

Helping the community

# Community center, pantry at former A&W on 12th may open this summer

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Keonte Edwards, left, uses a crowbar to disassemble an awning at 1701 12th St. with the help of Darion Hill, on ladder, and Haley Avery. All three work with the Great Lakes Community Conservation Corps. They are helping prepare for a Giving to the Nations outreach center planned for the site.

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The former J&W drive-in, 1701 12th St., has been vacant since 2004. If all goes as planned, the site is to open as A Place of Provision, a community center and pantry that will provide hygiene items.

- [Journal Times file photo](#)

Keonte Edwards, who works for Great Lakes Community Conservation Corps, wedges a crowbar into an awning at a former A&W restaurant at 1701 12th St. on Wednesday. The building is anticipated to become a new community outreach center run by the Giving to the Nations nonprofit.

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RACINE — Pastor Lynn Nys said that her [Giving to the Nations](#) nonprofit has everything it needs to open its community center at the corner of 12th Street and Terrace Avenue. The contractors are lined up and the site plan has been drawn by Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Network. Well, almost everything.

Funding is the final missing component, Nys said.

Nys says the [community center, which will be called “A Place of Provision,”](#) could be up and running in three months once the money comes together.

The process of taking over the building, 1701 12th St., started in summer 2017 and ground was broken in November of that year. Nys can see the finish line.

“The City of Racine has been awesome in helping us with plans,” she said.

## New developments

On Wednesday, members of the [Great Lakes Community Conservation Corps](#) were working on tearing down part of an awning at the long-vacant building.

“They have been wonderful, helping us,” Nys complimented the workers.

Great Lakes CCC, 1437 Marquette St., is a nonprofit. It sponsors schooling for underprivileged youth seeking high school diplomas or trades certificate, “so hopefully, when they graduate, they can find a job in their field,” said crew supervisor Haley Avery.

Great Lakes CCC also tests water quality in Lake Michigan and removes invasive plant species from area parks.

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## Hygiene and community

The building Giving to the Nations is taking over used to be an A&W and J&W drive-in restaurant, but it’s been vacant since 2004. The land is owned by Midtown Church of Christ, which runs an outreach center nearby, 1705 13th St.

Once it opens, Giving to the Nations’ center will have a food pantry of its own, and will also offer hygiene products. Nys said that although there are plenty of food pantries around the city, there aren’t enough offering items like diapers, women’s products, and other necessities like soap and household cleaners.

“There’s nowhere around here that always has hygiene products,” she said.

Nys explained that it will also offer nutrition and language classes, will hopefully have its own community garden, and can also act as a “resource referral hub.”

“We can get (people) hooked up with other community resources to help each other,” explained Nys, who is a pastor with Stand On His Word International Apostolic Ministry. “There’s not a lot of connectivity right now.”

### Upcoming event

On Thursday, March 28, Giving to the Nations will be hosting a “hygiene drive” at the Dr. John Bryant Community Center, 601 21st St.

Pastor Lynn Nys invited community members to come and receive hygiene products, ranging from soap to laundry detergent to diapers.

Giving to the Nations is always accepting physical and monetary donations. For more info, go to [GivingToTheNations.org](http://GivingToTheNations.org).

### LOCAL NEWS

#### Local nonprofit turning former drive-in into food pantry, outreach center

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### LOCAL NEWS

#### Giving to the Nations breaks ground on future food pantry site

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