The First Annual BakerRipley Experience was a huge success!

BakerRipley’s new fundraising event, The BakerRipley Experience, presented by Shell, was held on Thursday, Oct. 20, 2022, at the Hilton Americas – Houston. The evening brought together Houston’s philanthropic community, businesses, and elected officials to recognize BakerRipley’s critical work and impact in the region.

The theme for this year was “UNLIMITED: An Evening Benefiting the Neighbors We Serve.” It spoke to BakerRipley’s work since 1907 and honored the resiliency, vitality, and productive achievements of the individuals, families, and communities who are served.

Guests heard stories of gratitude and success, and they heard from BakerRipley’s President and CEO, Claudia Aguirre, as she honored Verizon, whose investment into the Economic Initiatives program is changing the lives of Adult Education students every day.

Typical of BakerRipley, the night was filled with education, connection, opportunity, and fun! The event exceeded the fundraising goal of $400,000 for BakerRipley programs.
Cheering On Our Trotters


The BakerRipley Houston Turkey Trot is an annual event which supports BakerRipley’s mission of bringing resources, education, and connection to emerging neighborhoods. The BakerRipley Community School Cheerleaders, coached by Ms. Jacqueline Grant, were energized, motivated, and excited to cheer on Trot runners and walkers. Look for the BakerRipley Community School Cheerleaders at other events.

Final Community School Content Day for 2022

The BakerRipley Community School Instructional Leadership Team rolled out an intensive content day on Nov. 11. There were 148 District team members who participated in various workshops on the method and practice of teaching, intervention, and implementation of high-quality instructional materials. Teachers took deep dives into Eureka Math: “Using Math Manipulatives during Math Instruction,” High-Quality Instructional Strategies, Social Emotional Learning Strategies paired with Effective Communication, and how to use data in intervention.

Team members were greeted with breakfast, BakerRipley swag, and books for teachers to use with students during Reading Block.

Professional Development helps to increase the teachers’ expertise in their field and, as a result, builds confidence in the work they do for our students. Education for teachers, like our students, is a never-ending process, and the BakerRipley Community School District is proud to be able to provide these continuing education opportunities.

"Autumn is the season that teaches us that change (transformation) can be beautiful!"
Community Connections Night at Gulfton

On Thursday November 11th, the BakerRipley Gulfton Sharpstown Campus Advisory Committee hosted its first Community Connections night. Community partners and elected local officials were invited to network and learn more about the services BakerRipley offers to the community. The Advisory Committee is composed of local business owners, active community residents, health organizations, and financial partners. The Advisory Committee meets quarterly to provide expertise for the implementation of the Campus goals and programs, share knowledge about the community, and make recommendations on how the Campus can best serve the community, as well as assist in attracting resources (funding, connections, and volunteers) to the Campus.

The event was held at the Gulfton Campus’ Verizon Wireless Learning Center. Guests were encouraged to interact with the various technologies available to the community, such as the photo-editing station, green screen for film creation, a podcast setup, and a 3D printing machine. In addition, local bites were provided for the event from Afghan Village, Pollo Bravo, Bijan’s Persian Grill, Thai Cottage, and Sweets by Belen, all of whom participate in the Gulfton Advisory Council or volunteer for the center’s programs. Notable event guests included Madres del Parque, City of Houston Office of New Americans, Metro Houston, Houston Police Department, Amaanah Refugee Services, Judge Israel Garcia (Harris County Justice of the Peace), Legacy Community Health, and State Representative Gene Wu’s Office. Attendees commented that these events "need to exist to ensure strong collaboration, connection, and trust exists in the community." After the meeting, several guests inquired about becoming a part of the Advisory Committee and finding ways to best support BakerRipley’s mission to bring resources, education, and connection to emerging communities.

