



# theExchange News

October 2024

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## HIGH NEED ITEMS

Upright vacuums  
Microwaves  
Side tables  
Metal bed frames  
Floor rugs  
Fans  
People Volunteering

## CONTACT US

### Open Hours

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

### Address

1009 4th Street South  
La Crosse, WI 54601

### Phone & Website

608-301-5345

[theExchange](https://theexchange.lacrosse.org)

### Website

[www.theexchange.lacrosse.org](https://www.theexchange.lacrosse.org)

## OUR MISSION IN ACTION

*Sarah Gebo, Program Director*

As our organization grows, it is vital that we continually refer back to our mission statement, making sure we are staying true to our commitment to the community we serve. This has been a recent topic of discussion for theExchange's advisory committee.

**This newsletter will share how our organization's mission with its three goals have continued to be alive and in action this summer. Let's break this down...**

### *Our Mission Statement*

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



Sarah Gebo

### **Through the effective reuse of donated items...**

theExchange accepts donations of household necessities and rehomes them within our community for no charge, providing individuals and families a safer and more comfortable environment in which to thrive.

### **theExchange collaborates with local organizations...**

theExchange partners with nearly 40 local organizations on a referral basis to serve the marginalized populations of our community. Each organization has its niches and strengths, and by supporting each other, we build a stronger foundation for our community.

### **to provide home essentials for community members in need.**

The commonality of the people we serve is financial insecurity. There are a multitude of contributing factors such as aging and disabilities, fleeing domestic violence, natural disasters (such as fires and flooding), job insecurities and potential or current homelessness.

Thanks to all for the varying ways you support this truly worthy mission!

## FROM OUR EXEC DIRECTOR

*Ben Hein, Executive Director  
Shelter Development, Inc.*

In my time here I've witnessed the impact of the services of theExchange upon the families we serve.

Long time volunteers, community supporters and partners likely know that impact feeling well. Transport team members arriving at an empty home



quickly transform it into a livable space. Team members preparing kitchen and bathroom kits may recognize that impact with a smile, handshake or glance that is shared by a grateful recipient.

We are often asked: how can I contribute to the mission of theExchange?

Consider the following avenues of contribution knowing each element is equally important in making our program available to those who need it most!

-Volunteers contribute their valuable **time and energy** to operate the program. We are always looking to grow our dedicated team of volunteers who choose to give in this way to our community.

-Supporters contribute their gently used **household items** to support others. The need for these donations is ongoing throughout the year and a vital component of our ability to meet the needs of households who visit theExchange.

-Donors contribute their hard-earned **financial resources** to support our mission allowing theExchange to provide services at no cost to recipients.

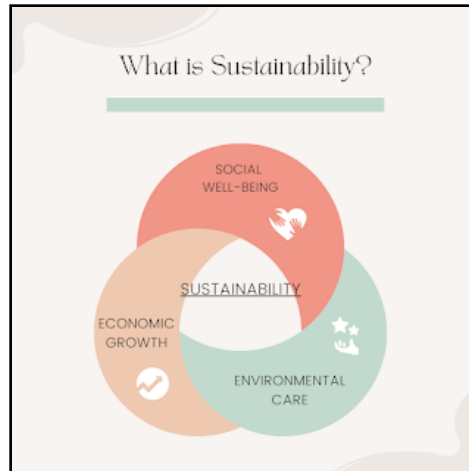
-The community contributes their collective **voice**, sharing the work of the program and advocating for those we serve. Everyone can contribute their voice and awareness is a key to our ongoing success.

However you choose to contribute, please know that your support is deeply appreciated and vital to our mission!

With thanks for all you do,

Ben

## EFFECTIVE REUSE OF DONATED ITEMS



There are various definitions of sustainability but a common one is that sustainability consists of fulfilling the needs of current generations without compromising the needs of future generations, while ensuring a balance between economic growth, environmental care and social well-being.

So how does theExchange implement the 'environmental care' aspect of sustainability in the greater La Crosse area? Think "REUSE" vs landfill.

Over the last 10 months, **more than 1,100 individuals have made donations** to theExchange. Donations of dinnerware, towels, kitchen utensils, or vacuums make just as much of an impact on our clients as mattresses, couches, and dressers.

Based on average weights determined by a national database, **we estimate that we have served as a point of reuse for over 56 tons of furniture so far this year. That is over 112,600 lbs that potentially would have been in the landfill!**

Through the collaboration of agencies, donors providing both tangible items as well as financial contributions, and the enormous generosity of time that our volunteers provide, **to date this year, we have served 408 households consisting of roughly 951 individuals (329 of those were children). 65% of the households were headed by females.**

A recent collaboration with Viterbo University "Student Service Saturdays" showcased the power of our mission and community collaboration. On two Saturdays the students staffed a donation drive and participated in numerous projects to support theExchange.

