



Support Our Community Impact Initiative



Grassroot Givers

Connecting Communities. Giving with Dignity. Empowering Lives.



Connecting Communities, Giving with Dignity, Creating Opportunities

Founded in 2009, Grassroot Givers has been making the connection between those in the Capital Region who lack basic essentials for daily life—housewares, clothing, personal care items, books and more—and those who have these like-new resources to share.

Without these essentials, even the most basic activities can be a struggle: preparing meals without dishes, pots, or pans; encouraging children to go to school or play outside without warm coats and boots; or sparking a child's interest in reading without access to books in their home.

At our facility on Washington Avenue in Albany, our dedicated staff and team of volunteers help us sort and organize clothing, housewares, and books from our generous donors to help ease those struggles and create opportunities for local families.

Everyone who walks through the door at Grassroot Givers feels welcome. Donors visiting Grassroot Givers are grateful that their cherished personal, family items are finding a new home and helping local families move forward. Those coming to Grassroot Givers in need of basic necessities feel

valued. We work closely with each person, to ensure they receive exactly what they need. Our shelves are neatly stocked with quality, like-new home goods and clothing. Our books are displayed and categorized similar to a retail bookstore. Children's books are rated for reading level, using the city school district's system, making it easy for teachers to choose books for their students.

Each year, as we have expanded our programs, our donations from the community have grown along with us.

Partnered to Support Every Family

We partner with more than 130 businesses, schools, and regional nonprofit organizations that assist our neighbors living in poverty. These families are often living paycheck to paycheck, transitioning from homelessness, or are refugees creating a new home in our community. In 2021, we joined Healthy Alliance, a network of more than 500 health care providers and community-based organizations that collaboratively support vulnerable people. These partners refer individuals to Grassroot Givers, where they can request the exact items they need, completely free of charge.

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We are fortunate to have Grassroot Givers providing so many families in the Capital Region with the basic necessities they need. The important work they do makes our communities stronger and healthier, ensuring that our most vulnerable neighbors always have a hand reaching out to help them up when they need it most. They help define what makes Albany and the Capital Region community unique.”

— **NYS Assemblymember Patricia Fahy (District 109)**

Grassroot Givers by the numbers:

Each year, Grassroot Givers provides:

Clothing for
8,250
children and adults per year through:



- Referrals from partner agencies and walk-ins
- Pop-up shops throughout the City of Albany, bringing clothing to neighborhood venues

Housewares for
380

families per year through:



- Healthy Alliance Network
- Partner Agencies (emergency cases)

Books:
55,000
per year through:



- 20+ Little Free Libraries throughout Albany's neighborhoods and at a dozen schools, through HATAS' Feed and Read Program, which provides 600 books a week to Albany schoolchildren.
- Traveling book bikes—a whimsical, eye-catching mobile library which allows us to share diverse books out in the community.
- General sharing of books to day cares, Albany public and charter schools, other nonprofits, Schenectady County Jail, the Albany Airport, and many other venues.
- Sharing books gives families the tools to build literacy, empowering children and adults alike, including those with English as a second language.



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As a longtime volunteer at Grassroot Givers, I see firsthand how Grassroot Givers helps individuals and families every day. Support for our neighbors is tailored with care for each person and given with dignity. Whether it is preparing a home essentials order or sharing books, the message to all is the same: no matter your situation, you are valued.”

— Judy Kahn, longtime volunteer



A Message from Our Co-Directors

Grassroot Givers has come a long way since we helped our very first family who lost everything in a house fire in 2009. The community not only answered the call, the outpouring of support was enormous. This sparked the idea to open a small store where people could choose the basic necessities they needed, all of which would be completely free. In 2011, Grassroot Givers added the Book Project, recognizing the need for books in the home to support literacy for all.

From these beginnings, our tiny venture has grown into a lifeline for thousands of our neighbors. Our philosophy remains the same: we provide people with the resources they need to start a new chapter in their lives—giving them the tools to stabilize their lives, to bolster literacy, to promote economic equity, and to support the dignity that every person deserves.

We are fortunate to witness the impact our work has on a very personal level: the joy of a child who holds a new book in her hands, perhaps the first she has been able to call her own; the smile of a mother setting the table for a family meal she has just prepared; the comfort a teenager feels, sleeping in their own bed with fresh linens after transitioning from a shelter; and the confidence of a man who is now wearing the professional clothing he needs for his job interview.

As our programs continue to grow, it allows us to give even more to all who need this simple helping hand. We are so thankful to our community for their dedicated support and spirit of sharing. We humbly ask you to join us as we plan for the future.

With gratitude,

Mary Partridge-Brown & Roberta Sandler



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After losing everything and moving into a shelter, I was blessed to have Grassroot Givers help my family. The beautiful things they gave me helped me settle into my new apartment so I could focus on my children. I am so appreciative of Grassroot Givers for giving me things for free to help supplement my budget.”

—Yolanda G.

Increasing Our Community Impact

Each year, more and more individuals and families in our community need the support that Grassroot Givers provides as requests from our partners at schools, shelters, and community programs are increasing. In order to expand our programs, as well as our space, we need to increase our revenue to keep up with the demand.

- We require more space to take in, sort, organize, and display our home essentials, clothing, and books. Currently, our lack of space severely limits the amount of out-of-season goods we can accept, and additional items are often stored offsite, out of necessity.
- Each of our programs is expanding to meet the increasing need. This requires more volunteer support and more staff, which is crucial to the success of our model.

With the increased rent, utilities, and renovations, we will more than double our current expenses. We have hired additional staff and will invite more volunteers to help us manage our programs. To meet these challenges, we are launching our \$500,000 Support our Community Impact Initiative, appealing to our community for philanthropic investment in our mission, thereby increasing our capacity to serve.



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We do not need to look any further than our own homes to understand the importance of clothing, home essentials, and books in our lives. Grassroot Givers' model of connecting communities provides families with the opportunity to move forward. Laying the groundwork now will assure we can expand our programs and help more families.

— Jim Bilik, President,
Grassroot Givers Board of
Directors

With your support, Grassroot Givers will:

- Provide basic essentials to many more who face poverty—whether they are in transition from a shelter, refugees making a new life in our community, or simply in need of basics that they can't currently afford.
- Support literacy in very basic ways such as providing books to students that are learning to read or, with older students, reading to learn, and surrounding families with the basic tools to succeed.
- Increase our square footage at our current facility by renovating an adjacent available space and combining the two, giving us triple the capacity for storage and, more importantly, for giving to the community.
- Broaden our capacity for volunteers, thereby increasing our efficiency and making more connections for our community.
- Engage more community partners to assist us in the work we do.
- Upgrade our computers and increase our technological capabilities.

We invite you to join our Community Impact Initiative, helping our neighbors and our community thrive.

Visit Grassrootgivers.org to learn more or to make a gift online.



**We support individuals,
families & over 50
nonprofit programs in
the Capital Region of
New York.**

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I wish I could videotape when the children get their books. The kindergarteners and first graders love the books with pictures of children who look like them! Thank you for helping us grow readers!”

**—Tricia B., Arbor Hill
School Social Worker**



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We are grateful for our collaboration with Grassroot Givers over the past 12 years. Their focus on connecting communities to fill specific gaps in resources not only helps stabilize families, but also offers opportunities. Working together we can reduce poverty and enhance the quality of life for local families.”

— Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan



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