



# The BRICK Ministries

## *Quarterly Newsletter*

*Volume 13 2017*

### *From the Director—*

It's hard to believe that the winter holidays are behind us. Even though we'll have snow and ice for quite some time, winter will officially be done in just a few weeks - and March 1 is the first day of Lent.

In the Western Christian traditions, Lent is observed for 40 days (excluding Sundays) starting on Ash Wednesday and lasting through just before Easter. It's a time of reflection in preparation of celebrating the risen Christ. Fasting or giving up meat for Lent is a common practice. Some say that's the origin of Wisconsin's traditional Friday Fish Fry, although there's no parallel rationale for the fermented beverage that many of us enjoy with that meal! Many people mark the passing of Lent with prayer and focused studies. Resources from many church bodies are widely available in print and digital editions for anyone interested in following this path. Others observe Lent by almsgiving – making donations to their favorite charities.

Still others donate their time to a local organization. If you're reading this newsletter, you might already be one of our 175+ volunteers. The BRICK relies on its vibrant volunteer workforce for most of the daily activities that ensure our ability to serve our low income program participants. In 2016, staff and board members worked hard to develop our volunteer programming; and that shows in our numbers. Although we began documenting volunteers' hours part way through the year in May, we can still use that information to recognize the value of our volunteers. From May through December, our volunteers logged just under 4,875 hours of work, which is valued at over \$109,500! (Independent Sector) Volunteers served in a variety of ways: stocking shelves, checking in participants, assisting shoppers in our four pantries, unloading trucks, picking up donations, coordinating our outlying pantries, and helping with special events. We also rolled out two new volunteer opportunities. Last summer and fall The BRICK Pickers made several trips to local gardens and orchards, and picked thousands of pounds of excess produce that might otherwise have been left behind. Volunteers now regularly support the work of our Benevolence Program by filing, processing payments, and following up with our participants through a six-month outcomes survey.

Our Board of Directors members are also all volunteers. None are ever compensated for their time and efforts to steer The BRICK for success in serving our community. They share their expertise and carefully analyze data and evaluate information to move our programming forward to continually improve how we deliver services and how we meet the needs of so many.

I'm grateful for our volunteers, who serve – in whatever capacity – with our mission “to live Christ's message to compassionately love and respect those in need” at the heart of their actions. All of us come together to share the bounty with everyone who come to our doors.

As we enter the Lenten season, I encourage each of us to find our passion and serve wherever we are called, sharing that message of Love that has been shared with each of us.

*Liz Seefeldt, Executive Director*



## Office Manager

Emily Heald

I've held the position of Office Manager for The BRICK for almost exactly one year, and am heavyhearted to announce my resignation. The past year has flown by, but I cannot help but also feel I have been at The BRICK forever (in a good way!). As I am preparing to move from the area, I have some final thoughts and reflections on volunteer service to share.

Volunteering is good for you! I was first introduced to The BRICK as a volunteer myself. Volunteer work at The BRICK fills us with a sense of appreciation for what we have in life. Helping others is a great reminder of what is truly meaningful— friendship, family, and health. Volunteering helps us to view our lives and communities differently. I myself take more notice and time to appreciate the small moments that bring me happiness. Work with the community has opened my eyes to the fact that, even though it is easy to group people into categories (low-income, homeless, etc.) everyone has their own story of who they are and their life journey to where they are now. Each story is unique and no two are alike.

Plus, there are also scientific studies showing evidence that there is “a strong relationship between volunteering and health: those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression later in life than those who do not volunteer” (Report from the Corporation for National and Community Service). What better way to get healthy than to help others?

Volunteering is good for the community. This is common sense to many, but it's a good reminder! Even if you volunteer for a couple hours a week, you are a part of a HUGE network of volunteers across Ashland and Bayfield Counties who work together to serve well over 400,000 pounds of food to about 20,000 people each year. The community appreciates our work immensely. Every week I watch as program participants come in looking downtrodden, and leave with a smile on their faces after working with a friendly volunteer. I can't even count the number of times I have seen program participants and volunteers share hugs, updates on life events, and even homemade food made from food shelf items. A program participant once brought in pickled zucchini after receiving a box of it when we had a surplus... I was skeptical but it wasn't bad!

