



The BRICK Ministries

Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 33, 2022

From the Director—

One of my favorite nonfiction writers is coming out with a new book. Susan Cain, whose bestseller *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*, shared an excerpt of her latest that really resonated with me.

According to the Kabbalah, “in the beginning, all of creation was a vessel filled with divine light. [But] it broke apart, and now the shards of holiness are strewn all around us. Sometimes it’s too dark to see them, sometimes we’re too distracted by pain or conflict. But our task is simple – to bend down, dig them out, pick them up. And in so doing, to perceive that light can emerge from darkness, death gives way to rebirth, the soul descends to this riven world for the sake of learning how to ascend. And to realize that we all notice different shards; I might see a lump of coal, but you spot the gold glimmering beneath.” *Bittersweet: How Sorrow And Longing Make Us Whole*, Crown Publishers, 2022.

This Jewish mystical teaching reminded me that, however broken we are, renewal and healing are possible.

These thoughts were echoed in an Ash Wednesday meditation I read:

. . . God was near, here, inside of her, and all around her. Even if God felt absent to her, that absence held a holiness which we cannot name. The first step in a more spiritual journey begins by admitting that we don’t have to go looking for God so much as we need to listen and trust that God’s presence is always with us. Cole, Brian. “God Is Already Here.” *Living Well Through Lent 2022: Letting Go with Heart, Soul, Strength, Mind*. Living Compass, <https://www.livingcompass.org/>, 3/2/22.

What struck me in both cases is that we are never alone. Our God has never abandoned us. We only need to look, to listen.

The season of Lent is a season of seeking – looking and listening for any sign of God among us. Our seeking is satisfied when we celebrate Easter – death is overcome, our wounds are healed, our emptiness is filled.



I think of The BRICK as one place where those shards of light can be found. All of us – consumers, volunteers, donors, and staff – find and share that light when we serve with Love.

Peace and Joy to you and yours -

Liz Seefeldt, Executive Director



Outlet Buzz

Helping Hands Food Shelf

It's not too early to start thinking about the garden! Now is the time to be sprouting seeds indoors and sketching the garden bed layout. Soon enough it will be time to dig in the soil and plant those sets.

Bill Polencheck, the Outlet Site Manager at the Helping Hands Food Shelf in Mellen, has been growing fresh veggies for eight or nine years. He sets aside a portion of his personal garden and dedicates that space to the pantry. The 24' x 40' plot has been his family's garden for decades, so you can imagine just how rich the soil is after all those years of mulching and composting.

With such fertile earth, Bill's garden really produces. Tomatoes, cucumbers, winter squash, and zucchini do especially well. In 2019, it produced nearly 1,800 pounds of produce! There was so much extra that some of those veggies were transported to our pantries in Cable and Cornucopia, too.



Tomatoes sets ready for planting

Our pantry shoppers really appreciate the peppers, tomatoes, and cukes. "They always have big smiles on their faces when they see all this stuff, and it's a good feeling when we're handing it out!" says Bill.

It takes a lot of work to get these great results, and Bill can't do it alone. Our garden in Mellen can use extra hands throughout the growing season. Planting takes place in late May and early June after the chance of a late frost. Weeding and watering is needed throughout the summer. Harvesting later in the season takes many hands, so the produce doesn't rot on the vine.



Bill Polencheck in the garden

If you like to play in the dirt, let us know! Contact Cheyanne: 715-682-7425 or officemanager@thebrickministries.org and she can set you up.

PS – if you have your own garden, The BRICK happily accepts home-grown donations!



From the Board Room

JULIE STIPETICH
President



The season of Lent offers us a time to journey with Jesus; to walk with him to the cross and to quietly prepare for the promise and joy of the Resurrection. During Lent we are called to deepen our relationship with Jesus through prayer and scripture and to give alms - to personally sacrifice for the good of others. We walk with one another on our journey, as a people of God, as the body of Christ. The BRICK works to compassionately love and respect those in need in the body of Christ, not only through Lent, but through the entire year.

We are extremely proud of our hardworking and committed staff at The BRICK who serve those in need within the body of Christ. The Covid-19 pandemic presented an unprecedented challenge to the services offered by The BRICK Ministries. The staff and volunteers of our four food pantries rose to the challenge and continue to offer healthy and nutritious food to nearly 300 households every month. Our benevolence program continues to focus on keeping individuals and families in their homes with financial assistance for rent and utilities. We are also very excited to partner with the new Ashland Community Shelter to assist our local homeless population. The shelter assists individuals and families in becoming self-sufficient with suitable employment and permanent housing. We welcome the Ashland Community Shelter and look forward to our journey together in providing for the body of Christ.

