

When we first moved to Brentwood, I didn't know anyone and wanted to do something to serve in my new community. We had just started visiting BUMC, and I saw something in the bulletin about GraceWorks. I reached out to them, and they needed someone to help solicit businesses to collect toys for Toys for Tots. Once Christmas was over, I had learned more about this impressive organization and wanted to continue to be a part of it. So, I began volunteering weekly in the food pantry.

There's so much food insecurity in Williamson county, and I wanted to do what I could to help. There are many ways to assist in the food pantry, and I quickly began to learn all of them. I gained further understanding of the many ways GraceWorks serves others when they allowed volunteers to shadow the "GraceWorkers" (social workers). We met with the neighbors one on one to determine their needs and how GraceWorks can best help. In shadowing the GraceWorkers, I learned that they offer rental assistance, utility assistance, guidance in being more self-sustaining, financial guidance, and helping with basic day-to-day needs, including clothing and food. It meant so much to me to actually meet these precious neighbors, people just like me, who just happened to be struggling at that time.

Recently, the food pantry was re-organized so that neighbors can come in, get a grocery cart, and do their own shop shopping. They choose their own groceries in the same way that you and I like to choose our own groceries. We as volunteers are there to help them if they need assistance, or they can do it on their own. It's been so fun meeting people and interacting with them while they shop! I love just being a listening ear when people have a story to share. I also love playing with the sweet children that come in to give their parents an opportunity to shop. So many of the neighbors are filled with gratitude. GraceWorks is, as their mission statement says, "Neighbor serving neighbor, by the power of God's grace."