

Neighbors News

Late Summer 2015

A Postcard from Santa

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





Hello-ho-ho-ho to all!

Mrs. Claus and I are poolside on our summer vacation, and the Elves are in Vegas. We're praying they don't lose the North Pole in a game of craps – reindeer and all – but worrying about that can ruin even a jolly man's enjoyment of a margarita in a lounge chair. So instead, we're writing to you about an opportunity to bring joy to the children in your area this December, especially those children whose parents may be having difficult financial times.

All children deserve to feel loved during the winter holidays. We know it's hard to think about Christmas when Minnesota is in the throes of its summer beauty, but we'd cherish your help so much and ask that you think this fall about purchasing and donating some toys and clothing items to the Neighbors, Inc. Holiday Program.

If you'd like to go one step further, adopting an entire family or senior brings an incredible amount of joy to the adopters. Sometimes, I hear adults who so loved Christmas as children talking about how it's just not as magical for them as grown-ups. "Christmas is really for kids," they say. I say that adopting the children in a family can bring back some of that child-like excitement to your holiday. Thinking of the joy you've brought to a child who may not have had it otherwise really reminds us adults of the magic that time of year can hold.

Below is a list of gifts the Elves are convinced will be all the rage this year - and they're rarely wrong. Thank you for all that you do for your community. My "Nice" list is mighty long for northern Dakota County. Wishing you sugar and spice, and everything nice,

Santa's (and the Elves') Wish List

Minions, Legos, Minecraft, Monster High, My Little Pony, Barbie's, Car toys, Frozen, Jurassic World, Princess toys, Baby toys, Learning toys, Arts and Crafts, Science kits, Sports equipment and balls, Make up and accessories (jewelry, hair styling equipment, etc.), Cologne (Axe body spray, especially), Headphones or ear buds, \$10 Gift Cards (Target, Walmart, Best Buy, local restaurants, iTunes), \$20 Gift Cards for local barbers and hair salons, WATERPROOF mittens and gloves for kids and teens, Hoodie sweatshirts for pre-teen and teen boys with sports teams insignias.

We're especially in need of gifts for middle-schoolaged boys and teen boys.

People Living in Poverty Now Greater in Suburbs Than Cities

I am amazed sometimes at the lack of understanding we run into about the extent of the poverty problem we face here in northern Dakota County. On a fairly frequent basis we hear people say, "Oh, we don't have any poverty issues in our community. Nobody is living in poverty!"

Oh, if only this were true. I'm not sure how anyone can drive through the communities that comprise northern Dakota County, particularly West St. Paul, South St. Paul and Inver Grove Heights, look out their car windows at the changing nature of the people who are shopping in our stores, attending our schools and our churches, standing at the corner bus stop or just walking down the street, and not understand how different our communities are today compared to 20, even 10, years ago.

In May, Alan Berube, senior fellow and deputy director of the Brookings Institute's Metropolitan Policy Program, spoke with food shelf staff from around the metro area about the increase in Suburban poverty at a gathering at Second Harvest Heartland Food Bank. His program analyzed U.S. Census data to understand how poverty is changing in suburban communities.

Between 2000 and 2013, the poverty rate increased from 6.9 percent of suburban residents to 11 percent, Berube said. In the cities, the poverty rate increased from 16.4 percent to 21.5 percent. The poverty rate is higher in the cities, but the actual number of people living in poverty is higher in the suburbs – 167,797 people, compared to

144,138 people in the cities – according to 2013 census numbers.

The overall poverty rate in Dakota County is 7.2 percent, but in the South St. Paul school district it is 12 percent, in the West St. Paul/Mendota Heights school district it is 9.4 percent and in the Inver Grove Heights school district it is 8.4 percent.

There was a major shift in the mid-2000s, Berube said, "the increase in the suburbs is much sharper than in the cities."

The biggest changes in the number of residents living in poverty between 2000 and 2013 happened in Hennepin and Dakota counties, he said. According to Second Harvest, 12 of the top 20 food shelves are suburban.

