

Neighbors News

Spring 2015

Community Raises More than 130,000 Pounds of Food for Neighbors

Everyone from a potbellied pig to church pastors to a manager at Vivint rallied to raise 132,021 pounds of food during the month of March for the annual Minnesota FoodShare Campaign. And so many more people participated!

The South St. Paul Mayor's Youth Task Force started things off with a bang when it announced the city's goal of raising its zip code: 55,075 pounds of food. When Sarah Davis, a West St. Paul resident, heard about the goal, she challenged her city to raise its zip code: 55,118 pounds of food - even enlisting the help of her potbellied pig, Daisy Mae. People who dropped off food donations to Davis's house got a chance to meet the pig. Both cities exceeded their goals.

At Vivint, a national company with offices just down the hill from Neighbors, a manager was duct taped to a wall for two hours. As part of their fundraising, employees were able to purchase strips of duct tape for \$1. CHS, a farmer-owned cooperative based in Inver Grove Heights, hosted a whole week of fun events. Employees sent cookie grams, had chili and brownie cook off contests, played "Dollar Wars," which is usually played with pennies, and much more.

On April 27, the assistant manager and manager of the West St. Paul Anchor Bank, along with the COO of the company, Jeff Hawkins, all got pies to the face after employees met their fundraising goal not once but three times.

Continued on p. 2



Vivint Manager duct taped to a wall



The South St. Paul Mayor's Youth Task Force

2014-2015

Board of Directors

- John Glieden, Chair
- Brian Counihan,
Vice Chair
- Brian Taurinskas,
Secretary
- Joe Gullerud, Treasurer
- Gail Alexander
- Dana Babbit
- Chris Becker
- Tim Felton
- Greg Kuntz
- Tom Leonard
- Pam O'Connell
- David Paton
- Megan Torgerson
- Dan Warner

John Kemp,
Executive Director



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



Continued from p. 1



Daisy Mae

Curves in South St. Paul quadrupled its fundraising goals; the business offered free month-long memberships for a bag of donated groceries, and free fitness classes in exchange for donations as well.



Barry Hungry the bear, with two favorite friends

In 2014, Neighbors Food Shelf gave more than 826,000 pounds of food to area residents in need.

Those are just a few of the incredible stories from this year's March FoodShare Campaign, and we at Neighbors are so grateful for every single donation and all the effort our community puts in to fighting hunger.



A Turn in the Cold Seat Shows Good Shepherd's Passion for Fighting Hunger

The temperature was a mere 45 degrees and the sun just about to set on April 8, 2015, when two brave women of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Inver Grove Heights readied themselves to be dunked. The church challenged itself to raise 25,000 pounds of food this year, or the equivalent in dollars, for the Minnesota FoodShare Campaign.

Pastor Leesa Soderlind and the Music Director Lisa Langton formed two teams: the Sharks and the Alligators. The team leader who had the least amount of donations by April 8 would have to brave taking the "cold seat" in the dunk tank.

When the big day came, Good Shepherd was a little behind its 25,000-pound goal. So both team leaders decided to take a turn in the dunk tank on a night when the water temperature matched the air temperature. At a cost of \$5 for four balls, the church's leaders took many a plunge and raised another \$400 towards the cause. Our thanks goes out to all who participated and especially to Leesa and Lisa for all they did to help Good Shepherd reach their goal!

Thank You for All That You Do!



Easing on Down the Highway

Here is a story from one of our recent rides: Kelly called on behalf of her brother for a ride to his medical appointment. She often gives him rides herself,

but she was going to be out of town for his appointment. Her brother, Greg, suffered a traumatic brain injury a while ago and still struggles with anxiety in addition to his medical concerns. So, both Kelly and Greg were a little nervous about him getting a ride with a stranger.

