



Neighbors News

Summer 2014

2014-2015

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Rubber Ducky Ridiculousness

Mark your calendars. Saturday, October 4th will be Neighbors' Sixth Annual Duck Races. The spectacle will be a part of South St. Paul's On the Road Again festival. Neighbors will be racing thousands of rubber duckies down a waterway built to span Southview Blvd.

The event is not to be missed! The wet and wild races launch every 15 minutes and the anticipation builds during the day to a final race where the Grand Prize Winner swims their way to glory. Delbert the Duck will be there and there will be loads of fun for kids.

You can "Adopt a Duck" for just \$5, or a family pack of 5 for \$25. Prizes will total over \$5,000. Proceeds will go to support Neighbors' programs for the people of northern Dakota County. You do not need to be present to win. Please visit our web site at www.neighborsmn.org for more details and to get your Adoption Certificates and watch for them in the coming months around the area at your favorite church or restaurant.

This year's Duck Races will be organized by Heidi Satre. Heidi joined Neighbors in July and is our new Events Manager. Heidi comes to us from the Saint Paul Hotel where she managed events including countless weddings and other festivities. Please help us welcome Heidi!



The waterway on Southview Boulevard at last year's On the Road Again festival with Delbert the Duck.



Heidi Satre, Neighbors new Events Manager



*With the help of its
volunteers,
Neighbors, Inc. will
strive to reduce
poverty, promote
self sufficiency and
build community.*



New Raised Garden Beds at Neighbors

In June, Eagle Scout candidate Ryan Kohler, led 30 scouts and family members in constructing raised garden beds on Neighbors' property. The four garden beds currently have tomatoes, beans, carrots and squash planted in them. As the brainchild of Ryan, the gardens are expected to produce hundreds of pounds of vegetables at their peak to directly benefit the Neighbors food shelf. Visitors to the food shelf are grateful for receiving fresh produce when it is available from stores, garden clubs, and farmers' markets. It is a nice treat to receive fresh foods, in addition to the regular non-perishable food items that families receive. Food from the garden, harvested by volunteers, will help to supplement current donations. Many hours of research, planning and installation took place to construct these garden beds. A big thank you to Ryan and his team for this generous donation to the families Neighbors serves.

A decorative border of various fresh vegetables and fruits surrounding the central text. The items include carrots, corn, tomatoes, leafy greens, purple flowers, a bunch of tomatoes, a yellow bell pepper, a bunch of green grapes, two lemons, a bunch of leafy greens, a beet, a head of cauliflower, a cucumber, a corn cob, a bunch of leafy greens, a yellow bell pepper, a bunch of raspberries, a pear, a bunch of leafy greens, a head of lettuce, and a bunch of green beans.

***Neighborhood Farmers' Markets
Up and Running***

Last year at the South St. Paul Farmers' Market, Neighbors received nearly 3,000 pounds of donated produce - just by having a booth at the market each week. This year, we are looking for volunteers to also help at the markets in Inver Grove Heights and West St. Paul.

Details are as follows:

- West St. Paul: Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to noon at Signal Hills
- Inver Grove Heights: Sundays from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the VMCC
- South St. Paul: Wednesdays from 3:30 to 6:00 p.m. at 7th Avenue and Marie

If you are interested in taking a shift (or a location for the season!), contact Lon or David, 651-306-2145 or volunteer@neighborsmn.org. Groups or individuals are welcome.

Thank you SpartanNash

Thank you, SpartanNash, formerly Nash Finch, for volunteering at Neighbors, Inc. in June. The volunteers helped in the Food Shelf, Clothes Closet thrift store, and around the building. Over 9,000 lbs. of food was sorted and organized, which helped to feed about 90 families. Boxes of summer clothing donations were brought out of storage, sorted and hung on racks for families to receive.

