



Our Neighbors' Place

ANNUAL REPORT



2022

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

2022 – the year that got better in terms of the public health crisis but got worse as prices for everything skyrocketed. From gas and groceries, to rent and household goods – the struggle to afford even the basics was real for many in our region.

Luckily, Our Neighbors' Place was there to help. Guests from all walks of life and every situation imaginable streamed through our doors looking for help and looking for hope.

And they found it.

Across our 4 programs, we connected guests to what they needed – food, shelter, housing, clothing, personal care items, referrals, advocacy, a place to go, a sense of belonging, and most of all – hope.

For those of you who are just learning about Our Neighbors' Place – welcome and please reach out with questions. For those of you who have helped us get to where we are – thank you!!!

SHELLY SMITH

Executive Director



"You guys have been one of the biggest blessings to us! Thank you so much. You are really doing something good here!"

Man and his girlfriend who were living in their car. They had both just gotten accepted into treatment programs but needed to use our shower, got food resources, used The Closet, and met with our Case Manager.



Our Neighbors' Place

DAY CENTER

*"When I come here -
I feel normal!"*

Man living in a tent who comes in to use the shower, restroom and laundry; eat a warm meal; and have somewhere that he feels welcome, accepted, and safe.



The Day Center is the first point of contact for most guests of Our Neighbors' Place. Staffed by 3 employees, the Day Center is open 10-4pm Mon - Fri and provides the following:

- Laundry
- Shower / restroom
- Lockers
- Phone/fax/internet/wifi
- Mailing address
- Food
- Personal care products
- Gas cards
- Taxi vouchers
- Motel vouchers
- Housing counseling
- Case management
- Referrals

There were 3,505 total points of contact through the building (in person visits and phone calls) in 2022. We work hard to create a safe, non-judgmental environment where everyone is welcome.

Yearly Points of Contact* at the Day Center

- 2022 = 3,505
- 2021 = 4,085
- 2020 = 3,039
- 2019 = 4,870
- 2018 = 4,123
- 2017 = 3,171
- 2016 = 1,648
- 2015 = 1,043
- 2014 = 989

**More and more people
in need are relying on
us for critical support**

*Points of contact measured as in person visits and phone calls

THE CLOSET

The Closet thrift store is located within the Day Center building and provides guests with clothing, shoes, accessories, outerwear and more – helping guests stretch their budget while supplying their families with the things they need.

In 2022, The Closet provided 859 vouchers to ONP guests – meaning that those individuals could "shop" at no charge.



The resources in The Closet are made possible by generous donations from the community. In 2021 – The Closet received over \$102,000 in donations of clothing, shoes, outerwear and accessories – and over \$6,000 in donations of personal care products, blankets, towels, diapers/wipes, etc.

The Closet is open to the public for everyone's thrift store shopping needs. Prices range from \$1 – \$8 and funds raised from The Closet's sales go to support ONP programming.

"Thank you so much - it's great you guys offer these vouchers for clothes. You don't know how nice it is to have something new to wear. I appreciate this so much!"

Man staying at Kinnic Falls Drug & Alcohol Rehab Center. He had a good paying, higher level job, he struggled with drinking, and now he's working on staying sober.



BACKPACK PROGRAM

Families in the Backpack Program have choices!

They can choose which store they would like to receive vouchers for:

Dick's Fresh Market

Family Fresh

Kwik Trip (north RF location)

They can also choose if they want their student's bag delivered to the school or if the family would like to pick up their student's bag at Our Neighbors' Place Day Center.

Families appreciate the options to customize the program to what works for them

Since 2010, Our Neighbors' Place Backpack Program has provided food to families in the River Falls School District who need help feeding their children when school is not in session. 7-9 pounds of non-perishable food as well as vouchers for perishable food are sent home each week.

During the 2021-22 school year, the Backpack Program provided 2,208 bags (16,137 pounds of food) to families in need.

During the summer of 2022, the Backpack Program provided 270 bags (2,160 pounds of food) to families in need. Special THANK YOU to The Lions' Club of River Falls for providing funds and volunteers for our summer program! Participants also receive fresh produce through our partnership with River Valley Charities and YMCA Camp St Croix.

What's in an ONP Backpack Program bag?

- 7-9 lbs of non-perishable food
- Voucher for perishable food (rotates weekly between milk, meat, eggs, bread, produce)
- Birthday bag with cake mix, candles, balloons, plates when a child has a birthday



TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Transitional Housing (TH) is a bridge from homelessness to permanent, stable housing. Our Neighbors' Place owns a 4-unit building in River Falls to provide stable housing to families experiencing homelessness. With the guidance of our Case Manager, families have the potential to stay in their unit for up to 24 months, contributing 30% of their income toward rent, as they work toward their goal of securing permanent housing. As with many of ONP's other offerings, this program is unique to ONP because TH programs are not readily found in Pierce and St Croix counties, despite the need.

Since program inception in 2016, we have had 23 families in the Transitional Housing program.

- 3 families early in the TH program did not successfully complete the program
- 1 family was housed in the program at the end of 2022
- 18 families completed the program and found permanent housing

Those 23 families were made up of 33 adults and 54 children – most of whom now have permanent, stable housing thanks to this program.

"It feels so good to unpack in a home!"

Words from new tenants in the Transitional Housing program.

This young family had been staying at Grace Place, had their baby while at the shelter, and were running out of time to stay there.

They worked with Sara on housing voucher applications and after staying in our Transitional Housing program - they were able to receive a Section 8 voucher and find permanent housing.



Extra special thanks to our Case Manager Sara for her tireless work with the Transitional Housing families. Her dedication to ONP and to those we serve is unparalleled.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2022



We had several notable highlights from 2022 to share:



Upgrades to our Transitional Housing building! We have had several maintenance/repair items on our "wish" list for our Transitional Housing building. As a rental unit and an older building, it gets a fair amount of wear and tear. Notable updates in 2022 included repaving the parking lot and most importantly, all new windows were donated and installed through the generosity of Renewal by Andersen (value of \$66,000).



Upgrades to our staff! Since 2018, our staff has consisted primarily of 2 employees. We are so excited to have found a third employee to add to the roster. Sue Dorsch joined the team in September 2022 and has been a wonderful asset to ONP. Serving as Operations and Events Coordinator, Sue is a welcoming presence at the Day Center for our guests and she ensures that all of our events run smoothly.



The Closet premieres to the public! In an effort to diversify our revenue stream, we revamped The Closet space and started promoting to thrift store shoppers, while maintaining the Closet as a service to our guests. Sales in 2022 averaged \$1,000 per month - adding another source of revenue to support our programming.

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

At the heart of Our Neighbors' Place, our volunteers provide the caring, compassionate help that our guests come to expect. Whether it's packing backpacks of food, attending Board or Committee meetings, doing repairs and maintenance at our Transitional Housing building, or providing assistance to a guest at the Closet - our volunteers touch the lives of hundreds of people in our community every month.

There are numerous opportunities to volunteer in River Falls - and we are honored that our volunteers choose to help us further our mission. THANK YOU!

Special thank you to our Board of Directors for their leadership and guidance!

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THANK YOU DONORS!

We could not do the work we do without the support of our donors! From corporate sponsors and area churches, to individuals, businesses, and civic groups – we appreciate ALL the ways countless people step up to provide crucial funding and other support. Thank you for helping us help others!!!!

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