Ripley House Campus Partners with Houston Dash and Houston Dynamo to Fight Food Insecurity

On Nov. 9, the Houston Dynamo, Houston Dash, and Dynamo Charities partnered with the Ripley House Campus to host a food distribution event with Goodr, which leverages technology and logistics to reduce waste and eliminate hunger. A total of 11,000 pounds of food was disbursed to 315 families. The partnership with the Dynamo and Dash was first initiated through the agency’s Public Resources Development (PRD) team, which connected the teams to the Ripley House Community Center to plan and execute the event. The Ripley House campus, located in the East End, regularly sees a high demand for food-security support. The community center teams hope to partner with Dynamo and Dash for future food distribution events.
**COMMUNITY INITIATIVES**

**BakerRipley Harbach Greater Hobby Campus Celebrates New Leader**

Community Initiatives is excited to announce Rachel Herrera as the new Manager of the Harbach Greater Hobby Campus.

Rachel most recently served as the Youth Leader for Gulfton Campus, where she managed the Campus’ CASE for Kids after-school program serving the Gulfton Charter School students. Rachel’s passion for working with youth has helped her thrive in roles at the community centers and within the youth program. She started at BakerRipley in 2009 as a volunteer in the Even Start program and was hired later that year as a full-time staff Youth Specialist in the youth department.

Before COVID, she served as the Youth Leader in the Young Leaders program, engaging teenagers at the East Aldine campus. Throughout the pandemic, Rachel worked on the frontlines to support neighbors, working in-person in the licensed child-care program, serving in the direct assistance program, and working drive-thru pandemic food fairs. Rachel is ready for her new role as Manager of the Harbach Greater Hobby Campus. She says she looks forward to “getting to meet the community, be part of their everyday lives, and bring resources to the Greater Hobby area.”

From Rachel, "I knew about BakerRipley because I was a Ripley House kid growing up, so as someone who received BakerRipley services, I was familiar with the values and mission of the organization. I come from that culture of, ‘even at my lowest I still have more to give.’ I was without a job at the time, losing hope and wanting to give up. The opportunity to join BakerRipley in 2009 was a life saver in more ways than one."

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**Pasadena Campus Community H.E.R.O.I.C Celebration**

On Nov. 12, 2022, BakerRipley Pasadena Campus hosted the second annual “BakerRipley Pasadena Campus Community HEROIC (Honesty, Excellence, Reliability, Optimism, Inclusion, and Compassion) Celebration” led by the Pasadena Advisory Committee. The event honors HEROIC Leaders while helping reach fundraising goals for the newly expanded Pasadena Campus. Under the leadership of Event Co-chairs Miguel Hernandez and Jarrett Cameron, the advisory committee reached their fundraising goal of $25,000. Net proceeds from the event, including table sponsorships, silent auctions, and individual donations, exceeded $28,000 to directly support the Pasadena Campus operations.

The winners of the H.E.R.O.I.C. Recognition Awards included - the nonprofit organization Anchors of Hope; longtime BakerRipley partner Bay Area Council on Drugs and Alcohol (BACODA); BakerRipley Sr. Director of Facilities Matt Starr for his work on the Pasadena campus expansion; and Pasadena community leader Frank Borrego. Frank is known for his civic-engagement work and for always being present at city council meetings. He has been involved with the Pasadena Action Committee since 2014, neighborhood community meetings, and serves as a board member for Caring for Pasadena.
ECONOMIC INITIATIVES

Finding a Career in Healthcare Tech

Yusuf Davis received his Certified Nursing Assistant certification with Active Nursing Assistant Training in September 2021. Shortly after, he started caring for patients and supporting the patient hotline at the Bay Area Turning Point, a women’s shelter in Clear Lake. He enjoyed helping people through his work.

His best friend and TechBridge Alumni Latrent Child encouraged him to find a career in the health-tech space. There will always be a need for workers with specialized healthcare credentials, and IT and tech provide endless growth opportunities if you’re willing to do the work. On May 9, 2022, Yusuf enrolled in the Tech Bridge & CompTIA training program.