Volunteer driver Michelle called Kelly to confirm all of the details of the ride the day before and she was able to ease Kelly's worries a bit by answering questions and

having all the details in order. When Michelle arrived to pick up Greg, he may have been a little nervous at first, but Michelle quickly put him at ease with her cheerful, pleasant manner. They had a nice conversation while they were going to and from the medical appointment, and it was a smooth, easy experience. Greg was so impressed that he told his sister how great an experience it was, and she called Neighbors to let us know how they were both very grateful for Michelle's help, and that she did an excellent job! Michelle writes, "I am very much enjoying this volunteer position and meeting such wonderful people." Thank you Michelle, and thank you to Kelly and Greg!

Are you interested in becoming a driver? There are multiple benefits: very flexible hours, a one-on-one connection with someone who needs your help, and getting out to explore your local area. You choose which rides you would like to take, so it can fit your schedule and comfort level. Mileage reimbursements are available. For more information about how to volunteer, please contact David Miller at david@neighborsmn.org or call (651) 306-2145.

Neighbors Events and Opportunities

Taps & Apps: An Event to Fight Hunger

Join us for the second annual Taps & Apps event at Summit Brewing Company on Wednesday, **June 17, 2015**. Back by popular demand, this event will feature a beer tasting with appetizer pairings as well as lawn games, a silent auction, and a relaxing happy hour filled with camaraderie and fun. This fundraising event is only \$20 per person and includes two beverages. Want to tour the brewery? Buy a VIP ticket for \$30 to include an exclusive VIP tour plus the event. Space is limited! Buy your tickets today. Proceeds benefit emergency needs programs at Neighbors, Inc. Visit our website, www.neighborsmn.org, and click on events or contact Heidi, our events manager, at (651) 306-2154, to purchase tickets.



Photo: Neighbors



It's Parade Season!

Look for the Neighbors, Inc. van in the upcoming West St. Paul, Kaposia Days and Inver Grove Heights Days parades. Interested in walking in the parade? We are always looking for volunteers (and it's a nice workout!) Call Heidi at (651) 306-2154 for more information.

Going on Vacation This Summer? We are looking for people to volunteer to take one of our small, yellow, rubber ducks with them and take pictures. The pictures will be used in our promotional campaign for the 8th annual Great Neighbors' Duck Races in October. Contact Heidi for more details: 651-306-2154 or heidi@neighborsmn.org.



Easter 2015 at Neighbors Inc. A Success!!

This Easter we had the first ever Easter Coloring Contest. This was the brainchild of no less than our great director, Joan Rhodes, who said, "Let's have a contest where kids can participate by coloring drawings about Easter." The kids could choose either an Easter Basket or a Duckling over Easter Eggs.

Three different age groups - 4 and younger, 5 to 8, and 9 to 12 year olds - colored one of the two drawings, and everyone would win something, but only one per age group would be named a winner. We thought, "We will be lucky if we get at least five kids to participate." Boy, were we in for a surprise!

It was hard to select winners. We decided to create more categories to include as many winners as possible: we extended the number of winning entries from three to seven. Everyone else received a very nice consolation prize.



Not only did we have more than 20 girls and boys participate, they showed so much excitement, it took us by surprise. Boys and girls from 2- to 13-years-old showed up at the door very excited to participate. Some of the girls came back wearing Easter dresses and hair bows, and some boys were wearing spring colors. All were excited to win and to have their pictures taken.

We expect to duplicate this great experience next year and in the years to come, and hope to have many more participants join the Easter experience at Neighbors, Inc. A big thank you to all participants!

Yudihana Montes, Administrative Assistant

If You Can't Afford Food, How Can You Afford an Attorney?

You'd never guess the gentleman's age: 71. He's fit, full of energy and still working full-time. But a car accident in January required surgery on his shoulder. Medically, his doctor will only allow him to lift 5 pounds with that arm, which his job says they can't accommodate to allow him back to work, which he very much wants to do. "To be honest, I'd rather be working," he said.

But he also needs to work. A permanent resident, he's worked in this country for 35 years, so he qualifies for social security, but his payments are only a couple hundred dollars more than his rent. He doesn't qualify for short-term disability from his job because the accident didn't happen there. The auto insurance company told him they could reimburse up to 85 percent of his lost wages, but they've so far only sent one check in early February for about \$650. The company keeps telling him they need to investigate a fall he had in December to make sure the injuries weren't pre-existing. When he told his doctor about this, the doctor told him to get a lawyer, he said, "But I asked him, 'If I can't afford food, how can I afford an attorney?'"

