



# COASTAL CONNECTION

NEWSLETTER | FALL 2024  
Domestic Ministry

## WELCOME

As promised, below is our domestic newsletter for 2024. We hope you enjoyed our recent newsletter on our international ministries as well. Thank you for your continued prayers and financial support.

## EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH INVESTMENT (EWI) PROGRAM



We are pleased to announce the graduation of our second class of diverse women. Our last session was held in June and each participant received a \$1,140 check to begin their personal investment journey. Special thanks to our three-volunteer instructors Nancy Stich, Kathy Rosenblath, and Mindy Rodriguez for helping to make our year a success. Our next class will begin in 2025, and plans are already underway to identify Year-Three participants. Below are testimonials from this year's class.

**“Before your program, I was struggling with financial management. I had a couple of high interest loans and a few credit cards with utilization over 50%, and little to nothing in emergency savings. By the end of your program, I had paid off 3 loans (one with an extremely high interest rate, total of the 3 loans \$7,000), and saved up to \$9,600 in emergency funds. I was able to do so despite being off work for 8 weeks due to a medical situation. The monthly meetings were very informative as I learned about investing for the future, credit card debt and management, loan management, and overall healthy financial management. There is no way I would have accomplished what I accomplished had I not been part of the program. Thank you so much!!!!”**

“I would like to thank you all so much from the bottom of my heart for the knowledge you have imparted and for taking the time off your schedules to educate us. I’m eternally grateful, and the money didn’t hurt either! You all ignited an “investment fire” in me. Be blessed.”

“When I was approached, I was overwhelmed by the complexity of my financial situation. I had multiple accounts, a mixture of investments, and no clear strategy for my retirement. From our very first meeting, the team at EWI made me feel at ease. They started off by making sure that we had smart goals, and this is very important. Their expertise was evident as they reviewed my goals and crafted a personalized financial plan that aligned with my aspirations. They took the time to explain their approach in a language I could understand. The regular meetings and topics have been impressive, keeping me informed and confident in my financial journey. Some of the topics included credit reporting and scores, understanding financial investments, managing credit cards, preparation for buying a home, savings and spending plans, and simply knowing and realizing the true values of money and retirement. Thanks to Stephen Wright and his team, I now have a clearer path to financial stability and ways to invest along with the peace of mind that comes with it. For the past ten months, their guidance, knowledge, and thorough financial information has been invaluable, and I recommend this course wholeheartedly.”

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## SCHOOL FOOD PANTRY PROGRAM



The 2023-2024 school year was a huge success for the children in our Food Pantry Program. In addition to our monthly food and drink deliveries, we were able to obtain some items from the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana. Over 5,000 students are represented in the schools we serve, and we were able to provide over 45,000 snacks this school year. We were also successful in providing boxes of food for the college food pantries on the LSUA and UWF campuses.

However, the 2024-2025 school year will bring several changes to our program. Two of the schools we served have closed and the students have been reassigned to other campuses. We will not add additional schools at this time but will not rule out the possibility for the future. We have also decided to change how the program is operated.

When the Food Pantry Program originated in 2019, it was run by Children's Miracle Network (CMN) as a grant program. Remember, the spring of that school year is when everything shut down due to COVID. CMN asked us to take over running the program, which we agreed to do. For the past three years, we have bought and distributed the food items to the various schools we serve. During that time, we have had technical difficulties, problems with deliveries, and costs increases.

After getting input from some of the principals and coordinators of the program, we have decided to return to the original format of a grant program. Checks will be delivered to the schools at the beginning of each semester. The schools may then purchase the items for their schools from wherever they wish. We are asking that they email us copies of the receipts for our records.

Coordination with the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana will continue. As we find items the schools can use, we will be happy to pick them up and deliver them.



## WAREHOUSE AND SHIPPING

Over the last six to nine months, we have made several international shipments. Our largest was an eighteen-wheeler trailer full of medical equipment that was shipped to Hospital Sister Mission Outreach (HSMO) in Springfield, Illinois and then several pieces of that equipment went into a container that recently arrived in Nigeria.

Additionally, we successfully sent multiple shipments of supplies to our Christian Community Clinic in Haiti.

Out of the warehouse, we were able to share multiple shelving units and a pallet jack with the local food bank for their work with community food pantries. We delivered 30-plus boxes of medical supplies to the LSUA Nursing and Allied Health programs. Finally, as a last act of emptying the warehouse, we donated the warehouse cart to David Raines Community Health Centers.

By the end of October, we plan to close our warehouse services down. We will continue to send small boxes of medical supplies to our Haitian clinics, but we will no longer collect major medical equipment donations. We will, however, continue to work with HSMO and other partners to meet the needs of international ministries.



## DROIDS & DRAGONS TRIVIA FUNDRAISER



This year's 5th annual Droids and Dragons event was our most successful to date! We raised about \$43,000. 60% of these monies went to the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana for the school backpack program, while 40% went to support our School Pantry Program. There were 26 teams funded, with 20 teams competing for prizes. Prize winners were as follows:

### Winners

- 1st Place: Let the Wookie Win
- 2nd Place: Link Up With the Rebellion
- 3rd Place: Let's Get Quizzical

**Best Use of Theme:** Let's Get Quizzical

**Best Team Name:** Let the Wookie Win

We have made the decision to host this event every other year so our next event will be in 2026. Special thanks to all our sponsors and teams for your support of the children in Northwest Louisiana.

## BAYOU BOURBON RAFFLE

On October 18th, 2024, we will be hosting our first ever Bayou Bourbon Raffle to support our international ministries. Thanks to the efforts of Coastal Connection board member Don Lloyd we have successfully secured donations of 30 bottles of rare bourbon. We have 10 pairings of bourbon pulls for participants to win. We are only selling 50 tickets at \$1000 per ticket. Some bottles we have received are valued at over \$2000. See the link below for more information and the chance to buy a ticket to participate:

[donorbox.org/events/679066](https://donorbox.org/events/679066).



## THANK YOU

We want to say thank you to all of our donors who continue to support our ministry during these crazy times. As you can see, our ministry is alive and working to carry out its mission. We will continue to pray for you and your families. We wish each of you an early Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year!

Yours in Christ,

*Stephen and Mona Wright*