Seeds were planted in 4 raised garden beds which will provide fresh vegetables to families in the food shelf. The grass was cut, trash was picked up around the property, and painting was completed, helping to beautify the Neighbors, Inc. building this summer. All in all, SpartanNash saved us weeks of work all in one day so that we can better serve families in need. Neighbors appreciates this valuable partnership that has developed over the past several years. SpartanNash also has recently donated \$30,000 and conducted food and holiday program drives.

We are also grateful to Stephanie Naito, formerly of Nash Finch, who has served on the Neighbors Board of Directors from 2012 to the present. Again, thank you for everything you've done, and we can't wait for all of you to come back next year!

David Miller, Director of Volunteer Programs

Happy Birthday, Virginia!

Virginia Milbert, a volunteer at Neighbors since the organization was formed in 1972, recently celebrated her 97th birthday. To honor Virginia on this milestone event, Boua Xiong from KARE11 did a short story about Virginia and her numerous accomplishments. You can watch this story on KARE 11's website.

Virginia is one of the three women who manage The Clothes Closet. She not only works a regular weekly shift (Tuesday and Thursday), she helps organize the staffing, sets the schedule for sales and events, prices the clothing and makes sure things continue to run efficiently and effectively. Congratulations Virginia, on your 97th birthday, and we're looking forward to your 100th party.



The Clothes Closet – Best Value in Town

“I’m going to be back, the prices are unbelievable!”

“We don’t shop anywhere else because you are so reasonable!”

“What a nice little store!”

We have one young customer who tells us, “I am the best dressed guy in the office!”

We can’t tell you how often we hear this from people who are shopping in The Clothes Closet. Whether they’re first time shoppers, just discovering the home of the most affordable clothing in the area, or people who shop The Clothes Closet regularly, they all agree on one thing.: you can’t find clothing this good and this inexpensive any place else.

The Clothes Closet has clothing for people off all ages, from infants to seniors, and for people of all sizes and shapes.

We never know what we are going to receive as donations. Michelle, a Monday volunteer, will often put on the “unusual” donated items and wear them around the store. Customers laugh and it creates much conversation and chuckles as they ask, “What are you supposed to be?”

Also on Monday we have a regular shopper who is familiar with the items in our store and is heard saying to other customers, “Could I help you find something special?”

The Clothes Closet is staffed entirely by volunteers and is open Monday to Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Friday and Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

As you think about updating your wardrobe this fall, or getting your children or grandchildren outfitted for school, think about Neighbors Clothes Closet. And tell your friends and neighbors. Neighbors Clothes Closet is for everyone! **Open to the Public!** Proceeds from the store help support the food shelf and our many other programs.

Struggling Single Mom Thanks You for Your Support

Sometimes the toughest situations to see are the families who are doing all the right things, but are still struggling. When one single mom of two kids came in for food in April, she was facing an \$1,800 disconnection notice from Xcel following an incredibly cold winter. Her monthly take-home pay is less than \$1,500, and her rent costs more than half of her income. She earned an associate degree in criminal justice in an attempt to better her income, but said she has had no luck finding a job in her field.

During her April food shelf intake process, we referred her to assistance at Dakota County with her utility bill, SNAP food support, and free health care through Medical Assistance - all of which she took advantage. She also applied with the CAP Agency, another program that assists with heating costs and was approved, which means during her most recent visit in June, we were able to help her apply for a discount on her utilities. If a Dakota County resident has received assistance from the CAP Agency, he or she is eligible for the Energy Cents program, which sets up an averaged payment plan with Xcel, and then pays a portion of the bill each month. The hope is that the discount will make this mom's Xcel bill more manageable by preventing the extreme ups and downs in charges created by our lovely Minnesota weather, as well as giving her a discount.

During her June visit, this single mom thanked Neighbors for all the information we gave her: "You helped me so much. I wanted to let you know that."

And we wanted to let you know too. Thank you for supporting Neighbors, Inc. so we can support the single moms in our community who are struggling.