During his first coaching session with Diana Delgado, his Mobility Mentor for TechBridge, they spoke about growth opportunities for Yusuf and the success he’s having with his work. In that conversation, Yusuf mentioned he was struggling with some of the coursework because his home Internet connection struggles to keep up with his family’s demanding connectivity. Diana connected Yusuf to a program available through Economic Initiatives and Verizon that would provide him with a free MiFi.

For the first couple of months, things were going well until his Mobility Mentor noticed in his progress reports that he was behind on the required activities and practice tests. Diana addressed this during a coaching session and Yusuf told her his day job was taking most of his time and energy. Together, they worked on time-management strategies that Yusuf could implement. After the coaching session, Yusuf assured his Mobility Mentor he would complete everything on time and pass the exam.

In October, Yusuf passed the CompTIA A+ certification exam. As part of the incentive program for TechBridge, he received a brand-new laptop (provided by Verizon). Yusuf said that his cohort was also an inspiration for him. He also was very grateful for the program, BakerRipley and the support he received, “Thanks for going to battle for all of us Ms. Diana”.

Yusuf started applying for jobs in IT and has additional skills and experience on his resume that come from volunteering for BakerRipley’s Digital Literacy program, which helps Basic Digital Literacy students. Yusuf’s long-term career goal is to support an IT department in the health-care industry.
Entrepreneur Connection program celebrates Wellness Institute of Neurodevelopment

Dr. Carmen-Baez Franceschi was born in Puerto Rico. Her passion for biology and research quickly gained her national recognition and scholarships from the National Science Foundation, Minority Biomedical Research Support, and the National Institutes of Health.

After she received her doctorate with honors in 1994 from the Medical Sciences Campus at the University of Puerto Rico, she completed her residency at the All Children's Hospital, now known as Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital, in St. Petersburg, Fla. The American Board of Pediatrics certified her in 1997 and 2015 and, after finishing her training, she started working in a private office and as a CMS physician where she was assigned to care for children with severe chronic and developmental problems. Less than a year later, Carmen moved to Houston and opened her own practice, The Wellness Institute of Neurodevelopment (WIN).

In July 2022, Carmen came to BakerRipley seeking assistance to stabilize and organize her new business so she could continue to grow and connect with more patients. The Entrepreneur Connection Program quickly assigned two of their business coaches, Alexis Rios and Andrea Lock, to learn about her business’ mission and its process management. Over the next five months, the coaches were able to analyze and provide feedback to optimize and create value for WIN services, provide coaching on creating pitches for target audiences, and developed flow charts allowing Carmen to reduce workflow bottlenecks in her practice. As a result, with the program’s support, WIN has created two new jobs and implemented intake and operational processes to increase revenue.

"I need hands and minds," she said, to help consolidate this business and make an impact on those in the community who need her methods to improve their lives.

On Nov. 15, 2022, the Entrepreneur Connection program celebrated WIN’s ribbon cutting at its Houston location in Uptown Park. With the coaches' help, Carmen was able to gain access to potential partners and continue her work for the community while scaling her business.
In February 2021, BakerRipley Head Start partnered with the Weekley YMCA and "Books Between Kids" to provide subscriptions to **DOLLY PARTON’S IMAGINATION LIBRARY** as a pilot program. Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library is a book-gifting program that mails high-quality books directly to children’s homes from birth until 5 years of age, no matter their family’s income.

For almost three years, this collaboration has been highly successful among BakerRipley’s families and staff, who enjoy building their private libraries and fostering the early love of reading. This program is free to participants and provides a new hardback book every month. It aligns perfectly with BakerRipley’s School Readiness Goals, and this November BakerRipley officially expanded the partnership to all of our Head Start centers in Harris County.

Head Start families are excited - “My daughter Alaina [5 years old] loves receiving her Dolly Parton book every month,” says one Neighbor. “This book, ‘Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come,’ is her favorite. It helped her feel comfortable with starting kindergarten this school year. It gave her the confidence and the excitement to start kindergarten. Thank you for allowing my daughter to create her library at home. This reading opportunity was truly a blessing.”

