



theExchange News

August 2022

OUR MISSION

Through the effective reuse of donated items, theExchange collaborates with local organizations to provide home essentials for community members in need.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS Shelter Development, Inc.

Chuck Berendes, Pres
Craig Sacia, Vice-Pres
Annie Berendes, Treas
Andrew Sahlstrom, Sec
Isaac Hoffman
Nancy Gerrard
Rebecca Naugler
Kelly Oliver
Sheila Riley
Thomas Schlesinger
Janet Stansfield
S. Kathy Stuttgen

CONTACT US

Open Hours

Mon & Wed: 1- 3:00 pm
Tues & Thur: 1- 4:00 pm

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BIG STEPS AT theEXCHANGE

What an amazing summer we are having! Our volunteer program assistants have been working hard to keep up with the summer donations. There have been days I unlock the front door at 12:59 and there are five trucks/cars lined up full of items to donate. What a blessing to have all our volunteers willing and able to support our community's generosity and our recipients' needs!



Sarah Gebo
Program Director

We want to give a BIG shout out to our transportation team, "the moving crew," for volunteering their time, energy, and vehicles to help us fulfill our mission at theExchange.

We hope you enjoy reading about the highlights of this spring and summer at theExchange—and don't miss the important update from our Board President about the grant to purchase this building!

March - La Crosse Area Homebuilders Association Home Show

With the help of 10 volunteers we set up an unconventional booth at the Omni Center in Onalaska. We brought a homey set-up with us including a dining room table, area rug, comfy chairs and props such as cleaning supplies, kitchen utensils and other high need items. This visual drew a lot of attention and we were able to



connect one-on-one with a couple hundred potential donors. Five months later we continue to reap the benefits of participating, and I truly look forward to this event next spring!

NOTE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

The last couple of months have brought big changes and advancement to Shelter Development, Inc. and theExchange. Shelter Development secured a **sizable grant** from the City of LaCrosse as the administrator of the American Rescue Plan Act funds. With that money Shelter Development made a large down payment and secured a mortgage on the building that houses theExchange. The mortgage is much, much more affordable than the rent payment, allowing us to do other things with some of the funds donated to the operation of theExchange.

theExchange has grown enough to be supported by **two staff people**. Sarah, as Program Director, and Miranda, as part-time Operations Manager, make a great team and will provide stability and direction to volunteers, donors, partner agencies and recipients going forward. Obviously having a couple talented people on staff is a huge benefit, but without volunteers, we simply wouldn't exist. I'm looking forward to witnessing the expanded impact that theExchange will have in the community as time goes on. Thank you all for your support!

Chuck Berendes

May - Dumpster Diversion

Organized by UWL students, the goal is to keep items off the curb and out of the dumpster as students across La Crosse move out of housing. We filled up the trailer and two vehicles with furniture and household items! Next year we hope to partner in organizing this event and bring even more awareness to program.

June - Drive for A/C units and Fans

The need for A/C units and fans started coming across my email the second week of May when we hit 90 degrees. We reached out to our community through the La Crosse Tribune, Facebook and even aired the need on WKBT, News 8000. The response was incredible and immediate. We received over 20 A/C units and 60 fans!



July - Project Homeless Connect

This is an event that brings together local organizations to welcome the homeless and low-income population for an afternoon of fun and information. People had immediate access to social workers, programs and resources all in the comfortable setting of the La Crosse Center as well as free lunches, haircuts, crafts, music and giveaways.

MOVING CREW Superstar Service!

- Thank you for the:
- heavy lifting, handling deliveries and donations
 - best attitudes, ready for whatever we have lined up for the day
 - kind hearts, helping hands and limitless generosity.
- You are the BEST!



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

We can't say it often enough—volunteers make this organization possible. Please mark your calendars for early evening of **October 12** for a time to connect and celebrate!

MOST NEEDED ITEMS

- Dressers
- Nightstands/side tables
- Mattresses/boxsprings/
folding bed frames (must be
in great condition: no stains,
tears or odors)
- Microwaves/toasters/
crockpots/electric skillets
- New bed pillows
- Shower liners and rings
- Bath towels
- Cleaning supplies (dish/hand
soap, multi surface wipes,
brooms/dustpans)
- Large items*

REMINDERS to DONORS

*Please email us with pictures and dimensions of large items you are interested in donating (mattresses, dressers, couches, etc).

Reach out to us if you have hygiene products, sleeping bags, tarps, tents, bug spray or sunblock etc. These aren't items that we usually take but are happy to share resources who do!

THANK YOU ALL!

Follow us on our Facebook Page

TheExchange-La Crosse Area
Furniture Bank

We See You!

Joan Waniger, Coordinator

As theExchange transitions from grass roots to a well-oiled machine, it is important to recognize the unseen volunteer time and talent that boosts our success. In June, Volunteer Coordinators Cindy, Joan, Mary and Sheila hosted a small gathering to honor three women who have provided many hours of administrative support. Please read about them and give a friendly Hello when you see them!



