...
adults in the United States are functionally illiterate, lacking basic skills beyond a fourth-grade level.



SC has the 13th highest...
rate of functional illiteracy in the United States.



11% of adults (10,745)...
lack basic prose literacy skills in Beaufort County.



10% lack...
a high school education.



27% of adults...
lack a high school education in Jasper County.

We are on a mission to change that. But we cannot do it alone.
Join the movement to help move 10,000 households in ten years to economic self-sufficiency.

Our Focus

BASIC NEEDS PROGRAMS

Bluffton Self Help's basic needs programs are often the first step on one's path to success, helping neighbors stretch their budget and meet their most critical needs. Through The Market, neighbors have weekly access to fresh, healthy food, clothing, diapers, hygiene items and special groceries for major holidays. We are stabilizing families as they work toward self-sufficiency.

- The Market
 - The Clothing Closet
 - Diaper Program
 - Holiday Grocery Program
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EDUCATION & TRAINING PROGRAMS

Our education and training programs help adults acquire the basic skills they need to be productive workers, family members, and citizens. At Bluffton Self Help's four Learning & Literacy Centers, neighbors attend adult education classes, workshops and trainings, have access to computers and internet, and receive the support they need to reach their individualized goals on their path to success.

- Adult Basic Education Classes
- GED Preparation Classes, Tutoring & Testing
- English as a Second Language Classes & Online Programs
- Workshops, Tutoring, & Certificate Programs
- Open Computer Lab
- American Civics in preparation for U.S. Citizenship
- Educational Scholarships for higher education
- Digital Literacy Online Program & Classes
- Career Readiness Certificate Program

COORDINATED RESOURCES & COLLABORATION

We empower, mentor, and advocate for individuals and families to improve their lives and livelihoods, providing one-on-one support to set and achieve individual goals. Through our career development programs, we help train and educate the Lowcountry workforce.

- Emergency Financial Assistance
 - Guided Resources
 - Referrals to Community Resources
 - Address Critical Needs & Provide Ongoing Support
 - Goal Development
 - Apply for Jobs & Connect with Local Employers
 - Resume Building & Interview Skills
 - Career Planning
 - Provide Guidance with Benefit, Education and Training Applications
 - Educational Scholarships
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COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Throughout the year, we collaborate with community partners, local schools, and neighbors to provide various programs that provide nutrition, resources, and tools, enabling all Lowcountry neighbors to stretch their budget, experience joy and thrive.

- Fresh Xpress Program
- Education Supplies
- School Snack Programs
- Christmas Toy Shop

Thank You



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