



Mission

Volunteers In Service empowers Christians to join Christ's work in their community.

As people of faith, we know that service is a powerful way for individuals to express and experience Christ's love. Volunteers In Service helps the Christian community answer the call to serve with an open mind and a ready heart.

Just as Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, Volunteers In Service helps people of faith and their churches prepare their minds, hearts, and hands for service shaped by humility.

History

Volunteers In Service (VIS) was founded in 1986 to be a support ministry for Grand Rapids area Christian Reformed deacons. As churches desired to connect with neighbors by loving and serving them, deacons did not have a system in place that could identify people in the community who would benefit from a church volunteer connection. VIS began its work by developing partnerships with social service agencies in Kent County, who were able to identify people who were falling through the cracks because of limited services available to them. To learn more about our history -

VIS soon became aware of the amount of lonely, isolated people who had little to no support systems in their life. In 1987, VIS began the Supportive Friendship Ministry where a church volunteer would build a relationship with a person who was referred, by regularly visiting with them.

Not long after the friendship program began, agencies began to identify other needs that church volunteers could assist with and two years later, VIS began the Service Project Ministry. This ministry offered people help with minor home repairs, yard work, painting and other miscellaneous household chores. Over the last ten years, VIS has seen significant growth in a more proactive approach by the Christian community. Small groups from churches (i.e. couples, retirees, men's or women's groups and youth groups), along with student groups from Christian schools and Summer SERVE (a summer serving program through Youth Unlimited which includes youth from USA and Canada) contacted VIS asking for serving opportunities.

As deacons became more involved with their community, VIS realized the need to expand services to include training and resources. In 1995, VIS offered the first annual deacon training and in the fall of 1998, VIS organized the first Leadership Training Event (LTE). This event was for all ministry leaders and offered a variety of workshops on topics that equipped them to carry out their work in the church. This event continued for nearly two decades!

Today

Over 35 years, VIS has been committed to a listening posture with deacons. Training topics offered each year are based on what deacons identify as challenges they face. Today VIS partners with over 100 agencies and churches which include many Christian denominations. VIS also receives nearly 700 referrals in a year and is able to meet 70% of those needs. VIS is grateful for the local church partnerships and their growing desire to reach into the community and connect relationally.