Between 2009 and 2012, the median family income in all three school districts in this northern part of the county fell by more than \$10,000 per family. County-wide median family incomes fell just \$3,000 in the same period and statewide just \$2,000.

Are you seeing a trend here? In the 2012-2013 school year, 46 percent of the children attending school in the South St. Paul school district qualified for the free and reduced lunch program. That usually means the child's family qualifies for food support, which means the family has very low income.

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In the West St. Paul/Mendota Heights school district, 41.9 percent qualified and in the Inver Grove Heights school district 41.3 percent qualified. In all three school districts the percentage of kids who qualify for free-and-reduced price lunch will approach or exceed 50 percent of all the kids in the next two years, if not this coming year.

So what does that mean to us here at Neighbors? In 2014, the last full year of data we have, we served more than 18,000 people in our food shelf and more than 31,000 people from our bakery shelf. We provided these people with more than 825,000 pounds of food.

But it wasn't Neighbors that did this. It was you. More than 85 percent of the food we received was donated.

It's been that way in our community since Neighbors began in 1972; neighbors helping neighbors. Amazingly, no matter how fast the need grows, this community responds – with food donations, volunteer hours, in-kind donations and just pure kindness.

for a tour. We'd welcome the opportunity and I am willing to predict that the vast majority of them will go home with a more clearly informed and changed opinion.

John Kemp

This is not a problem that is going to go away soon. Many people still think of our communities as being primarily white, middle class, fully employed and commuting with living-wage jobs. The reality is, we have become much more like the urban core; the issues that have been prevalent in our larger cities are now our issues.

We are far more diverse. Many of the people who live here are well below the "middle-class" category. Although our unemployment rate is lower than the other parts of the state, many jobs here don't provide a living wage, hence the increase in the number of people who turn to Neighbors for assistance.

So don't hesitate to correct someone the next time you hear that we don't have any poverty in our community. Suggest to whomever says this that they come to Neighbors and spend a few hours volunteering in our food shelf, or at our front desk, or in our holiday program. Or just come for a tour. We'd welcome the opportunity and I am willing to predict that the vast majority of them will go home with a more clearly informed and changed opinion.

John Kemp Executive Director

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.

Clothes Closet	Food Shelf	Chuck Tracy
Debby Monjeau	Gail Anderson	Sandra Trifunov
Darcy Wetzel	George Brown	
Lori Young	Al Bruhn	Front Desk
	Joe Eschenbacher	Diane Young
eBay	Linda Gray	Darlene Gerbozy
Travis Pirkl	Tom Hammond	
	Mary Kaiser	We didn't mean
Daily Check-In	Gloria Kivel	to forget anyone.
Jennifer Metz	Thomas Kivel	If we did, please
	Rick McCarty	tell us by contact-
Dial-A-Ride	Luis Mendez	ing 651-306-2145
Marcelline Han-	Lois Miller	or volunteer@
son	Mary Proulx	neighborsmn.org.
JoAnne Walther	Rebecca Ruddy	
	Duane	

Schiefelbein

Why Volunteer?

Diane Kubal, a cherished front desk volunteer, gave several reasons:

Volunteering helps you get to know your neighbors.

It's better to give than to receive. Volunteering makes you appreciate what you have, and who you are.

And finally, "Volunteering is good food for your soul," she said.

Leave a Legacy

Please consider including Neighbors, Inc. in your estate plans. A gift in your will, a beneficiary designation in your retirement plan or life insurance policy, will make a difference in the lives of people in our community. Your legal or financial advisor can answer questions, and inform us of your gift intentions.

Soul Food

Heart-warming stories from the food shelf



The Boys and Girls of Summer

Summer is definitely the season of children around here, as they are all home for the summer and often accompany their parents to the food shelf. Fortunately, the energy is infectious and many of our volunteers really enjoy playing with our younger visitors. One volunteer developed the idea of having a cup of suckers, and if children wait in a chair instead of running in the grocery aisles they get a sucker. Another volunteer found some containers of bubbles we can give kids for their way home.

