



theExchange News

October 2023

OUR MISSION

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

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CONTACT US

Open Hours

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

Address

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La Crosse, WI

Phone

608-301-5345

Email

[theExchange](mailto:theExchange@shelterdevelopment.org)

PEOPLE MAKING IT HAPPEN!

Sarah Gebo, Program Director

What an amazing group of people I work with. All different types of personalities, skill-sets and backgrounds coming together to support TWO incredible objectives rolled into one organization: theExchange!

We keep 100's of 1000's of pounds out of the landfill and support our community by re-homing them to families and individuals struggling to get a leg-up.

As we continue to change and grow in our community, we ask for your help to build our volunteer base by spreading our mission with your friends, family and other cohorts!



Sarah Gebo

At theExchange we have a fun, dedicated and lighthearted group of volunteers committed to helping our community! We provide household goods and gently used furniture effectively re-homing donated items to those in need. At this time, we are serving 10 households per week! The families and individuals we serve have a wide variety of stories of being unhoused— everything from fleeing domestic violence, job insecurities, house fires, medical hardships, and more.

In most cases, delivery of our clients' selections is necessary, and we have an incredible "delivery team" who consistently provide this beautiful service for our community and neighbors. But we are in **desperate need of more volunteers who are able to help deliver the furniture to our clients** within the city of La Crosse, La Crescent and Onalaska. We are **also looking for people who have a vehicle to pull a trailer, or experience pulling a trailer.**

Currently, this amazing team of movers goes out on Tuesday and Thursday mornings between 8:00-10:30. However, if you are not able to meet at those times and have a heart for this, please reach out and we can discuss other options.

We invite you to visit our website to learn more about our program. If you are interested, please fill out the form on our [website](#) or contact us via email [here](#).

NOTE FROM OUR NEW EXEC DIRECTOR

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

When you stop into theExchange on a busy afternoon you'll likely see a flurry of activity.

You're sure to recognize familiar faces and meet new members of our team.



As a new member of theExchange team I am grateful for the opportunity to introduce myself and share a bit about my role in supporting the fantastic work that you do! My name is Ben Hein and in September 2023 I was hired for the newly created Shelter Development, Inc. Executive Director position.

The mission of Shelter Development, Inc. is to provide hope and create opportunity for community growth and human development through collaboration, strategic purchases, and a commitment to social justice. In practice, Shelter Development, Inc. is comprised of the services provided at theExchange as well as the Francis Homes program.

Francis Homes seeks to connect families experiencing homelessness, or at risk of homelessness, with affordable safe housing. Francis Homes works collaboratively with partner nonprofit organizations to provide case management support as a family moves from crisis to stability.

Moving forward you will find me at theExchange supporting the work of our staff and volunteers, working with community partners and addressing administrative needs in support of the smooth operations of our programming.

As I have begun meeting team members and partners that make theExchange work I have been inspired by the skills you bring to the program, the compassion with which you serve and the team mentality that drives all you do!

I am very excited to meet you all,

Ben

ktyser@me.com
Kathie Tyser
Volunteer Editor

Over 10 Household Appointments a Week Things move in and out fast!

We continue to serve 10+ households a week!!! As a result, our inventory changes day to day. We are looking to replenish items large and small. Every little bit makes a long and lasting imprint! Thank you for your continued support!

Most In-Demand items

We always need kitchen tables (for family dinner), recliners, couches, storage units (side tables, dressers, shelving, etc), and rugs (large and small).

Can openers, hand and bath towels, laundry baskets and kitchen garbage cans are always out of stock.

Calling All Thrifty Shoppers

There are a handful of items that we purchase for clients such as dish soap, hand soap, all-purpose cleaners, shower curtain liners, brooms and toilet bowl cleaners. These aren't items that can be recycled or rehomed. We have a special fund set aside from your contributions to purchase these items. We are 501c3 - tax exempt and look to purchase items in bulk.

There was a group of 4th graders that collected spare change at Sunday School. Within a month they accumulated almost \$500! With their donation we went to the Dollar Tree and purchased two cases (96 count) of each of these items.

Volunteer Time & Talent: This is what makes it all happen! THANKS!!

One Year Ago...

We are thrilled to celebrate Erin Lisota's one year anniversary with theExchange! Thank you Erin for your incredible spirit, commitment to our donors and clients alike and for making work fun! Tell us:



Erin & Sarah

What stands out the most about the uniqueness of theExchange?

Our volunteer base! The heart and sincere kindness that every volunteer contributes is beautiful. When you stop by theExchange you will certainly hear laughter and maybe even see a dance!

What do you like about your work?

I enjoy seeing the full circle of our work. Donors often have stories about the items they bring in and it is fun to pass that on to our clients.

What tasks makes you smile?

That's easy! Organizing, sorting and using the label maker, of course!

