

Our Neighbors' Place Newsletter January 2011

<http://ourneighborsplace.org>

715-426-9000

136 N. Riverwalk



On behalf of all the committee members, and volunteers of Our Neighbors' Place we wish all of you a Happy New Year! We have much to be grateful for and I find that we don't say thank you for the gifts that we have received often enough but our committee wants you to know how truly grateful we are to all of you . We would not be in existence without each and every one of you. Each of you are miracles to this organization. It is not the big things that have created who we are but the little gifts that each of you have brought.

I personally want each of you to be blessed in this season and in 2011.

Mary Jo Sutton

Here are updates:

CAMPAIGN FOR HOPE – MORTGAGE BURNING!

Our 2010 fundraising drive was a great success in that we raised enough money to buy a 4-plex as a homeless shelter. Thank you so much if you were one of the 300+ Individuals or groups that contributed towards our cause. We had hoped to buy an 8-plex but these are tough economic times for a lot of people and there is a lot of competition for limited funds. We are optimistic that, by the time you receive this newsletter, the Planning Commission will have approved a special use permit for our "new" home and the City will have approved a \$120,00 loan to be re-paid by the end of 2013. Now we need to get busy writing grants, conducting fundraisers and reaching out to the wonderful neighbors in our communities to pay back the loan and burn that mortgage! Life is certainly looking up for the homeless families in our communities. Please contact Carole Mottaz at mottaz@presenter.com or 715-425-7903 if you would like to help. Thank you!

Benefit Concert

Land O' Lakes Harmony Brigade Chorus and the Four Seasons Gospel Quartet

Saturday, January 8th 2011 - 7:00PM, Ezekiel Lutheran Church, 202 South 2nd St, River Falls, WI

Come hear a great Barbershop and Gospel A Cappella concert as the Harmony Brigade brings together over 40 men from the upper Midwest and Canada singing wonderful classics from Broadway, Pop and other old time favorites. Also enjoy The Four Seasons barbershop quartet with their special blend of Gospel favorites. A free will offering will be taken going to Campaign for Hope-Mortgage Burning. Dessert to follow in the Fellowship Hall



Our Neighbors' Place Day Center "Connecting People with Resources"

In the last 6 months, the Day Center has averaged **14** encounters a day with an average of **273** encounters a month. An encounter is a phone call, a return guest, a WestCAP guest, someone using our phone, computer or washing machine and a person shopping in The Closet. The Resource side of the Day Center met with 64 guests on a one on one interview basis. That constituted 46 households and individuals with an average 3.8 people per household. The average age of the guest was between 31 – 50 years of age.

We have 3 consistent Guest Coordinators and the privilege having two additional Guest Coordinators who come from Workforce Resource and Workforce Connections. They are paid through special WI programs and are looking for full time work during their 6 month stay with us. Each of these women has had experience in a social service resource setting and has brought knowledge of new programs and support to the Center. We continue to have part time student staff from the Social Work department from the University of WI River Falls. These students have been with us for a year now and bring a breath of fresh air when they work.

The Closet - Please come in to see us. We are open to the public!!!

Offers adult and youth size clothing to the General Public, with great selection, quality, and prices. Vouchers for free clothes are available for referred clients. Our prices are very reasonable.

The Closet averages 83 guests a month. We have put on several programs. We had our clothes on Main St. during River Falls Days this year. We put on a Back to School Sale for Teens to coincide with the return to school back pack program. There was a huge coat drive by the River Falls High School Honor Society on Halloween night. We received over 300 men, women and children coats. They flew off our racks when the snow began to fly. We have completed an inventory and reworked the Closet site for better guest flow.

This is accomplished with great volunteers. We have 4 consistent volunteers and several people who have community service hours to complete that keep the Closet in good order. We also have Nancy Peters, a Board Member and Chrissy Wheeler, a student and guest coordinator teaming up to run the Closet.

The Kinnickinnic Back Pack Program

This program was started in the spring quarter of 2010 with 4 grade schools and 35 backpacks.

This fall there are 4 grade schools, a Montessori, and middle school participating with 55 backpacks being distributed each Friday. The program is run by Amber Tubre and Romaine. Each has a passion for this program and Romaine is a dietician and works out the menus that the children can make on the weekends.

Volunteers pack the backpacks on Thursday afternoon and members of the St. Bridget's Knights of Columbus deliver the backpacks on Friday am to the schools and Andy picks them up on Monday.

There was a huge fund raiser on Fathers' Day this summer where we matched a \$2000 donation. Since then the M&I Bank in River Falls, United Methodist Church Women's group among others have supported the program with donations, backpacks and food. The program has been chosen to benefit from the Bowls of Hope this spring on the University of WI River Falls campus. We are very proud of our program of helping individual families in our community.

Neighbor Helping Neighbor Program

This program is individuals, families, civic and youth organizations who give \$10.00 per month towards the rent, utilities and operating expenses for the Day Center.

We continue to need the support to keep the Center doors open to those who need our services.

This is a tax deductible program and allows us to service the many needs of our city and two counties.

The Emergency Shelter opened on September 1, 2010

Our Neighbors' Place offers emergency shelter to families and individuals who are or will be homeless.