As Board Members we are looking to the future of The BRICK Ministries and we are eager to begin the process of developing a Strategic Plan. Our Strategic Plan will help us identify and define our goals for the next 3-5 years, determine actions to reach our goals, and create a metric and benchmarks to evaluate whether we are successful in reaching those goals. We are currently interviewing consultants and reviewing proposals to identify the best fit for our organization. We look forward to beginning this important work in guiding our organization forward.



Our volunteers and donors play a key role in the success of our mission. We are grateful for the many hours our volunteers serve our neighbors in need and for our donors who continue to generously support our work. Together we will journey to the joy of the Resurrection!

May our journey be blessed -

Julie Stipetich





Recently The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) announced even more generous financial guidelines for our consumers (\$40,770 for a household of one, for example). At some point in 2022, FoodShare (Food Stamps) pandemic emergency benefit monies will end. With these facts we anticipate an increase in participation rates at all four of The BRICK's pantries.

Thankfully, we have plenty of food to go around, thanks to the work of TEFAP, Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Bank, Feeding America participants, and donors like you. We have been fortunate to be able to give out additional food to our consumers depending on over-abundance (think bakery, meats, etc.), and have a reserve for an increase in demand.

If you or someone you know can use a few extra groceries, check us out!



- 03/10/22:** Virtual Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
- 03/25/22:** Virtual Volunteer In-Service: 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
- 04/21/22:** Virtual Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
- 04/29/22:** Virtual Volunteer In-Service: 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
- 05/12/22:** Virtual Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
- 05/27/22** Virtual Volunteer In-Service: 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.



Medica Foundation Grant Supports Food Shelf

The BRICK Ministries is thrilled to announce a grant award from the Medica Foundation for the fifth year in a row! The \$5,000 Rural Health award will support the Food Shelf Program.



Medica Foundation's mission is to "Improve the health of those in need by investing in community-led initiatives that advance health equity."

That's a great fit for The BRICK, whose mission is "to compassionately love and respect those in need." The Food Shelf Program's wide variety of nutritious, healthy food and personal hygiene selections available to under-resourced residents in Ashland and Bayfield Counties is closely connected to community health and health equity. There is never any shame or blame in using The BRICK's resources. Everyone deserves healthy, nutritious food in abundance, and everyone who qualifies is welcome and encouraged to participate.

Medica Foundation's partnership with The BRICK will ensure that the Food Shelf Program will continue to serve the region at its four pantries in Ashland, Cable, Cornucopia, and Mellen. "The Medica Foundation is grateful for its relationship with The BRICK Ministries, and appreciative of its commitment to ensuring everyone has access to nutritious food," said JoAnn Birkholz, Executive Director of the Medica Foundation. "Their program aligns with our mission of investing in community-led initiatives that advance health equity." The BRICK's leaders are grateful for the continued partnership of Medica Foundation. For more information about Medica Foundation and its good work across the region go to <http://www.medicafoundation.org/>.

FROM THE OFFICE

Cheyenne Reeves

As the days slowly grow longer, it's refreshing to know the long haul of winter is nearing its end. If you are looking for new and engaging ways to celebrate the opening of spring, consider filling a volunteer shift with us! We have many current openings in

our Ashland pantry; every bit helps. There is no way we'd be able to provide for our community without the passion and dedication of our volunteer crew.

In 2021, a total of 147 volunteers completed a total of 5,236 volunteer hours—or nearly 36 hours per volunteer. We also began 2022 with a solid start. In January, 63 volunteers contributed 370 hours of time across the organization. Thank you for all you do! For more details about volunteering, please contact me at: (715) 682-7425 |

officemanager@thebrickministries.org

Be well & stay warm!

~ *Cheyenne*



BENEVOLENCE

Eric Lindell Benevolence Manager

It is hard to believe that March has arrived and the promise of spring is drawing near. The first few months of 2022 have flown by as the need for assistance remains high and energy prices mount for our consumers. But there is a piece of good news. The new emergency shelter run by Northwest Wisconsin Community Service Agency has opened! It has been gradually upgrading units and, when it is fully opened, will have 21 rooms to house both families and individuals in need. The shelter offers them up to 30 days or potentially longer depending on the circumstances, and will provide greater access to resources to assist our homeless population. We know, however, that the need for our hotel program will still exist. We have a great partnership with a local hotel and we are grateful for that relationship.

If you know someone in need, please send them my way! It can be scary to want to tackle a utility bill or to face one's rent as it goes further behind, but there are plenty of resources to assist consumers. I understand what it can be like to face these situations and will take the time to assist with

phone calls or even just listening and help form a path forward. I look forward to spring and being able to make a difference in the lives of our consumers.



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 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

 @TheBRICKMinistries

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

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James L. Miller, Vice President

Rhonda H. Sundberg, Secretary

Lorri Mattes, Treasurer

John Manno

Jeffery R. Muse

Staff—note new email addresses!

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