Sister, Sister

When two sisters - one 21 and one 17 - came into Neighbors, Inc. recently, they'd been homeless since February. They'd been staying with friends for all those months, their father not in the picture, and their mother in crisis and unable to provide housing for them. The older sister decided she needed to do what it took to get her younger sister stable housing so she could finish school and not worry about where she would be staying next.

The older sister found a full-time job. The pair applied for financial and food support with Dakota County, and for rental assistance with Neighbors, Inc. and the Salvation Army. Neighbors, Inc. offers financial assistance with emergencies that threaten the stability of families through our Emergency Assistance program.

We were able to help the sisters get an apartment. Being able to help these young women brought us great joy here at Neighbors. We wish them all the best.

Annie Nelson

Food Shelf Breaking Records

The food shelf has been as busy as ever since school got out for the summer! After reaching the milestone of serving 500 families in one month last August, we have surpassed our new record several times. In June, we did it again, serving a record 534 families! This is more than 1,500 individuals!

Recently, a young boy came to the Food Shelf to make a donation. Apparently, he had been saving his allowance for several months. He donated a 6-pack of Kraft Macaroni and Cheese. A few weeks ago, another 6-year-old boy brought in 19 pounds of food from his birthday party where he asked for food donations instead of presents. Imagine what a wonderful world this would be if we ALL thought like these little boys!

Another day, we had a harried mom stop in with her two young boys, ages 7 and 4. She got lost on her way to the food shelf, so she had to call for directions. She was VERY relieved when she finally walked into our office. After her intake appointment and food shelf visit, she and the boys came back upstairs to pick up some bread. The boys both came over and gave Shari a BIG hug to say thank you. If you ever doubt that your donations to Neighbors make a difference, please think of those two little boys and know that they most definitely do!!

All of our clients who come to Neighbors remind us that so many caring people live in our community. This really means YOU! We could not function without your support and help and our dedicated, gifted, and capable volunteers. Sometimes we feel overwhelmed at the generosity. But we also feel very blessed to live in such a caring community. To all the volunteers and donors who touch the lives of our area residents in need, we say THANK YOU.

Neighbors Staff

Getting There

Transportation can be an issue for some of our clients at the food shelf. Most come by car, but others walk, ask a friend for a ride, or use the DARTS and Metro Mobility systems. I've seen a grandmother use a baby stroller, baby included. Several of our clients use public transportation.

They bring their own cloth bags and we help them pack and balance everything before they walk to the bus stop. These are some of the most creative, cheerful, and determined people I have ever met.

One person in particular really stands out in my mind. She is about 50 years old and has been hit with multiple life tragedies in the last few years. As a result, she really relies on her walker to keep her steady and moving. She balances cloth bags on the handles on both sides and front of that walker in ways I would never have thought possible. She came to the food shelf a few weeks ago with a new and improved system for her walker. It was probably one of the most ingenious balancing systems in the history of humankind. Somehow she had managed to use bungee cords to fasten a large plastic bin about the size of a small air conditioner to the front of her walker. One by one she

told me exactly where to place each item as we packed up the food. She had placed cloth bags in other parts of the walker to keep the entire system balanced. That dear lady should be teaching college physics!

I could tell as soon as I saw her that day she was in great pain and weaker than usual. When we were all packed up, she said, "I feel so much better than when I first got here. I think it was all the laughing." I hugged her and said, "You know, I think all of us were uplifted by you being here today. Laughter is powerful stuff."

Sue - Wednesday Food Shelf Volunteer

Volunteers at Neighbors Have Special Experiences

This is a true story about what a bad attitude, an unspoken prayer and three people have in common!!