The gentleman and his wife came to us for the food they can't afford, and we spent more than half an hour discussing his and his wife's situation. When they left, they left with food, but also a sheaf of papers containing information for other agencies that could help them: the phone number for the Volunteer Lawyer's Network for his problems with his job and insurance company; contacts at Salvation Army for a referral to Bridging, which might be able to help with a new bed (He and his wife have only a sofa bed, which is so painful to sleep on because of his surgery that this gentleman is currently sleeping in a chair.); housing help, if their rental payments get behind; and other food resources. We also made sure that they were aware of support options at Dakota County.

"In the 35 years I've worked here, I've never needed help. We always had enough; we always took care of ourselves, but I need help now," he said.

And we told him: "That's what we're here for."

Annie Nelson, Emergency Services Intake Specialist

Help Feed Hungry Kids This Summer! Sign Up to Volunteer Today!

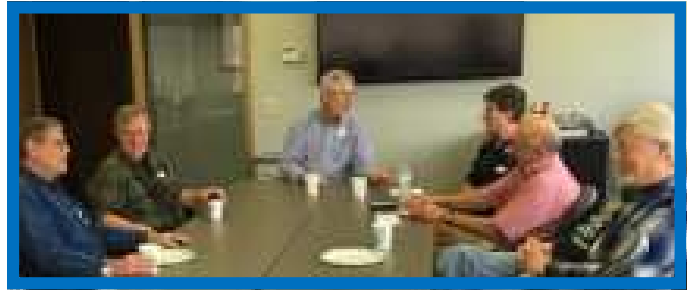
Do you love working with kids? Are you passionate about hunger relief? Just need to get out of the house this summer? Help in the Summer Meal Program!

Volunteers will work at four area schools, helping prepare and serve meals. The schedule depends on the school, but there are both breakfast and lunch shifts available for most of the summer. Participating schools include: Garlough Elementary Magnet School, Kaposia Education Center, Henry Sibley High School, and Moreland Elementary School. We'll be signing people up individually and in groups on a first-come, first-serve basis. You can come with yourself, your family, or plan a group from your church, school, or workplace!

No experience is required! Skilled school kitchen staff are available at each site to show you the ropes.

It is now easier than ever to sign up to volunteer with our new self-schedule option. Check out the Volunteer section of the Neighbors website at www.neighborsmn.org and reserve your spot by clicking on the Summer Meal Program.

For more information about available shifts or to sign up, contact Jenna, program manager, at 651-306-2143 or jenna@neighborsmn.org.



A Drive For Healing

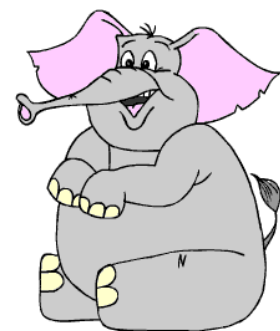
On April 15, Neighbors Dial a Ride drivers got together to share coffee and stories. The volunteers talked about the rider whose service dog always greets them with a lick on the face. They traded tips on which hospitals have the best waiting rooms (the best one around here is the acupuncture clinic in Maplewood—soothing music and herbal tea) and the worst parking.

They talked about the value of listening, and how many of our clients call for a ride but are also looking for someone to care. Once clients realize how much the volunteer drivers care, the car can become a confessional, as riders have discovered someone who will listen to them. Some of the stories our riders share are fascinating—experiences from other countries or interesting accomplishments like writing novels. It's not just moans and groans about health issues.

The drivers around the table nodded in agreement as they shared how worthwhile their time spent volunteering has been. We are very grateful to this dedicated team of volunteers—this program could not operate without your help!

