

*Duplin Journal February 4, 2026*

# DCOM helps thousands of Duplin families with food, rent and utilities

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WALLACE — Duplin Christian Outreach Ministries (DCOM) continues to provide emergency assistance to Duplin County residents facing financial and food insecurity, offering help with basic needs such as rent, utilities, gasoline and access to food resources.

Founded to give area churches a centralized way to respond to emergencies, DCOM serves residents across the county through a network of partner food pantries and social service referrals.

Tomme Maier, Executive Director of Duplin Christian Outreach Ministries, reflects on the powerful way the community has come together.

“It has been an amazing experience to watch churches, businesses, civic groups, schools, agencies and individuals come together to not only address food insecurity in our community but to encourage each other in service to our neighbors including our children,” said Maier, adding that the needs in Duplin are significant.

Data from the 2024 Economic Snapshot of the Duplin County Community Foundation, notes that 44% of Duplin County residents are considered low-income and 19.8% are food insecure.

Maier highlighted the painful realities many families face as they try to rebuild their lives amid hardship.

“I hate to think about a child going to bed hungry or sleeping in cars and tents in frigid weather, families torn apart by violence and those trying to restart their lives and hitting hardships while doing it,” Maier told Duplin Journal.

Despite these challenges, she emphasizes the strength and compassion of the community when needs are met through collective action.

“I witness greatness in our Community at large when needs are recognized, resources are identified, and efforts come together to put action to faith and faith into action,” Maier said.

“The services provided cannot solve the great issues of poverty and hunger in Duplin County, but they may make a difference for individual neighbors and families,” said DCOM Board Vice-Chair Phil Gladden.

According to DCOM’s data shared with Duplin Journal, last year DCOM served 8,911 households and 29,068 individuals across Duplin County through its core programs.

The DCOM Crisis Center assisted 1,375 households, a total of 3,782 people, providing \$56,130.27 in emergency assistance for rent, utilities and gasoline, helping 1,375 households during difficult times. Five partner pantries served 7,276 households, supporting 25,026 people.

According to Gladden, children remain a key focus of the ministry’s work with Duplin County’s child poverty rate at 31%. Through its Feed Our Hungry Children and Backpack Ministry, DCOM distributed 8,052 weekend backpacks and 750 summer backpacks to students in five Duplin County schools during the 2024–2025 school year.

DCOM also operates Blessings in Store, a thrift shop on West Main Street in Wallace. The store generated \$128,183.40 in sales, with proceeds supporting the ministry’s Crisis Center services.

Maier expressed deep gratitude for the volunteers who serve through the Crisis Center, food pantries, Feed Our Hungry Children Backpack Ministry, and Blessings In Store, noting that their dedication makes a meaningful difference every day.

She encourages the broader community to join in these local missions—feeding the hungry, keeping families safely housed, helping children thrive in school, and supporting local agencies like Duplin Christian Outreach Ministries.

“God has blessed many of us and we are reminded to serve where we can and when we can with what we can,”

Residents interested in supporting Duplin Christian Outreach Ministries can contact Maier at 910-285-6000 or visit [www.duplinchristian.org](http://www.duplinchristian.org).