With children eating more meals at home instead of school, parents need more kid-friendly foods during this season. We are well-stocked on macaroni and cheese, but have experienced a shortage of jelly. It's a real shame when you have a PB&J without the J. We also need applesauce cups, pudding and Jell-O, and other kid-friendly foods. Those of you who donate food, please bring in some of these great kid foods if you see them on sale!

Earlier this week a brave, but shy, 12-year-old girl stopped in. Like many people who have not been here before, she came to the food shelf door without stopping upstairs first. She lives nearby and had walked over. I could tell she felt very uncertain about even asking for help, so instead of just sending her upstairs to register with intake, I walked up with her and introduced her to the ladies at the front desk. Yudi and Maria explained that although the girl was not old enough to register herself, her mom could come in to visit the food shelf. They gave her a list of the papers that her mom would need to bring, and then told the brave girl that even though she couldn't go through the food shelf, she could help herself to the bread and produce in the lobby. Hopefully her mom will come in for food for her family soon.

One last anecdote about kids on summer break: Boy Scout Troop 248 from West St. Paul has shifted their annual food drive to August instead of November. The scouts and scout parents are excited because this will be a fun summer activity. We at the food shelf are excited to have a boost to our food stores during the leaner summer months. As of the moment I write this, the drive has not happened yet—but I want to thank the scouts in advance for all of their work, and everyone who contributes to their cause.

Scott Andrews, Food Shelf Manager



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 your hungry neighbors

We are grateful to the many local businesses that donate thousands of pounds of food daily to the food shelf. This allows us to keep up with the more than 500 families that need food support each month. Neighbors needs volunteers to help pick up those donations so we can get it The Great Neighbors' Duck Race is an annual fundraiser 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. Various, regular pick-up times and locations are available throughout the week, as well as on-call pick-ups for those looking for more flexible opportunities.

Drive 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.

Help Families Get Gently Used Clothing in our Thrift Store

Do you like clothes? The Clothes Closet thrift store is open to the public for shopping. Eligible families also receive clothing vouchers for free clothing. The Clothes Closet is 100 percent volunteer operated. As a volunteer, you make it possible for families to receive quality, affordable clothing. If you enjoy thrift stores, this is the opportunity for you! Available shifts include: Monday, 4 to 7 p.m.; Tuesday, 1 to 4 p.m.; Wednesday 4 to 7 p.m.; and Saturday, 1 to 4 p.m.

Rubber ducky, you make Neighbors so much fun

event for Neighbors, Inc. that will be held on Saturday, October 3 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Five thousand yellow rubber ducks are ready to be adopted and entered into the race. The first three rubber ducks to cross the finish line win a prize! All proceeds go to support Neighbors services and programs. Responsible and detail-oriented volunteers are needed to assist in coordinating logistics at the event. Additional volunteer groups and families are needed at the event to set up, operate kid's games, track duck winners and numbers, and clean up. There are limited volunteer positions, so sign up today.

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

Kids Receive Free Meals at Schools During Summer

Neighbors, Inc. helps find volunteers for a program that serves free meals - breakfast and lunch - to children while summer school is in session. The program's hope is to help low-income families afford the sudden jump in food costs when kids are on summer vacation.

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We supply volunteers at Garlough Elementary Magnet School, Kaposia Education Center, Henry Sibley High School and Moreland Elementary School. The program is a partnership between the USDA, ISD #197, Special District #6, and Neighbors, Inc.

As the program is moving along, I'm finding that the volunteers are enjoying their experiences. After visiting all the schools and meeting all the kitchen staff, everyone appears to be on-board with the same objective: feed as many hungry children and families as we can.

My children and I have been volunteering at Moreland to fill some of our empty shifts. The experience has been a joy for them; they look forward to helping out whenever they can. Being involved in a project as important as this has opened their eyes to how life can be. This has taught them to know the purpose of why they are there to help.

Volunteering at our Summer Meals program is teaching my kids to appreciate the small things in life, as well as reward them with a feeling of self-worth and knowing they are making a difference in people's lives. Volunteering for the summer meals program is life changing; I would recommend this program to anyone.

If you'd be interested in volunteering for the summer meals program next summer, we now have a self-schedule option on our website, which allows people interested in volunteering one-time or on an irregular basis to volunteer with many of our programs. Just click on the "Volunteer" link at the top of the Neighbors, Inc. home page to find out more.

