

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **GOOD SAMARITAN MINISTRIES ANNOUNCES NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS GRANTS**

Holland, MI, January 14, 2011 – [Good Samaritan Ministries \(GSM\)](#) announced today it has received three grants to support their work in community development. The program, Neighborhood Connections, is launched with grants from [Fifth Third Bank](#), [Holland/Zeeland Community Foundation](#), and the [City of Holland](#). Each \$5,000 grant provides the seed money needed to establish this initiative. According to Patrick Longeran, Vice-President/CRA Manager, *“Fifth Third Bank is pleased to support our local community in such a positive way making a difference at the neighborhood level.”*

Neighborhood Connections is a program designed to strengthen neighborhoods through relationship building and the collaborative efforts of neighbors, churches, associations, schools, businesses and government. The collective effort will focus on the betterment of the neighborhood and improved quality of life for the residents. Key to the approach is using asset-based community development (ABCD) concepts and methods to focus on the skills, resources, and other strengths of the community – the assets-- as a way of solving community problems.

Neighborhood Connections has developed a three phase approach which begins with ABCD work in one neighborhood and adding two more within one year. The work in this neighborhood will include a Neighborhood Connector, community-building events, asset mapping, and establishing a neighborhood improvement action group.

Neighborhood Connections is an expansion of Good Samaritan Ministries’ Beyond the Walls begun in 2007. Beyond the Walls worked primarily with churches and faith based organizations to connect with neighborhoods. Neighborhood Connections is a community-based model involving three community sectors – business/private, government, and faith based/nonprofit.

According to Linda Jacobs, Executive Director, *“We envision people working together to use their gifts and talents to improve the quality of life for themselves and their entire community. This happens in our community because local government, business and our community foundation combine their resources for the good of all.”* Neighborhood Connections seeks additional multi year funding for this effort. Businesses, organizations and individuals interested in learning more may contact Judy VanDyke, Neighborhood Connections Director at [jvandyke@goodsamministries.com](mailto:jvandyke@goodsamministries.com)

Good Samaritan Ministries is an intermediary organization founded in 1969 to engage the faith community in responding to social needs in the community. The focus is to build faith-based and community collaborations among churches, government, business and non-profit organizations in response to unmet or emerging community needs. For more information visit [www.goodsamministries.com](http://www.goodsamministries.com)

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