



The BRICK Ministries

Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 29, 2021

From the Director —

Many agree that we're glad 2020 is behind us and 2021 is looking up! But we're not in the clear yet. I'm still attending church from my kitchen, and I only see emojis and comments from my fellow church members and friends - not the best way to build fellowship. Yet surprising moments of Grace happen if we let them.

Ash Wednesday arrived quietly in my home. There were no ritually saved and burned fronds from last year's Palm Sunday service. There was no line of parishioners in the aisle waiting for the imposition of those palm-ashes. But at the last minute my son joined me and we shared a solemn moment to place ashes on each other's foreheads as the pastor led us through the ceremony on Facebook Live. I doubt we would have had that time together if not for the pandemic.

Our days are filled with meaningful moments just like my kitchen Ash Wednesday - most of them small and easy to miss. If we live our faith intentionally, we'll miss fewer and enjoy more.

This last year has been particularly difficult - more so for the under-resourced consumers who reach out to The BRICK for assistance - and some people are looking for another dimension of support. While The BRICK is not a church and we are careful to never push our beliefs on anyone, we've realized we can do more to invite that Grace to fill an unmet need through our faith-based mission and vision.

The BRICK is excited to roll out our prayer request portal! Anyone can use this service to submit their **completely anonymous and voluntary** prayer request on our website: <http://thebrickministries.com/services/prayer-request/>. All information that might identify a requestor will be removed from the request before being passed on to the prayer team to guarantee confidentiality. Trained and eager volunteers are ready to accept prayer requests. See more about joining in this effort later in this issue.



Please help us spread the word that The BRICK is available to support people with their spiritual burdens as well as their material concerns in this quiet Grace-filled moment.

Liz Seefeldt, Executive Director

Outlet Buzz

Celebrating 10 Years of Service



Ten years ago, Father Brenna of Most Holy Rosary Catholic Church and Robert E. Schutte wanted to start a food shelf in Mellen. Bob, knowing that I and Mayor Joe Barabe were good friends, wanted me to bring it up with Joe. He said I'd have to ask the City Council, so Bob, Rich Becker, Linda Doty, and I did just that. The Council was kind enough to give us our place in city hall for a six-month trial - to prove ourselves. I guess we did, because we're still there ten years later!

We only had eight families that first month and the Helping Hands Food Shelf has continued to grow over the years. Our highest service month was 76 families! It varies every month.

We've given out many thousands of pounds of food at the Mellen pantry and we've only been able to do that with widespread community support. Every month, the Congregational United Church of Christ shares its "Noisy Coin Collection." Midland Cenex - Mellen has hosted our brat and bake sale for the past five summers, and generously donates brats, hot dogs, and buns. This huge fundraiser allows us to fund Thanksgiving and Christmas meals. Lots of people bake delicious sweets for bake sales.

Many other supporters have donated generously over the years. From "small" amounts up to \$5,000, every gift adds up and each donor is a partner in our work to feed the community. The Tuntie Christie family helped us buy a merchandizer (glass-door) freezer. Columbia Forest Products, Superior Choice Credit Union, and Dan Devine and Linda Van Dyke also merit mentioning for their support. This is so appreciated and has helped many people over the years.

Thanks to all the volunteers, including the Mellen High School and Holy Rosary kids who've helped stock shelves, and especially to the City of Mellen for all they've done since we opened.

Getting ready for this one day of distribution each month requires many hours of work behind the scenes, and COVID-19 has made it much harder. I want to thank the current volunteers for their extra hours of help. We couldn't do this without them: Rich and Carol Becker, who have been with me from the beginning, Mike and Joyce Neibauer, Jean Krause, Gay Halvorson, Dave Karlinsky, Carol Sarnstrom, and last but not far from least, Liz Smith for her delicious contributions of homemade bread.



Thank you all, Bill and Dennice Polencheck



Amaris Shrider

Food Shelf Manager

I'm Amaris, The BRICK's newest staff member, who's managing the Food Shelf Program and its four pantries. I live in Bayfield and have a background working in nonprofits, managing volunteers, and organizing inventory. My goal in this role is to further spread the message of what The BRICK does, and how our food shelf is able to benefit residents to supplement their nutrition. I am looking forward to building relationships with local food distributors, food banks, farmers, volunteers, donors, businesses, and the community at large to further The BRICK's vision and mission.