Jenna Fulford, Summer Meals and Transportation Coordinator

Behind the scenes at Summer Meals through a teen's eyes

My personal experience volunteering through Neighbors and serving lunch to the kids and families at Moreland really opened my eyes. There was a great amount of young children and families who didn't have food throughout the summer. There were children and parents who came in off the street from the neighborhood.

I'm going into my sophomore year at Highland Park High School, and we are required to do a project over the summer called "My Personal Project." I took this opportunity to tell my experience and document it while volunteering at Moreland Elementary. I interviewed the kitchen staff, took pictures of the kids, and took photos of the meal we served. I really enjoyed volunteering, handling the food, and interacting with the children. I'm thankful I was given the opportunity to help the children and families. I would definitely do this again.

Jordyn Mitchell, 15, Jenna Fulford's daughter

Thank you, Judy, for everything.
We will miss you.
Judith Kay Johnson
January 28, 1942 January 26, 2015
May 26, 2015

Neighbors Has Wonderful Volunteers, and Judy Johnson Was One of Them

Judy volunteered in the Transportation Program, Front Desk, Clothes Closet, Food Shelf, and Volunteer Department at Neighbors from September 2012 to December 2013, so I had the honor of working with her in several of these programs. Judy not only demonstrated knowledge and professionalism, she also showed dedication, respect and empathy for customers and co-workers.

When I met Judy three years ago, there was an immediate connection between us, as two of her granddaughters are friends of my youngest son. So began our friendship. Many issues to talk about, many experiences to share. We laughed often, and we got sentimental many times, because she told me about the death of her only son and the loss of her husband.

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Despite much pain in her heart, Judy was a strong, beautiful, and always elegant woman. She had beautiful hands, her hair always was so well groomed. I always told her she was a real lady: delicate and stylish. Judy was a grandmother 100 percent, always participating in and accompanying her grandchildren to their school events and sports activities, taking care of them and spoiling them a lot. Her daughters could tell you what a wonderful mother she was, and her friends could tell you what a wonderful friend she was. Judy was diagnosed with cancer in February 2014 and given three to six months to live, and she survived 15 months. I went to see her the day of her diagnosis and for the first time I saw her so fragile and full of fear, but she managed to overcome her therapies and treatments. Her family, as always, was supporting her and giving her everything she needed.



Yudi Montes, staff, and volunteers Judy Johnson and Carol Mladek at our annual volunteer luncheon.

Judy was a woman of great faith which helped her to accept her departure and enjoy her life until the last day. A few days before she left us, we toasted her life with a glass of Chardonnay, our favorite wine. She always maintained her elegance, her beautiful smile and her distinguished personality.

Judy loved cardinals, so every time I see one fly over my backyard I greet it and smile thinking that she is there. Do I sound crazy? Maybe, but it's my way of keeping her alive. I miss her so much! She was a wonderful friend of mine!

Yudi Montes, Front desk supervisor

First Pres Kids Support Food Shelf



First Presbyterian Church in South St. Paul held their annual summer camp the week of July 5th. Along with the usual fun camp activities of singing, playing games and making crafts, campers were also challenged to bring a specific kid-friendly food item each day for the food shelf at Neighbors, Inc. Monday was mac & cheese, Tuesday was cereal, Wednesday was peanut butter and jelly, Thursday was snack, and Friday was toothbrushes and toothpaste. The children donated 24 boxes of mac & cheese, 24 boxes of cereal, 43 jars of peanut butter & jelly, 24 boxes of crackers, granola bars and other snacks, and 81 toothbrushes and toothpaste for the food shelf! Along with the food donations, the children also learned about who the food shelf serves (people just like us) and why it is important for all of us to give. The campers visited the church's community garden, and specifically the Farmer's Market plots that benefit Neighbors, to learn about growing our own food and to see another way to help support the food shelf.



Barbie Hosford Retires After a Decade of Giving and Gratitude

I grew up in Indiana in the early 1950's where my parents owned a grocery store – it was attached to our house. My generous mom would often give people food when they had no money.