Our volunteers at The BRICK Ministries are a big family – the kind that welcomes everyone with open arms and kindness. I deeply appreciate the opportunity to work with The BRICK Ministries, and will carry the love of the staff, volunteers, and program participants in my heart throughout the rest of my life's journey.



### **AgStar Fund for Rural America Supports Food Shelf Program**

Many thanks to the AgStar Fund for Rural America for their recent grant award for The BRICK's Food Shelf Program. AgStar Financial Services is a client-stockholder owned cooperative and serves the agriculture community in Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin as part of the Farm Credit System. This fund is one of the many ways that AgStar gives back to those communities. The AgStar Fund for Rural America is dedicated to “enhancing life in Agriculture and rural America.” Since The BRICK's Food Shelf Program relies heavily on partnerships with local growers, AgStar's philanthropy is a natural fit. This grant will allow The BRICK to build on these relationships to bring local foods to local residents, and raise the quality of life for the whole community. The BRICK's Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and especially our program participants are grateful for their support.

For more information about AgStar and its work in the northland go to <http://agstar.com> and select “Enhancing Rural America.” Contact Jake Greenberg, the local Financial Services Officer, at 715-688-9410 to learn about products and services.



## Gary Pennington



Anyone who has met Gary could probably guess that he is originally from Nebraska – he surely enjoys representing the sports teams of his home state! Gary earned a degree in Marketing and Management from the University of Nebraska, and then moved on to manager and buyer positions for a large department store. From there Gary moved to Wyoming to work in the newspaper industry. This job experience led him to newspaper positions all across the Northwoods in Wisconsin and Michigan.

Gary was first introduced to volunteer service through a Bible study group, where the group leader suggested members practice their faith in the community. He started out volunteering for Faith in Action mowing lawns and shoveling snow for seniors. While working in the newspaper industry, Gary met a past BRICK employee, Linda, who told him all about our volunteer program. Gary started at The BRICK as a front desk volunteer. He currently volunteers at least twice a week, helping to bring van loads of food from Walmart back to The BRICK. He also always helps us to unload large semis full of food.

Gary recognizes that The BRICK relies heavily on volunteers to achieve its mission and vision, and knows there are always small things to help out with that really add up! The good work he sees completed at The BRICK touches his heart and he is happy to help out in any way.

When Gary is not volunteering, you can probably find him outside. He is an avid cyclist, enjoys camping, and is looking forward to traveling in the future. He is also learning photography.

Thanks for all your time, Gary!



## Jim McPhetridge

Food Shelf Manager

Hello from inside the food pantry -

The holidays have come and gone and the New Year is moving quite quickly also. The fight against hunger seems at times to just stand still. We are very blessed and thankful, however, to have such dedicated and caring communities which understand that ***hunger is not seasonal***. The donations of time, resources and finances continue to flow into the food pantry, enabling us to continue to serve the 1600+ people who seek out our help each month. Thank you for your continued support and generosity. If you are not familiar with what we do or would like to learn more, donate, or volunteer, please feel free to stop by and take a tour with us. Like so many of us here at The BRICK, as we seek to help and serve others, our lives are touched and changed also!

Come, help in the fight against hunger and you'll see the difference we can make together.

Blessings, Joy and Peace to all through Christ Jesus.

# BENEVOLENCE

**Sam Ray**  
Benevolence Manager

When I started at the end of September of last year, PJ, the former Benevolence Manager, had told me about a young couple she had helped. The couple was living at a campground, but someone had stolen all their belongings. PJ helped with referrals, one of which was our partner, Northwest Wisconsin Community Services Agency (NWCSA), to help with a place to rent and items from its Cupboards & Closets program. PJ provided them with some gift cards for incidentals as well.

In January, the couple came to see me with an update. They are both enrolled at WITC. He is at the top of his class and will graduate in May. She will receive her GED in May as well and has plans to work in the Human Services field. They love where they live and have a great relationship with their landlord. They were so thankful for all the connections PJ had given them.