EBay Sales Raising More Money for Neighbors Programming

The two brass elephants seemed determined to escape the box into which Director of Programs Joan Rhodes was packing them to ship. One had sharp tusks that kept breaking through the cardboard. With extra cardboard to reinforce the box and lots of tape, the elephants were finally ready for their long journey to England. Neighbors volunteers sold the 10-pound pair on our eBay account, mnfoodshelf.



A few years ago, Neighbors decided to try selling more valuable items donated to the Clothes Closet on eBay to find a bigger market and make more profits from them - 100 percent of money earned from Clothes Closet and eBay sales goes to funding programming at Neighbors.

We sold a few things here and there, but now that we have an amazing team of three volunteers - Beth Arntson, Charyl Peifer, and Bruce Bentson - who've increased our listings from about 2-5 per week to now having 16 items for sale. "They are quite a team," said Rhodes. "One does research, one takes pictures and one lists the items."

Easter Bunny Makes Surprise Visit to CAYA



Participants and volunteers thoroughly enjoyed a visit from the Easter Bunny this past month during Come As You Are's annual Easter Celebration. A special thanks to local musicians Brian and Jordan Moore (pictured) for their musical entertainment, and to the Gutzman family (Brianna, Gracie, Courtney and Deb) for arranging to have the Easter Bunny visit. And, as always, a huge thanks to the volunteers who make this program an important part of the lives of adults with developmental disabilities and special needs. For more information about the Come As You Are program, please contact 651-306-2145 or volunteer@neighborsmn.org.

The Great Neighbors' Food Fight Winning Restaurant is..... Jersey's Bar & Grill!

Thanks to everyone who participated in the first Great Neighbors' Food Fight! With your help, we raised more than \$5,000 for Neighbors, Inc. A special thanks to all of the restaurants who donated burgers: 5-8 Grill & Tap West St. Paul, B52 Burgers and Brew, BLVD Bar + Grille, Cherokee Tavern and Jersey's Bar & Grill. All the burgers were delicious!



Bill Ashton from Jersey's and Heidi Satre, Events Manager at Neighbors

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.

Come As You Are

Gabe Grundtner

Clothes Closet

Silvia Garcia
Quyên Vo
Daily Check-In
Eleasha Button

Dial-A-Ride

Gary Fitch
Thomas Wyborski
Mauro Zampa

Food Shelf

Sandra Braun
Barbara Carlson
Sue Eschenbacher
Virginia Joseph
Nancy Kopet
Margaret Lehmann
Lois Miller
Tom Reitter
Angela Rud
Chuck Tracy
Sandra Trifunov
Len Tschida
Dwayne Watson

Front Desk

Marilyn Cornman
Dylan
McDonough
Kelly Weldon
Sandy Willis

We didn't mean to forget anyone. If we did, please tell us by contacting 651-306-2145 or volunteer@neighborsmn.org.

Remember the "good old days" when neighbors helped each other out?

They still do!

Neighbors relies on volunteers to deliver services daily to people in need of assistance. 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 our neighbors in need

1 in 10 people living in the Twin Cities metro area do not know when their next meal is coming. Neighbors' food shelf serves about 30 families per day. Neighbors seeks volunteers to guide clients through the store and help them select the food they need for their families. Your support will prevent more families from going hungry. Morning and afternoon shifts are available during weekdays.

Drive our neighbors in need to medical appointments

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. Neighbors also carries volunteer liability insurance.

To learn more or to sign up, contact David Miller, Director of Volunteer Programs, at 651-306-2145 or volunteer@neighborsmn.org.

Unpacking Some Beautiful Moments from the Clothes Closet

One afternoon, a lady stopped in to the Clothes Closet to look for Easter outfits for two young grandchildren. She came up to the counter with a beautiful soft flowing green dress that had fabric flowers sewn around the bottom of the full skirt. She'd also found an outfit for a four-year-old boy: navy pants, a white shirt and a vest. When Solveig, a Clothes Closet volunteer, commented on how beautiful the clothing items were, the shopper said: "These are for my two grandchildren. Their mother died last year. I am now their guardian."