Since the spring of 2021, 218 families Head Start families have been enrolled in the Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library program.
A Place to Belong

Ella Trahan has been active with BakerRipley’s Senior Health and Wellness Center in the Kashmere community since October 2014. Ella is 83 years old and lives with her 21 year old grandson in the Kashmere Gardens neighborhood of Houston. After her husband’s death, Ella sought a place for camaraderie and fellowship. What she found, though, was more than new friends—she found a second home and a place to belong.

Our BakerRipley Senior Health & Wellness Centers provide a safe place for older adults to visit during the day, eat a nutritious lunch, make new friends and engage in activities like health and wellness classes, games, arts and crafts, parties, and special holiday-themed events.

In 2017, Hurricane Harvey destroyed Ella’s roof, leaving her with a molehill of repair-cost estimates. On a very fixed income and with no real understanding of how to address the damages, she sought help wherever she could find it.

Through BakerRipley Harvey Home Repair and Weatherization Programs, Ella was able to fix much of the damage caused by Hurricane Harvey and she even received a brand-new Central A/C unit for her home from BakerRipley’s Utility Assistance and Weatherization programs.

While the work on her home was happening, Ella was introduced to our Senior Health and Wellness centers. She has been a staple in the center ever since and has created an extensive support system that keeps her encouraged and uplifted, even when things become difficult.

Ella’s participation quickly grew from attending to becoming a volunteer in the Senior program. She helps the site specialist perform basic daily tasks, including setup and decorating for festivities. Ella enjoys assisting so much that she even took it upon herself to get her food handler’s certification, allowing her to help during mealtime.

Ella says she is thankful for BakerRipley and her Site specialist, Valerie Cooper. The Senior program, she says, gives her reason to “Keep going.”

If you want to know more about the Senior Health and Wellness Program BakerRipley offers at sixteen sites across the City of Houston, contact SeniorCentersIntake@bakerripley.org.
BakerRipley would like to thank everyone who joined the 30th Annual BakerRipley Turkey Trot.

The annual BakerRipley Turkey Trot event is made possible by the generous support of dedicated volunteers who help bring this Thanksgiving Day family event to life. This year 431 volunteers provided their time, talent, and treasure and helped with packet pickup, race day logistics, and race day support for participants. In total over 2,000 hours were contributed by volunteers with an in-kind value of over $62,000.

A special shout out to our partners at the Astros Foundation, who provided over 50 Astros Foundation volunteers who made it possible for thousands of racers to pick up their race packets smoothly during the November 18th-23rd rush week.
PROGRAM STRATEGY, PLANNING, AND EVALUATION

Introduction of the United Way Client Journey

In 2021, BakerRipley was selected to house two “navigators” as part of the implementation of United Way’s Integrated Client Journey framework, a component of their Second Century Vision. BakerRipley navigators, located at our Gulfton-Sharpstown and Pasadena community centers, respectively, help neighbors build their own personalized pathways to achieving financial stability while giving them access to services along the way—whether those services exist at BakerRipley or through other community programs. The navigator’s long-term relationship with neighbors helps them access any needed community resource as seamlessly as possible without getting lost between organizations or complex systems.

The overarching goals of United Way’s Integrated Client Journey have served as a catalyst for BakerRipley’s efforts to be a holistic community development organization by offering integrated programs that enhance socioeconomic mobility for our neighbors. To that end, the Program Strategy, Planning, and Evaluation (PSPE) team has begun facilitating BakerRipley’s internal Integrated Client Journey that seeks to: Create a seamless neighbor journey through BakerRipley programs, strengthen external relationships for strong referral and resource connections, develop shared measurements to document increased socioeconomic mobility, and synthesize knowledge sharing to inform shared best practices across the agency.

In November, with lessons learned from existing socioeconomic mobility and coaching pilots, the team began mapping the current state of client journeys within each of the seven program divisions to build a future state in which clear paths exist between programs and with external partners.

REGIONAL INITIATIVES

Give back to the community while developing a new skill.