The success of this couple is exactly what we hope for in our Benevolence Program. It's our ultimate goal – to give our participants a chance at financial stability which fosters growth.

One of my current goals is to continue to learn about the many resources available to help individuals. I am very thankful for the network of organizations that are partnering with each other and working so diligently to make life better for those who need a little extra help, and I'm gratified to be part of that network through The BRICK.



**03/02/17:** Blind Joe – motivational singer and speaker, Ashland High School

Auditorium, donations accepted for The BRICK, 6:00 p.m.

**03/09/17:** Board Meeting, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 5:15 p.m.

**03/16/17:** Sea to Sea: Cycling to End Poverty Bake Sale for The BRICK, Walmart Supercenter,

9:30 a.m. until sold out

**03/24/17:** Volunteer Event

**04/01/17:** 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Empty Bowl, Cable Community Center, 4:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

**04/13/17:** Board Meeting, Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church, 5:15 p.m.

**04/28/17:** Volunteer Event

**05/9-10/17:** Feeding Wisconsin's 2nd Annual Hunger & Health Summit, Wisconsin Rapids

**05/11/17:** Board Meeting, Saron Lutheran Church, 5:15 p.m.

**05/19/17:** Grill-Out for Benevolence Program, Northwoods Community Credit Union, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

**05/26/17:** Volunteer Event



## Helping Hands Food Shelf: Mellen, WI

Six years ago Mellen church leaders considered community needs and identified nutrition as an unmet health need. At that time, members of the three churches met and decided a local food shelf would be a way to meet this need. The church representatives attended a City Council meeting to present a proposal to open a food shelf. The City of Mellen approved the plan for a six month trial period. The City contributed space in City Hall for what is now known as The BRICK Helping Hands Food Shelf. After a successful six month period ended, the Helping Hands became a permanent satellite distribution site for The BRICK's location in Ashland. Each year the number of families The BRICK Helping Hands serves has grown. When the pantry opened six years ago, eight families were served. Today nearly sixty families are assisted. The Mellen food shelf prospers as a result of the strong support and generous contributions from the three churches, local businesses, individuals, and the Mellen School through an annual food drive.

Joe Barabe, Mayor of Mellen, recently remarked on The BRICK Helping Hands' service to the community: "I congratulate BRICK on their 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Mellen. No one could have predicted the value BRICK would become to our people and the leadership of volunteers is something we all enjoy being a part of. Everything is always positive and no one runs a better program than Billy Polencheck. He's all heart which shows each and every day he works. Hopefully someday we will not need BRICK, but until then, we feel lucky to have BRICK here."

On the third Thursday of each month, The BRICK Helping Hands is open 11:00am - 5:00pm. Families can choose from an array of foods, including fresh produce and many high protein options. In 2016, BRICK Helping Hands distributed 28,183 pounds of food - over 14 tons - to needy families in Mellen and the surrounding area.

Twelve volunteers work at The BRICK Helping Hands in different capacities. A cargo van from the home office arrives before the monthly distribution date and volunteers stand ready to help unload. The shelves are then filled and readied for the families. All families are welcomed with a smile and friendly word. Families with needs in addition to food are referred to The BRICK Benevolence Program or other community resources.

Families and volunteers share a compassionate human interaction with both reaping rewards. Our work is twice blessed. Until hunger is relieved, The BRICK Helping Hands' mission joyfully continues.



## Food Shelf Locations and Hours



**Ashland**, 420 Ellis Ave., Mondays-Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.; Thursdays, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.



**Cable Area Food Shelf**, 13380 Spruce St., 4th Thursday Jan.-Oct., 3rd Thursday Nov.-Dec., 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.



**South Shore Food Shelf**, Cornucopia, Bell Community Ctr., 1st and 3rd Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.



**Helping Hands Food Shelf**, Mellen, Mellen City Hall, 102 Bennett St, Mellen, 3rd Thursday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

CABLE'S 6TH ANNUAL



# Empty Bowl

Choose a unique bowl of ceramic, pottery, glass, metal, or wood to take home with you.

Entertainment provided by the area's finest local musicians.