We currently lease four, two-bedroom apartments for Pierce and St. Croix homeless residents who have lived in either county for 90 days. We have been full since mid September. In November alone we had 420 Bed Stays. A Bed Stay is a sheltered night counted for each man, woman and child who slept in the Our Neighbors' Place Shelter.

Those interested in applying for emergency shelter can apply at the Day Center of Our Neighbors' Place during open hours or can request an application be mailed, faxed, or e-mailed by placing a call to the Day Center.

Families are given priority in the emergency shelter but if space is available, homeless individuals will be considered. Criminal background checks and references will be contacted and final acceptance into the program will be approved by the Shelter Support Team who provides in-home support and resources. Those appropriate for the program must have had a period of mental health stability, sobriety, and safety in the community.

If there is no current vacancy in the Emergency Shelter, Our Neighbors' Place will maintain a waiting list and will review and screen applicants. Contact a Day Center Volunteer for more information. Supports offered by the Emergency Shelter are provided by volunteers and are not considered to be any sort of professional

treatment or rehabilitation. Parent's in the program with children or dependents are fully responsible for the safety and needs of their children while residing at Our Neighbors' Place Emergency Shelter. All guests sheltered will be expected to comply with a contractual agreement to follow all rules and recommendations and violations may result in discharge from the shelter

We are always looking for additional volunteers for the team or for activities for the children who are guests at the shelter.

Our Neighbors' Place Committee's

New Board Members:

Nancy Peters has retired from teaching at Jacob's Ladder pre-school for 20 + years. She and husband David will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary this year. They enjoy time with their three children and five grandchildren. Nancy has volunteer involvement with Hope Lutheran Church, Hospital Auxiliary, and University Women. She enjoys playing bridge, gardening, reading, and traveling.

Brad Shaffer is a self-employed CPA who has been in business for a year in River Falls and has lived in River Falls for 5 years. Brad has a wife and three sons. His wife's name is Kim and she is the owner of alterations shops in River Falls and Hudson called Custom Needle Alterations. Brad's son Nathaniel lives with his wife in Eau Claire and works for Cartridge World as a Sales Associate, Jeremy lives in Portland and owns a computer marketing consulting business called Poor Boy Possibilities, Kyle lives at home and is a student at UWRF and will be graduating next fall with a degree in Psychology. Brad formerly worked for Bauman Associates, a local CPA firm, as a Tax Supervisor. Brad has over 20 years of tax and accounting experience working as a CPA for Bauman Associates; as a Controller for Cornell Corporation, a manufacturer of roof insulation in Cornell, WI and as the Office Manager for Corner Motors, a Dodge, Chrysler, Jeep, Sprinter dealer in Cadott, WI. Brad can be reached for help with taxes and accounting at schafhq@yahoo.com or by calling 715-222-9689.

Joel Larimore is an Attorney, married with two young children.

Dan Scholz has 30 years of experience in business at 3M and Imation as well as ten years as a small business owner of Beacon Shores, a family resort near Brainerd MN. He and his wife Karen live in the town of Hudson between Hudson and River Falls. Their three grown children all live in River Falls. Dan is looking forward to using his skill in Human Resources and Marketing to support ONP and our community.

Needed committee volunteers: We are formalizing into committees to bring in additional knowledge and support. The following are the committees that have been formed and their committee chairs. If you have a specific talent and an hour of time, call the committee chair and discuss with him or her what that committee will be doing and what you can bring to it. It is intended that these committee's meet on their own schedule and report back to the Board monthly with action items.

Guest Coordinator – Welcome clients; answer a phone, interview guest to connect them to local and county resources. Mary Jo Sutton maryjosutton@gmail.net 715-426-9000

The Closet Assistants and Sorters – The Closet Assistant directly helps a guest find items they are looking for and assists with Interview clothing. A Sorter works behind the scenes processing and preparing donated clothing to be added to the inventory.

Nancy Peters - davidpeters141@sbcglobal.net

Day Center Facility– Clean, organize; the kitchen, restroom, living room, the children’s play area.

Seasonal decorating

Mary Jo Sutton maryjoansutton@gmail.net 715-426-9000

The Kinnickinnic Backpack Program

Brenda Yurs byurs@comcast.net

Shelter apartment furnishings, upkeep and basic supplies

Brenda Yurs byurs@comcast.net

Food Committee –provides refreshments/meals for ONP fundraisers and events. Sees to the basic, ongoing needs of the families currently living in the emergency and transitional housing apartments.

Brenda Yurs byurs@comcast.net

Transportation

Morris Marsolek mjmarsolek@sbcglobal.net

Finance – Budget, bookkeeping, accounting

Brad Shaffer schafhq@yahoo.com 715-222-9689.

Fund Raising and Grant Writing Research and submit grants to appropriate funding sources, organize volunteers for special events

Carole Mottaz mottaz@presenter.com 715-425-7903

Communications –web site, newsletter, marketing, publicity,

Sue Watters sue.watters@uwrf.edu 715-307-1697 715-425-7540

West CAP Literacy Program- student-centered literacy training, tutor support / training, high quality educational resources

Stephanie Stark 715-426-9031 sstark@wcap.org