As an adult living in South St. Paul, I would pass Neighbors Inc. almost every day going to my job and think someday, I would like to volunteer there because of my fond memories of my mother's habit of helping the hungry.

In 2001, I was laid off of work, so while looking for a part-time job, I went to Neighbors and asked if I could volunteer. Linda Messerich, the volunteer manager in the food shelf, called me to work here. I loved it here and it felt so good to help people.

As time went on I was asked by Bob Adams, a previous executive director, to be on Neighbors board. I told him I felt that I may not be qualified for that, but he said he thought they needed someone who understood how the food shelf ran.

I then became an employee here in 2004 and left my eight-month stint on the board to work with clients at Neighbors. I helped families in crisis for six years before switching to manage the monetary donations, sending tax receipts and thank you notes to donors, and also keeping the database organized. I miss seeing clients, but do see at times we've received donations from previous clients who have used our food shelf. I think this is amazing that they want to give back to us.

After 14 years of volunteering and working for Neighbors, I am retiring on Sept. 30. I plan on spending more time with my husband, family, and especially my grandchildren, of whom I have five and one more on the way. I also hope to travel on the East Coast, take a trip all the way around Lake Superior, and spend more time up at our cabin in Grand Rapids, Minn. I'll see you at the duck race as I will be volunteering there, and may do more volunteering at Neighbors in the future.

Barb Hosford Database Specialist

Interns at Neighbors Learn Skills and Life Lessons

For those I haven't had the pleasure to meet, my name is Doug Lewis, and I am a 21-year-old junior at Macalester College in Saint Paul. I am originally from Duluth, Minnesota, I'm a baseball player at Mac, majoring in English and Economics, and this is my first summer on my own, but fortunately I have found such a nice community at Neighbors.

I'm learning through working in the food shelf, and collecting donations for Neighbors from the area farmers markets, that the range of people we help stretches much further than most think.

I was surprised to see so many of the people shopping at the markets who had already received some form of aid from Neighbors and were familiar with the organization. At the South St. Paul Market, a few folks who had received food from our food shelf were generous and thankful enough to purchase small pieces of produce and donate it right back to us at our booth. Generosity can be contagious. The fact that our organization can kick-start these acts of kindness really makes it a pleasure to come into work each day.

GR.

I have had a lot of internships and jobs over the last few years in mostly finance and management fields, in which I have lost interest somewhat quickly due to the individualistic culture of some of those larger businesses. What draws me to a non-profit organization like Neighbors is the community built around serving others, not just working for personal gain. I find myself more motivated when there are others benefiting from my work, so Neighbors and I fit very well. Thanks to everyone for making this place such a wonderful work environment and I hope you all continue to enjoy your summer.

Doug Lewis





Hey, my name is Brian Borscheid and I am one of the interns working in the food shelf this summer. I am a student at Bethel University of Arden Hills and will be starting my final year this fall.

I have been at Neighbors for almost two months and it's been an incredible experience. I have had the honor of working alongside many all-star volunteers, food shelf shoppers, and staff who have each played a role in making my experience here not only beneficial but also enjoyable.

One of the cool projects I have been given this summer is to go to other food shelves in the metro area and gather information about how the food shelf receives and distributes food to their shoppers, learn different resources or services they offer, and also gain information about their volunteer positions and processes. Every day I spend at Neighbors, Inc. helps me become not just a better worker but also a better teammate. The combination of my assigned project and the experience gained within the food shelf has made me a more well-rounded individual and has also made me more prepared for life after I graduate.

Brian Borscheid

"Life-Changing" Events

A round-up of past and upcoming Neighbors, Inc. fundraising events

Our 2nd Taps & Apps Was a Success!

After an otherwise rainy day, the sky cleared just in time for our happy hour fundraising event, Taps & Apps on June 17. Event attendees enjoyed tasting some of Summit's best offerings with eight different beers available on tap as well as munching on suggested appetizer pairings for each. Approximately 50 attendees took a behind-the-scenes tour of the brewery and learned how Summit makes its delicious beer. And let's not forget about the wonderful silent auction items attendees nabbed as well as how we learned that you can play bean bag toss inside! (Who knew?!) Thanks to everyone who came out. It was great to have a beer with you!