On Nov. 5, 2022, BakerRipley Neighborhood Tax Centers kicked-off volunteer recruitment efforts for the upcoming tax season. Close to 100 longtime volunteers and individuals of all ages and backgrounds looking forward to volunteering for the first time shared a couple of hours that morning, exchanging experiences and addressing questions about making a difference in the community while developing tax-preparation skills.

Volunteers make it possible for BakerRipley to offer free, quality tax preparation services to over 60,000 neighbors. The more volunteers, the more households who can benefit. Join the efforts! No tax experience is required.

Scan the QR code to volunteer. Questions? Contact us at: taxes@bakerripley.org.
REGIONAL INITIATIVES

BakerRipley offers "the help we needed" to Neighbor struggling on fixed income

Rosa, 74, built a life together with her husband Luis, 71. They have lived for years on a fixed income in their Bear Creek neighborhood of Northwest Houston. The couple has lived on less than $700 a month in Social Security and a small supplemental amount in Food Stamps. With rising costs and inflation, the couple realized that they needed to find assistance or make more money.

Luis worked small jobs here and there, but nothing steady. The couple decided they needed to tap into community resources and find assistance. They connected with BakerRipley’s Utility Assistance Program through a referral from a family friend. The BakerRipley team worked quickly to handle the intake and eligibility process for the couple. They were able to help the couple receive more than $2,500 to help with their electricity bills, which will help keep the lights on and the heater running throughout the winter months. Rosa says the help meant more to her and her husband than BakerRipley can imagine. She says she knew there was more to life than financial struggles and finding out about BakerRipley’s Utility Assistance Program was just “the help we needed.”

Throughout the years, our BakerRipley Utility Assistance team has helped thousands of families pay electricity and gas bills. The team has learned to listen for and look beyond Utility Assistance. This year was no different. The team chose to gift Luis and Rosa a Thanksgiving surprise. Our Utility Assistance team collected items the family would need to cook a hearty feast and made a special delivery the Friday before Thanksgiving to ensure the family would have a joyous holiday. Pictured above is Rosa with Eric Daniels, BakerRipley Customer Service Specialist.

WORKFORCE INITIATIVES

Andrenise Faust had received a few nursing school acceptance letters but was taken aback when she realized the total costs to attend school and achieve her goals. She had been working as a lab technician at a chemical plant when she was laid off. Through a referral, she met Jeanelle Goins, Career Advisor in the Workforce Initiatives Division. Andrenise learned about programs BakerRipley offers which could connect her with a temporary job as a COVID-19 Contact Tracer, and help cover the costs of school and the admissions testing prep.

“I thought it was the end of the nursing road because I couldn’t afford it [tuition] anymore,” she says. “That was, until a conversation came up with Jeanelle about my goals and work situation.”

Andrenise began applying to nursing programs again and was accepted to the University of Houston College of Nursing in October 2020. Then, in the spring of 2021, she started her formal training. “With the help of Workforce Solutions, especially Jeanelle Goins, who constantly provided encouragement and good advice, I could finally begin my nursing school journey without stressing about the financial burden.”

Because of the financial help and guidance throughout the program, as well as some relevant work experience, Andrenise was able to complete the nursing program in a little over a year and a half. She finished this December. “I started the nursing program knowing my why— which is to be of service,” she says. “I will leave knowing how thankful I am to my amazing professors and mentors who helped me make it to the end.”

Andrenise has since accepted a full-time role in Labor and Delivery at Texas Children’s Pavilion for Women.
The holidays are a time to make warm family memories—not to worry about feeding your kids or paying the electric bill. Help our Neighbors this holiday season and give them the gift of hope.

Let's empower them so they look forward to a new year of working toward their dreams. Will you take a few minutes to make a special, tax-deductible holiday gift today?

Scan with your phone to give now!

Or mail your check payable to BakerRipley to P.O. Box 231808, Houston, TX 77223

https://give.bakerripley.org/givehope