To set the stage.....it was 12:30 p.m. on a Wednesday in mid-April and I was rushing out the door to help out a crew in the Clothes Closet that was short-handed that day. For some reason, I was not having a very good morning and my attitude was reflecting it. I needed a serious "attitude adjustment." My first thought was "Dear God, I can't go to work like this. I need someone(s) to pray for me." Then I remembered my three Christian friends/co-workers whom I had just worked with on Tuesday (and every Tuesday at an infant day care facility). I could text them and ask them to pray for me and my attitude. But since I was driving, I'd have to wait until I arrived at Neighbors as texting and driving are seriously frowned upon!! Well, I got to Neighbors and totally forget about texting my friends. I hurried into the Clothes Closet and started pulling certain clothes from the racks (all clothing with a certain color tag goes on sale each week). Fortunately, I got to work alone (remember the bad attitude!!)

About an hour later, a customer I recognized walked over to where I was working and we exchanged greetings and a hug. After a short visit, the customer said, "You know, when I came in here today I was kind of down and I really needed a hug. Thank you." Fifteen minutes later, an older gentleman came up to me and wanted to know if we had any jackets. He tried on a couple, one of them fit the bill, and looked really good on him (it was also on sale)! He gave me a hug, said, "Thank you," and excitedly told his wife about his great find.

Half an hour later, I recognized another customer in the store. We stopped to visit and she talked about her family and wanting to do some volunteering and said that Neighbors may be the place she wants to work. We parted with a big hug. And then it hit me!!! During all my rushing around I had totally forgotten to text my request to my friends. But God doesn't need a text! He not only heard my unspoken prayer earlier that day, he answered it. How? He sent not one, not two, but three kind souls to come along side me and befriend me that afternoon. one person for each of my three friends. And "bad attitude" was nowhere to be found. WOW!! Talk about feeling humbled, thankful and blessed.

Solveig, Clothes Closet Volunteer

Remember the "Good Old Days" When Neighbors Helped Each Other Out? They Still Do!

Are you looking for a positive way to spend your time, meet other goodhearted people, and help a neighbor in need? Have you considered volunteering at Neighbors? There are many opportunities that can use your unique interests and talents.

Help feed your hungry neighbors!

Neighbors relies on the generosity of the community to deliver services to people in need. We are grateful to the many local businesses that donate thousands of pounds of food weekly to the food shelf. This allows us to keep up with the more than 500 families that need food support each month. Several new stores will begin donating food to Neighbors on a weekly basis and we need volunteers to help us pick up those donations so we can get it to the food shelf and pass it out to families. As a volunteer, you can help stretch the dollar of a family in need. This opportunity is perfect for a church, workplace, or other group looking to make a difference in the community by adopting a regular pick up location for the week.

Individual volunteers are also welcome to sign up and help. Current pick up locations include:

- Monday around 8:00 a.m. at Walmart on S. Robert St. in West St. Pal
- Monday around 1:00 p.m. at Dakota Woodlands in Eagan

- Other short notice or on-call pick-ups are also available during the week for those looking for more flexible opportunities.

The morning shift is a great opportunity for volunteers looking to get up, get out, and help others—and all before lunchtime!

Like to talk on the phone?

Some of our neighbors in the community are unable to leave their homes because of health concerns and they often do not receive many visitors. With one phone call, a volunteer can brighten someone's day with a cheerful conversation and listening ear. If you enjoy talking on the phone and lifting people's spirits, this is the opportunity for you. A volunteer is needed on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month from 8:00-11:00 am. There are also substitute and on-call positions available as well.

Do you enjoy driving?

Volunteer drivers are needed to take neighbors to their local medical or dental appointments. Rides are scheduled in advance on weekdays based on the volunteer's availability. As a volunteer driver you will make a difference in the life of a neighbor who does not have access to reliable transportation. Mileage reimbursement is available.

To learn more about other ways to volunteer or to sign up for the opportunities listed above, contact David Miller, Director of Volunteer Programs, at 651-306-2145 or volunteer@neighborsmn.org.