From the Board Room

MEET JIM MILLER



Jim Miller of Washburn has joined The BRICK Board of Directors. Jim brings experience with a variety of non-profit organizations. He has held leadership roles as treasurer of Big Top Chautauqua, Chair of the Town of Washburn Board, and President of the 15,000-member National Association for College Admission Counseling.

Jim's career included roles as Vice President and Dean of Student Development and Enrollment at Northland College, Director of Enrollment Services at UW-Superior, and interim Vice President for Enrollment at College of St. Scholastica, Augsburg University, Illinois College, and Pacific Lutheran University. He has also served as a consultant to several other colleges.

Now mostly retired, Jim and his wife Kathy live in rural Washburn. He enjoys skiing, boating, fishing, motorcycling, and adventures with their travel trailer. He has two grandsons who live in Tacoma with daughter Emily and her husband Nils Wickman. His two granddaughters live in Louisville with son David and his wife Ally.

"I've observed The BRICK's good work for many years and have several friends who have volunteered or served on the board," said Miller.

"When we received a stimulus check last spring, we decided to give it to local organizations who could help community members who could use a hand, and The BRICK seemed to be a perfect fit." That generosity led to a conversation with The BRICK Executive Director Liz Seefeldt and eventually to an invitation to join the board of directors.

Jim's experience with management, finance, marketing, and fundraising will help advance The BRICK's ability to serve our Chequamegon Bay communities.

Board member Jeff Muse started the conversation with our newest board member. He says "I am very excited to be working with Jim. His expertise in networking and his love for the area will enhance the mission of our organization."

WELCOME, JIM!

Meet our Interns!

Hello everyone!

My name is Shyanne Eustace, and I am a senior at Northland College, and will be graduating this December. I am proud member of the Pueblo of Cochiti tribal community located in beautiful New Mexico along the Rio Grande. I am majoring in Natural Resources with an emphasis in ecological restoration, and after college I plan to advocate for a more sustainable future for the next generation.

I am truly honored to be an intern at The BRICK this winter semester! Since Ashland has given me a home for the past three years, I am glad I can give back to the community. My overall career goal is to give people access to fresh and sustainable food regardless of income status. I believe The BRICK can give me the experience and tools to make this happen and I am looking forward to my future with The BRICK.

Thank you,

Shyanne S. Eustace



Hello! My name's Kayla and I'm a junior attending Northland College and pursuing a B.S in water science. I'm currently an intern here at

The BRICK for winter 2021!

I am super interested in food sovereignty, as well as how to tackle food waste in our backyard!

Favorite color: yellow.

Kayla Lamson



03/18/21: Virtual Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m.

03/26/21: Virtual Volunteer In-Service: Becoming Familiar with the Benevolence Program
9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

04/08/21: Virtual Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m.

04/23/21: Virtual Volunteer In-Service: Celebrating National Volunteer Week
9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

05/14/21: Virtual Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m.

05/28/21: Virtual Volunteer In-Service 9:00am—10:00am



Carol Sowl

Last November, Carol reached out to The BRICK in search of volunteer opportunities that would enable her to stay engaged in the community through the pandemic without experiencing significant risk of exposure. Since onboarding, Carol has generously taken on a variety of roles around our Ashland office, including volunteering at our front desk, assisting with bookkeeping data entry, and taking on additional data entry tasks related to our Benevolence Outcomes Survey. We cannot express our gratitude enough!

Before moving to the mainland in October 2019, Carol and her husband lived on Madeline Island for over 40 years. On the Island, Carol taught at the local school for 20 years, and was deeply immersed in local nonprofit work, including the establishment of the Madeline Island Community Garden and helping keep the local ski trails groomed. Carol has a particular passion for outdoor-based activities and promoting access to fresh, healthy food.

Outside of volunteerism, Carol enjoys staying active outside through cycling, hiking, and paddling. She is an avid gardener (her favorite plant to grow is currently winter squash—specifically red kuri, yum!) and loves to go on travelling adventures. In fact, Carol and her spouse partially resided in Honduras for 10 years. Carol also travelled to Belize to provide professional development opportunities through the “Teachers for a Better Belize” program for 12 summers. This program offered support to more than 280 teachers! Carol looks forward to being able to travel again once the pandemic subsides. If you have the opportunity to meet Carol, be sure to let her know how much we appreciate all she does for the community!

Cheyenne Reeves, Office Manager



Thank you to our Supporters!