**APRIL  
1ST  
2017**

**4:30 PM  
to  
7:00 PM**

**TICKETS \$10**

Children under 10 are free.  
Includes delicious soup, bread, and  
beverages donated by the area's  
best restaurants.

Cable Community Center, 13660 Co Highway M



**The BRICK**  
Ministries Inc.  
*Believers Reaching Individuals for Christ's Kingdom*

Additional donations to help fund the  
Cable Area Food Shelf will be gratefully  
accepted.

Our Mission: The BRICK lives Christ's message to compassionately love and respect those in need.

Our Vision: To provide services and build relationships to change people's circumstances and lives through Christ.

## Taste of the Bay Builds Community

The BRICK's inaugural Taste of the Bay, held on Saturday, January 28, brought vendors and guests together to support our essential work providing basic human services throughout Ashland and Bayfield Counties. Thirteen food vendors and over 150 guests gathered at Northland College's Ponzio Campus Center for an evening of food and fun, demonstrating just how giving our community is.



(Best in show winners. Photo by Sara M. Chase of the Ashland Daily Press)

Hal Haynes – Northland College, Skip Hunter – Heartland Communications, and Fr. Paul Paré – Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church served as judges and awarded both Best Savory and Best Sweet to Chartwells at Northland College for their beef wellington stuffed mushrooms and blueberry French toast bread pudding. People's Choice Best Savory went to Deep Water Grille and The Alley Restaurant for their Caribbean pulled pork and tropical fruit slaw. People's Choice Best Sweet was awarded to Ashland Baking Company for their dark chocolate cake with chocolate mousse, port-spiced cherries and pistachios.

On top of all the vendors, the many event partners included Northland College (NC) as the title sponsor, and staff David Mettelle, Dawn Rivard, Amanda Tutor, and The BRICK's own Board member Steve Wammer. NC Students volunteering at the event made everything run smoothly, and musicians Andrew McInnis and Neil Paynter graced the event with "light classical" tunes for violin and piano. Sponsors and in-kind donors also played a part. Raffle items added to the buzz in the room and the cheers as prize winners were announced.

The BRICK's Board members are thrilled with the event's success and are already considering ways to make next year's event an even bigger hit. Most of all The BRICK's leadership is grateful for the community outpouring to help us serve with "compassion, love and respect."

## Covenant Churches

### **Ashland Seventh-day Adventist Church**

622 10th Ave. W — Ashland WI 54806

(715) 682-5877

### **Cable Congregational United Church of Christ**

13445 County Hwy. M — Cable WI 54821

(715) 798-3066

### **Chequamegon Community Church of Assemblies of God**

1451 County Hwy. C — Washburn, WI 54891

(715) 373-2939

### **Congregational United Church of Christ**

117 West St. — Mellen, WI 54546-0019

(715) 274-2203

### **First Assembly of God**

315 10th St. W — Ashland WI 54806

(715) 274-2203

### **First Covenant Church**

600 MacArthur Ave. — Ashland WI 54806

(715) 292-5193

### **First Lutheran Church**

83105 Washington Ave. — Port Wing WI 54865

(715) 774-3576

### **Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**

311 13th St. W — Ashland WI 54806

(715) 682-4510

### **Grace Bible Fellowship**

73605 State Hwy. 13 — Washburn WI 54891

(715) 373-1175

### **Grand View United Methodist Church**

22180 US Hwy. 63 — Grand View WI 54839

(715) 763-3340

### **Immanuel Lutheran Church**

22555 Elm St. — Cornucopia WI 54827

(715) 742-3440

### **Messiah Lutheran Church**

231 5th St. W — Washburn WI 54891

(715) 373-5378

### **Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church**

106 North 2nd Ave. E — Ashland WI 54806

(715) 682-7620

### **St. Mary's Catholic Church**

c/o 106 North 2nd Ave. E — Ashland WI 54806

(Odanah, WI 54861)