Kathy Knobloch (left) is a semi-retired payroll professional currently serving as treasurer and part-time secretary at Faith Lutheran Church. She was recruited by friend Nancy Gerrard (Shelter Development, Inc. board member) as an Administrative Assistant for Shelter, and retired this year after also keeping our books for the past five years, starting 'when it was the four volunteer coordinators working out of a warehouse'. Kathy lives on a farm three miles east of La Crosse and has one daughter, and two step-children--all adults. When asked what she likes best about theExchange: "Besides their mission, the people. The volunteer coordinators and staff are very kind and caring, so generous with their time and talent."

Linda Schwartz (center) is originally from Iowa but has called La Crosse area home for more than 25 years. Linda possesses administrative skills and currently assists with Adult Faith Formation at Mary, Mother of the Church. She was recruited by Sheila Riley to assist with Client Form development, Volunteer Login, and helping to streamline and collect data. Linda keeps busy with her husband Andy, and two sons attending the Universities of Minnesota and Iowa. In her spare time Linda enjoys reading, writing and gardening. She writes "It is a joy to use my gifts and talents to help serve those in need, and I am grateful for the opportunity to work with such a dynamic, talented and hardworking group of volunteers."

Kathie Tyser (right) and husband Rob moved to La Crosse 44 years ago to pursue careers in education. Kathie is a retired administrator in the La Crosse Public Schools, has served on the County Board, is currently on the LPEF Board and volunteers as a city tour guide for Mississippi River boat visitors. Kathie was recruited by Joan Waniger early on and states, "the mission immediately resonated with me as a need in our community and the energy of the four women making it all happen was impressive." Kathie has lent her expertise in developing our strategic plan as well as volunteering as a program assistant. She currently produces theExchange Newsletter. Her favorite thing about theExchange is the 'inspiring people I meet, the giving community, interesting conversations ...and a highly organized well-run nonprofit all continue to impress me!'

DONOR FEEDBACK

"We had furniture in excellent condition to donate but wanted it to go directly to a family in need instead of resale. Our neighbor told us about theExchange. Their volunteers were able to pick this up from our home and we were more than happy to make a donation for this service. Plus, it was much cheaper than having to get it to the dump!" –Tim and Dawn H.

JANUARY-JUNE DATA

Donations

2021 = 470

2022 = 620

Client Request Forms

2021 = 275

2022 = 347

Same Direction In and Out!

AGENCY FEEDBACK

"I appreciate the friendly and helpful volunteers at theExchange who help make a house a home. It is a joy to partner with theExchange to serve and care for our community." –Sue Graf, WINN (What I Need Now)

ktyser@me.com
Kathie Tyser
Volunteer Editor

Volunteer Coordinators Reflect

As we have welcomed Sarah and Miranda as paid staff, one wonders how the "founding volunteer coordinators" view this big step after six years. So we asked them:

Sheila Riley Transitioning theExchange from volunteer to paid leadership is a key step in ensuring the future of the program. I am thrilled to transfer daily operations into Sarah and Miranda's very capable hands and excited to see the program mature under their guidance. I am grateful to each and every person who has made the work of theExchange possible. And I am confident that I'll be seeing our trailers dressed in the cheerful purple couch logo transiting the city for years to come.

Mary Mueller It's incredibly satisfying to see that the Exchange has become an established resource in the community! While I miss the coordination from the early years and the creativity from Sheila, Joan and Cindy--Sarah and Miranda have been a gift and are growing us in all the right ways. I remain at the ready, delighted to be called in for busy weeks or special projects.

Joan Waniger There's nothing better than to raise a child (and yes it does take a village) and see them flourish in the world. Given that our pragmatic mission meets such an essential need for the environment and community alike—I am thrilled to see theExchange take on a life of its own.

Cindy Sahlstrom When starting up this program six years ago, we had many dreams. One of those dreams was for it to move on, even without the four of us someday. I believe by hiring Sarah and Miranda we have made a giant step forward. That's not saying we're out of the picture, just not taking the lead anymore. Looking forward to seeing where theExchange goes from here.

A huge THANK YOU to the amazing commitment and effort given by these four women to bring theExchange to this point in time!



Building & Grounds Work Crew Forming

theExchange is establishing a Building and Grounds Maintenance Committee and a Building and Grounds Work Crew list. With the purchase of our building in March 2022 came additional responsibilities! The BGM Committee, headed by new volunteer Mike Johnson, will track and prioritize building maintenance and repairs and coordinate services as needed. Work Crew volunteers will help with small maintenance or repair projects that can be handled in-house (from fixing a door lock and assembling shelving to snow blowing or weeding). As with all volunteer positions at theExchange, your time commitment will be flexible. Please email Sheila Riley if interested in joining the Work Crew: sheila@theexchangelacrosse.org.