That encounter was both sad and sweet: sad, knowing the children were growing up without their mother, but also sweet knowing their grandma was taking care of them and wanted special Easter outfits that just happened to be at our Clothes Closet in their sizes!!

One Saturday in March, a woman from the South St. Paul area came in with a young woman. The young woman and her three children had recently moved into the area but had no food and very little clothing. She and her children met the South St. Paul woman at a local church that was having a free dinner that night. It was the first meal the mom had eaten in 24 hours.

On Saturday, the woman brought the mom to the Clothes Closet. We told the young mom to shop for clothing enough to make it through the weekend. Only one of the clothing items was for herself. All the rest were for her children. Although the food shelf is closed on Saturdays, we found some canned and boxed items to tide them over until Monday when the young mom could come back and get a voucher for clothing and food enough to feed her family. The young mom and lady who brought her were so grateful and thankful. Tears were flowing on both sides of the counter.

Solveig Bentson

This week, the Clothes Closet received a donation of a telephone designed for the hearing and visually impaired. If you have shopped in the Clothes Closet, you know that we receive and sell all kinds of things. In this case, the wise sorting volunteers set aside this phone because they wanted to make sure that someone who really needed it, and maybe couldn't afford it, could benefit from it. Without thinking too hard, our transportation staff was able to think of several clients who might be interested, and the first one they called said that would be a huge

blessing. They thought of her because she had mentioned that she had recently been diagnosed with macular degeneration and her vision has been deteriorating. A few days later Neighbors staff delivered the phone to her door, and she was delighted. She contacted a friend to help install the phone correctly and it works! While we can't always go the extra mile, it is nice when it works out so smoothly and someone's life is improved because of it.

I've been volunteering at Neighbors since 2012 in the Clothes Closet, and it has impacted my life in a huge way. I love the way that the ladies always ask me for help if something, really anything, needs fixing. Every Thursday, I look forward to coming to Neighbors because I can help my community out. I get to make great friends, like volunteers Jerilyn, Mary Lou, Gail and Cheryl, who make me want to come and volunteer every Thursday night after school. And just helping people that come into the Clothes Closet and shop for stylish clothes at a reasonable price makes me glad that I have a place like Neighbors that lets me volunteer every week. One of my favorite memories from the store is when nobody is at the front counter, some of us just talk about what happened since the last time we saw each other. And gaining new friends like Rami, another volunteer.

Anecia Larsen
Age: 16

Like our Clothes Closet on Facebook Neighbors Clothes Closet - Thrift Store



Clothes Closet Crew

Left to Right: Jerilyn, Julianna, Rami, Solveig, Mary Lou



Neighbors, Inc.
 222 Grand Avenue West
 South St. Paul, MN 55075
(Address Service Requested)

Non-Profit Org.
 U.S. Postage
PAID
 Twin Cities, MN
 Permit #8314

Phone: 651-455-1508
Fax: 651-455-1319
Email: info@neighborsmn.org
Web Site: www.neighborsmn.org



UNITED WAY

HELP US UPDATE OUR MAILING LIST: If you are receiving duplicate copies of our newsletter, would like more copies, or would like to be removed from the list, please call or send a note with instructions. *NOTE:* We do not sell our mailing list to anyone or any organizations. *Neighbors News* is a quarterly publication of Neighbors, Inc. Lois Glewe, Editor and Designer

**Remember to save the date: May 20! Coffee and snacks will be provided!
 Come enjoy this exciting day with us.**

Neighbors, Inc. is having an Open House on **May 20, 2015, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.** Tours will be given throughout the day and the event will feature speed volunteering in the Clothes Closet and Food Shelf. The schedule for speed volunteering in the Clothes Closet will be from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. The schedule for the food shelf will be from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. You can come in anytime during those hours to try out one of the programs. A K9 officer and police dog will also be appearing from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Bring your family and friends to come learn more about Neighbors, Inc. If you bring a non-perishable food item to donate, you'll have your name entered into a drawing for some amazing prizes.

Open House at Neighbors—May 20