Splish - Splash

Shift supervisors of Sanimax in South St. Paul agreed to go into the dunk tank for a good cause. Employees paid \$1 for three balls to throw at the supervisor sitting up on the dunk tank. They also had a contest where there were seven managers up for "votes" to go into the dunk tank. People voted by putting bills or coins into that person's jar. The manager with the most money had to go in.

This event raised \$305 for Neighbors Food Shelf. In the photo at left, Randy Kotasek prepared for a possible dunk.

Welcome New Volunteers

Neighbors would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest volunteers. These volunteers have joined us on a long-term basis. Be sure to give a friendly “Hi!” and introduce yourself if you see them around.

Community	Mary Kirkeng	Mike Furlong
Donation Pickup	Charyl Peifer	Ann Klein
Kerry Babcock	Michael Shokunbi	Aaron Lemke
Michael Brodie		Mary Ricker
Aline Kies	Development	Rita Wenner
Samul Mathers	Department	
Barbara Yourczek	Kathy Anderson	Dial-A-Ride
Joseph Yourczek	Rachel Smith	Mary Lou Bailey
		Jim Cosgrove
Clothes Closet	Food Distribution	Volunteer
Barb Cummings	Michelle Nielson	Programs
(Front Desk too!)		Department
Lynda Dobratz	Food Shelf	Agustin Cano
Rosie Duncan	Corina Arellano	Kazoua Yang
Pat Janssen	Brianna Byrnes	

Summer Meals Program Continues to Help Families

Many thanks to all the churches, families, businesses, and individuals who have helped serve meals to hungry children at our local schools this summer! The summer meal program could not function without all of your help. Whether you helped serve breakfast at one shift, or your business helped for an entire week, you are making a difference to your community. This summer volunteers have served breakfast and lunch at five local schools: Henry Sibley High School, Kaposia Elementary, Moreland Elementary, South Saint Paul High School, and Garlough Elementary. The program offers free meals to anyone younger than the age of 18. Besides kids attending programs like summer school and school-aged care, there are numerous families who depend on these meals to help get them through the summer. Mothers may come with several children in tow. One day I was working at the high school and asked a lone student what brought him in to the school that day (figuring he was one of the athletes training in the weight room, part of the band, or maybe attending a summer class). He didn't know how to answer and I realized that he had come in just for food—I told him that the food was very good, and that he didn't need any other reason to come. I realized I'd accidentally embarrassed him. It is not easy to ask for help when you are a teenager, so I am convinced that this young man really did need and appreciate the summer meal program. Thank you to all of you who have helped out!

Retirement Celebration Benefits Neighbors



Stephen Larsen, on the left, and Scott Andrews with just some of the donations that friends brought to Steve's retirement party. Steve had requested no gifts and asked people to instead make a donation to Neighbors Food Shelf. \$125 and 96 pounds of food was donated. Thank you Steve.

Christmas in July

Bargain hunter alert! For those of us who shop all year round this is a great time to pick up some bargains for the “Love Your Neighbor” holiday programs. Stores have a lot of toys on clearance this time of year, especially for the older kids. Watch for craft kits too; those are always a popular item.

Back to school ads are starting and there should be some good prices on socks and underwear. We are especially low on underwear (boxers preferred) for the older boys. A big thank you for all the bags of clothing and toys that have been dropped off already; can't believe some of the great prices! A salute to all super shoppers out there; you shop, you score!!!



Upcoming Events: Rummage Sale and Style Show with Salad Luncheon



Neighbors will be having a rummage sale August 21, 22, and 23 from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00. p.m. There will be a wide assortment of household items and miscellaneous – something for everyone. The sale is open to the public! If you shop at garage sales or rummage sales, you don't want to miss this sale.

Both the Clothes Closet and Rummage Sales are completely staffed by volunteers.



A Style Show and Salad Luncheon will be held at Luther Memorial Church in South St. Paul on September 20, 2014 at 11:30 a.m. Cost is \$5 per person. The Style Show will feature multi-generational outfits from Neighbors Clothes Closet. All proceeds will benefit Neighbors.

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