UPDATES FROM the EXCHANGE 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.

HEADS UP

Watch for an important special email letter seeking your support coming in late October.

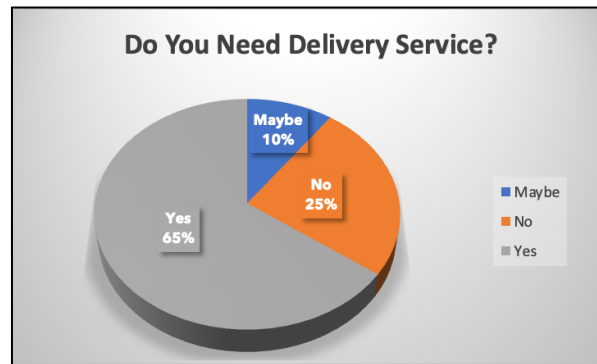
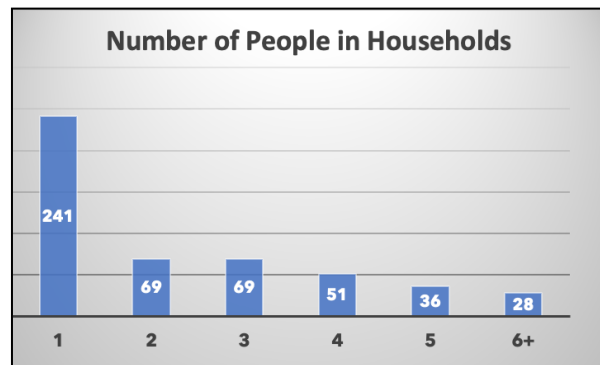
WISH LIST for OFFICE

- Laminating machine
- Laundry pods
- Unscented dryer sheets
- Computer paper
- Liquid hand soap
- Paper towels
- Garbage bags
- People Volunteering Time/Talent

PROGRAM IMPACT

January 1 - September 30, 2023

<p>380</p> <p>Households Served</p>	<p>230</p> <p>Free Deliveries by Volunteers</p>
<p>1,900</p> <p>Miles recorded by trailer team</p>	<p>150</p> <p>Large Item PickUps</p>



Join some of the BEST Volunteers Around!



JOIN US!

“What do you want to tell potential volunteers?” Here’s what they said:

- Come join a great group of volunteers who will welcome you!
- At this early point, just one: Try it out!
- Have fun!
- The flexible schedule is important and can meet anyone’s needs.
- Be grateful that you have the physical ability to serve others in any capacity.
- Just do it!! (Isn’t that the old Nike tag line)
- I’ve been very fortunate in my life. Many others are not. Try thinking about the struggles they might be going through. It makes the volunteer hours fly by!
- We have fun working.
- Be flexible with the work and helpful to co-workers.
- Roll up your sleeves and be flexible.
- Find your niche.
- Try it. You’re not locked into a regular time schedule. If you can’t make it some days, that’s okay.
- For folks that have retired, volunteering is a great way to connect to other people and to make the world a little better for someone else Provides a sense of purpose.
- Give it a try. You never know what you will find or who you will meet.
- Show up 😊

FEEDBACK FROM THOSE WE SERVE

Making an Impact

Independent Living Resources (ILR)

Hey Sarah!

TheExchange is one of my absolute favorite resources that exists within our community. I primarily work with individuals who are unsheltered, and part of that work is assisting individuals in the process of locating safe, sustainable and affordable housing. One of the biggest worries that comes up almost immediately with the individuals I work with is what they are going to do about furniture and household items when they locate a place to live, which is where TheExchange comes in.

Many times, individuals are in disbelief that an organization like TheExchange exists! Going to appointments at TheExchange with individuals is always an incredible experience. Many individuals walk through those doors with nothing for their new home, and leave with just about everything they could need. I still have individuals who have moved into housing years ago ask me if TheExchange is still going, and they reminisce about how much of a great experience it was going there.

The kindness, compassion and grace of every employee and volunteer at TheExchange is truly unmatched, and our community is truly a better place because of the work that is done through them. I always look forward to visiting TheExchange, and I know that the individuals who receive items through TheExchange are deeply grateful, too!

Michael Fitzpatrick,
ILR Homeless Outreach Specialist

A Client

In our chaotic transition, the blessings you provided in making our new house a home are deeply appreciated. The home you all helped us furnish is a safe haven and would not be so without the help you provided. Thank you again!

An Advocate

Dear Friends at the Furniture Exchange,

I just couldn’t go without telling you all how very impressed I am with your operation. I was very inspired by the energy, respect, and excitement you all portrayed to the family I was able to bring to your facility. I can’t tell you enough how much this family appreciated this resource. Even though we had a language barrier, when respect is part of the equation, no barrier is insurmountable!! I am humbled, proud, and in awe. Thank you!