One thing that's come out of the pandemic is the increased awareness of the issues that under-resourced people face every day and the incredible generosity that's sprung up at every level of our stakeholders. Donors and grant-makers have been particularly creative in getting what's needed out to the nonprofit and human services organization as quickly as possible. Last year ended on a high note, donation-wise, and this space is set aside to recognize just a few of the many incredible folks who support our work.

Our friends at the Elks Lodge #137 were awarded an \$8,000 grant for our Benevolence Program! This donation will go toward helping keep people in their homes by covering a portion of overdue rent, utility bills, and motel vouchers for people without a home, and will directly impact at least 32 households in our community. These are matching dollars and we invite the community to designate their gift to the "Make A Difference Fund" to double the impact.



A Thrivent executive with local roots recently recommended The BRICK for a gift of \$20,000 through a company program that provides community support to organizations recommended by its senior leaders. That gift equals 6,450 meals for 430 pantry shoppers!

thrivent[®]

The BRICK received a call in December from a local Walmart staffer to let us know there were grant funds immediately available. Just a few weeks later we received \$3,250 for our Food Shelf Program. What a quick turn-around!

Walmart 

For several years now the Medica Foundation has supported The BRICK'S Food Shelf Program. This time around, Medica's leadership saw the urgent need and responded accordingly by fast tracking its \$5,000 grant award! Our staff is essential to the success of our programming and these funds are dedicated to employee compensation to ensure the high quality of our pantry services.

MEDICA[®]
FOUNDATION

The Green Bay Packers Foundation also supported staff through its grant program with an award of \$4,000 for our Benevolence Manager's compensation. An application process that formerly took five months was reduced to three and the progress report has also been streamlined! The Foundation has really responded to community needs!

There are so many more who've generously shared what they can so we can offer essential programs to our community. Thank you for making our work possible!

GREEN BAY PACKERS
FOUNDATION


From the Office

Cheyenne Reeves

As I write this, there is just the slightest hint of Spring in the air. I know there is a long stretch of Winter ahead yet, but I'm already beginning to fantasize about trading in my snow boots for mucks and getting my hands in the soil. Until then, we'll continue to take the season in stride! Thanks to each of our dedicated volunteers, things have been pretty smooth around the office.

At the end of 2020, a total of 181 volunteers completed a total of 6,455 volunteer hours—or nearly 36 hours per volunteer. All challenges considered, that's pretty amazing! We also began 2021 with a solid start. In January, 62 volunteers contributed 498 hours of time across the organization. We couldn't do this work without you!

The BRICK continues to have a variety of volunteer opportunities available for those who are interested in becoming involved. There are many shifts open for our Ashland pantry and front desk. For those looking for a remote opportunity—consider joining our new Prayer Chain Team! We are very excited to begin offering this service with our community. For more details about volunteering, contact me at: (715) 682-7425 | officemanager.thebrick@centurytel.net.

Be well & stay warm!



Join our Prayer Chain Team

The BRICK is piloting a new prayer request program that provides an opportunity to community members to share voluntary, confidential prayer requests with our organization.

Requests are collected virtually through our website, and will be shared with a team of volunteers that have a passion for prayer work. This is a remote volunteer activity that does not require in-person contact.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact Cheyanne at: officemanager.thebrick@centurytel.net!



BENEVOLENCE

Sam Ray

Benevolence Manager



“Talon” works in the hospitality industry and, like many in the Bay Area, has been exposed to Covid-19 more than once on the job. This has led to lost wages, having to be off work for Isolation. She called The BRICK because she was behind in all her bills and didn't know where to start to try to catch up.

We referred her to Northwest Wisconsin Community Services Agency (NWCSA) for help with rent for those affected by COVID. We gave her the website, <http://energybenefit.wi.gov/>, to apply for the annual Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) online. The BRICK helped with a payment on the water bill and worked with Talon to create a realistic spending plan for her other expenses.

We are so thankful for all the services in our community that are helping those like Talon. If you know someone getting behind on their bills, please refer them to The BRICK so we can help them get the assistance they need.

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 Thursdays, Nov.-Dec., 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.



South Shore Food Shelf, Cornucopia, Bell Community Ctr., 22615 Co. Hwy.
C, 1st and 3rd Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.



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

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 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

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):

\$30 \$50 \$100 \$500 Other \$ _____

Designate my gift to (circle one):

Make a Difference Fund Food Shelf General

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____



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

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

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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.

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