Colin Burns-Gilbert, Viterbo Director of Orientation and Engagement, shared his views on sustainability as "the combination of two closely connected Viterbo values - Integrity & Stewardship. Whether it's using the resources we already have with care or actively finding ways to reduce our collective environmental impact, sustainability is essential to creating a just and thriving world for generations to come."

"It's incredibly motivating for students to hear that a bunch of people who had time, resources and compassion, created this entire operation - building step-by-step improvements along the way; but then got to show up and talk with those people, and the ones impacted by the organization. It's been powerful to be part of theExchange journey for the last ~7 years, building better connections between VU students, employees and the community."

## COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

### Summer Events



#### Safe Families Golf Fundraiser

theExchange was invited to 'host a hole' at Safe Families for Children's first annual golf fundraiser. It was a beautiful day at Cedar Creek to share our mission and celebrate our partnership with Safe Families, La Crosse.

"Collaborating with outstanding community partners such as the Exchange plays a significant role in positively impacting the lives of many. It is truly amazing to witness the joy and sense of achievement that families feel with their "new" furnishings provided by theExchange."

Stacia Johnston-Lyga, Community collaboration and event coordination  
SFFC La Crosse



#### Viterbo's Service Saturdays

theExchange hosted two Service Saturday with Viterbo student volunteer groups in September and August. The students staffed a Saturday donation drive and participated in numerous projects to support theExchange.

"It's been powerful to be part of theExchange journey for the last 7 years, building better connections between Viterbo University students, employees, community members, and the need we all share in serving justly." Colin Burns-Gilbert, Viterbo, Director of Orientation and Engagement



#### Bingo with BBBB

Beer By Bike Brigade invited us to co-host Bingo at the OmniCenter on August 12. We sold game cards and dobbers to the participants. Ben Hein, Shelter Development's Executive Director, spoke to the participants before the event. As a result of their fundraising efforts, BBBB presented theExchange with a check for \$500! Thank you, BBBB, for supporting the theExchange and our community!



#### WTC Student Welcome Event

Advisory Committee members Rebecca Naugbler and Nathan Crowder, hosted theExchange booth at the Student Welcome Event on Western Technical College's campus the day after Labor Day. Our mission was to bring awareness and support to our organization while recruiting students and faculty in volunteerism.

## UPDATES FROM theEXCHANGE TEAM

**Donors:** For large item furniture donations, please provide pictures, descriptions and dimensions of large item furniture you are looking to donate. Please click [here](#) to see guidelines of acceptable donations. We schedule Large Item Donation Pickups Tuesday and Thursday mornings as they fit within our delivery routes and volunteer delivery team's schedule. We suggest a minimum monetary donation of \$25-\$50 for this service. Please include your address and phone number.

**Clients:** If you are seeking help getting household items or furniture for your home, please reach out to your social worker, advocate or counselor and have them contact us at this email.

Please click [here](#) for more information if you don't already have someone helping you.

**What do we accept?:** See our guidelines of acceptable donations by clicking [here](#).

If an item you wish to donate is not on the list, please take a picture and email it to us. We may have a resource to direct you to!

All staff and volunteers have the right to refuse items that do not meet our quality standards.

**Large Item Pickups & Donation Drop-off hours:** Mon/Wed 1-3 and Tues/Thurs 1-4.

## THANK YOU Gundersen Nursing Team

In June, this message came through my inbox, "The Nursing staff at Gundersen have recently completed a drive collecting cleaning supply baskets for your organization." It was hundreds of items from scrubbies and toilet cleaners, to laundry baskets, and detergent!

A huge 'THANK YOU!' to the Nursing Department at Gundersen. Check out this video from WKBT!! [Click here](#)

[ktyser@me.com](mailto:ktyser@me.com)  
Kathie Tyser  
Volunteer Newsletter Editor

## Join Some of the BEST Volunteers Around!

A unique fact about theExchange is that we are a volunteer-run organization. Yes, we have two part-time employees coordinating operations, services, and logistics, but we wouldn't exist without our generous volunteer base! Please consider joining our team. We have a lot of fun while positively impacting our community.



### PROGRAM ASSISTANTS

theExchange Program Assistants support the day-to-day operations of the program including, but not limited to:

- Selecting and packaging household goods for scheduled client appointments.
- Walking clients and their advocates through the selection process.
- Communicating the program's mission and donation guidelines with community donors.

theExchange is open to the public and staffed with PA's Monday and Wednesday, 1:00 - 3:00 pm, and Tuesday & Thursday, 1:00 - 4:00 pm. PA shifts are scheduled in advance as coordinated by theExchange Program Director. For more information, [click here](#).

### TRANSPORTATION TEAM

theExchange Transportation Team works together to deliver furniture to clients and pick up large items from donors.

The team meets on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. The team begins their shift at 8:00 am and is generally done around 10:30.

A 'Sign Up Calendar' is emailed two weeks before the 1st of the month.

Volunteers have the opportunity to select shifts to meet their availability.

The Transportation Team receives support and supervision from theExchange Operations Manager and theExchange Program Director. For more information, [click here](#).