Upcoming Neighbors Events

8th Annual Great Neighbors' Duck Races Saturday, October 3, 2015, 11 a.m.—3 p.m. at the "On the Road Again" South St. Paul Festivities

Thanks to the support of our community, the annual Great Neighbors' Duck Races is Neighbors' most popular event. Watch the excitement as our rubber ducks race down a water chute to compete for prizes for their "adopters."

You can be involved by adopting a duck, sponsoring the event or volunteering. Ducks can be reserved for \$5 each, or a family of five for \$25. Ducks will be available for adoption in advance as well as the day of the event. Races will be run approximately every 15 minutes and prizes will be awarded to the top three finishers of each race. The top three finalists of each race will also advance to the final race and a chance to win a grand prize!

Wyatt was happy to win a prize

last year!

In addition to the races, there will be family fun activities including a duck-themed craft project, new, free games for kids, Delbert the Duck mascot meet-and-greet, and other duck-related games. Make sure to stop by and say hi to us! We'll be on the corner of 9th Avenue and Southview Boulevard.

Proceeds from this event benefit the emergency and supportive assistance programs at Neighbors, Inc. For more information about the Great Neighbors' Duck Races or to download an adoption certificate, visit: www.neighborsmn.org/event/duck-race-2014

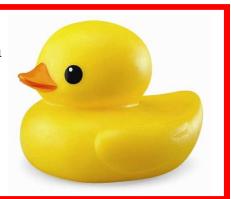


Grand Prizes this year include: a Mall of America Family Gift Basket (passes to many attractions, merchandise and a coupon book—\$462 value; St. Paul Getaway (a gift card to a local restaurant and an overnight stay and breakfast at The Saint Paul Hotel)—\$350 value; and an Xbox 360—\$250-\$350 value. Also awarded in the final race is the "Lazy Duck" prize—the last place finisher wins \$100.

Rubber Ducky Vacation Pictures

If you have taken a rubber duck with you on vacation, please remember to return the photos to Heidi by the end of August.

Thanks! We can't wait to see what adventures the ducks have been on!



Walk To End Hunger

A Thanksgiving Tradition

Thursday, November 26 from 7 to 9 a.m. at the Mall of America

Walking usually creates hunger, but with this event, it helps fill empty stomachs before we go pack our own full of turkey and all the fixings. Along with other organizations in the Twin Cities, Neighbors, Inc. will be participating again this year in the annual Walk to End Hunger at Mall of America on Thanksgiving morning.



We are currently looking for individual walkers and recruiting for team captains. This is a great opportunity for youth groups, church groups, civic groups, businesses and families to volunteer together. There is no age requirement – all are welcome! Participant cost is \$25 for adults and free for children younger than 18. Raise \$100 and you will receive an official "Walk to End Hunger" T-shirt.

For more information, visit: www.walktoendhunger.org. Click on the Neighbors' icon to register or donate. Any funds designated to Neighbors, Inc. will go directly to us.

It's A Wonderful Life: Live Radio Play

Tuesday, December 9 at 7:30 p.m. at The Saint Paul Hotel

Save the date! Tickets are \$30 each. Contact Heidi at 651-306-2154 if you have a large group. Thanks to the generosity of the hotel and cast, all proceeds from this performance go directly to Neighbors, Inc. Purchase tickets online: www.neighborsmn.org/events



Thanks so much for supporting Neighbors, Inc. through our events. Our events are successful because of your involvement. We couldn't do it without you!

Fall Fashion Show

Saturday, Sept. 20 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Luther Memorial Church
315 15th Ave. N. South St. Paul, MN 55075
(651) 455-2400
Tickets are \$7 and can be purchased at the
Luther Memorial Church office
or at Neighbors, Inc.
A salad luncheon, tea, milk and
dessert will be served.
All proceeds go to Neighbors, Inc.



All models will be wearing attire from Neighbors' Clothes Closet.

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