

## *Growing in Community: Stories of the Eastside*



“My name is Julia Miller and I was born here in Lansing and have lived on the Eastside for most of my life.

A time came in 2011 when I was underemployed and came to ANC to sign up for the Ingham Health Plan and an EBT card. I needed help, but I didn’t know what I was doing or what I needed. I am certain there are many people in the area who come down for the same reasons I did, and are maybe are a little older and not tech savvy, or English isn’t their first language, and they really need help navigating the system. I found the outreach crew to be incredibly helpful and patient, and I imagine they are that way with just about everybody who walks through there. They treated me more like a neighbor than a client – like friends who were helping me out.

I then began to volunteer, greeting at the farmers market and helping at BreadBasket. I knew that this was something I needed to do; ANC was there for me when I needed help, so I wanted to give back. It was important for my own well-being and peace of mind. I moved up from being a greeter at the farmers market to running the bank, which was offered as a paid position. I’ve seen people that otherwise may go without fresh produce and might not have access to this food, benefit from my work.

My mom would go to ANC’s Senior Discovery Group, and I personally was very happy that she was doing that because it gave her something to look forward to every week and a chance to meet other people in her age group. You know, there was a time period when she had cancer and was going through chemo and she had friends who were also sick and friends who were dying, and she was, you know, losing her support system. So I was happy that she had this.

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The people at ANC have become like friends and family to me. I'm totally in love with their commitment and passion for the community and the neighbors. I've met so many different people over the years, like interns, employees, students, AmeriCorps Members, and other Eastsiders. It's a way of keeping up with my community. I get to meet the people that the programs are impacting. We are all striving towards the same goal, which is to support our small corner of the world: the Eastside. I wouldn't live anywhere else.

ANC deserves support in its funding because I've seen how much this organization has done for the community. I've seen it change over the years, and we've grown and done so much with the indoor market, the kitchen, and all the services being provided. And it's important. We've done so much, but we just need to do more, more, and more. Because the need is still out there. We're not done yet."