(715) 682-7620

### **Salem Baptist Church**

118 2nd Ave. E — Ashland WI 54806

(715) 682-3934

### **Sanborn United Methodist Church**

42745 County Hwy. E — Ashland WI 54806

(715) 278-3955

### **Saron Lutheran Church**

517 9th Ave. W — Ashland WI 54806

(715) 682-2376

### **United Presbyterian and First Congregational Church**

214 Vaughn Ave. — Ashland WI 54806

(715) 682-3093

### **Washburn United Methodist Church**

326 Washington Ave. — Washburn WI 54891

PO Box 27

(715) 373-2696

### **Zion Lutheran Church**

1111 11th Ave. W — Ashland WI 54806

(715) 682-6075



# Photos



Some of our volunteers took a field trip in February to Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Bank in Duluth. We learned all about the process of buying and distributing huge amount of food to local food shelves! (From left: Manon, Curtis, Emily, Sharon)



A beautiful display of the gift baskets that were raffled off at our inaugural Taste of the Bay. We had a great turn out!



John Coffey of Coffey Oil (left) and John Warren of Heartland Communications (right) present Executive Director Liz Seefeldt with a donation from the Magic Stocking Initiative.



Bill Polencheck, Outlet Site Manager for the Helping Hands Food Shelf in Mellen, holding a celebratory cake for the shelf's 6th anniversary.

# From the Board Room

Teri Hanson



Greetings from The BRICK Board of Directors,

I have been a Board member for the past three years and have been privileged to be part of the tremendous growth of both the Board and The BRICK as an organization over that time.

One of the first things the Board accomplished during those three years was clarification of our mission and vision as well as the adoption of a strategic plan outlining the means of following our mission and working toward our vision. Using the strategic plan we identified particular areas of importance and established committees with goals to address these areas. Over the past three years much has been accomplished in each of these areas. The Board has developed from a "sitting" board to a "working" board with each member heading or serving on one or two committees. We also have invited community members and supporters to participate on our committees and task forces and their input has been invaluable in helping us.

With strong, consistent leadership from our Executive Director, an excellent staff, and so many wonderful volunteers and community supporters The BRICK has seen significant growth both in numbers of individuals served as well as the ability to meet our mission and vision.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve on the Board of such a dynamic organization with such a worthy mission and vision. I encourage others to join us as we continue to compassionately love, respect and serve those in need.

## Donation for The BRICK Ministries, Inc.

The BRICK welcomes your support in fulfilling its vision "To provide services and build relationships to change people's circumstances and lives through Christ." The BRICK Ministries, Inc. is 501(c)(3) tax exempt status as determined by the IRS. 100% of your donation is tax deductible.

Enclosed is my gift of (circle one):

\$25      \$50      \$100      \$500      Other \$\_\_\_\_\_

Designate my gift to (circle one):

Make a Difference Fund      Food Shelf      General

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

City\_\_\_\_\_ State\_\_\_\_\_ Zip\_\_\_\_\_

Phone\_\_\_\_\_ Email\_\_\_\_\_



Make checks payable to:

The BRICK Ministries

420 Elis Ave.

Ashland, WI 54806

**THE BRICK MINISTRIES, INC.**

**420 ELLIS AVENUE**

**ASHLAND, WI 54806**

Phone 715-682-7425

Fax 715-682-7427

[www.thebrickministries.com](http://www.thebrickministries.com)

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



# The BRICK

Ministries Inc.

*Believers Reaching Individuals for Christ's Kingdom*

*Our Mission: The BRICK lives Christ's message to compassionately love and respect those in need.*

*Our Vision: To provide services and build relationships to change people's circumstances and lives through Christ.*

## **Board of Directors**

**Sue Reader**, President, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Ashland

**William J. Holzhaeuser**, Vice President, Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church, Ashland

**Teri L. Hanson**, Treasurer, Cable Congregational United Church of Christ, Cable

**James R. Matzinger**, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Ashland

**Esther Marie Pufall**, Saron Lutheran Church, Ashland

**Julie M. Stipetich**, St. Peter Catholic Church, Dauby

**Steven M. Wammer**, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Ashland

## **Staff**

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[director.thebrick@centurytel.net](mailto:director.thebrick@centurytel.net)

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[foodshelfmanager.thebrick@centurytel.net](mailto:foodshelfmanager.thebrick@centurytel.net)

**Sam Ray**, *Benevolence Manager*

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**Emily Heald**, *Office Manager*

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