



neighborsnews

Volunteer Couples Feel the Love at Neighbors

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

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During a recent analysis of our volunteers, we were amazed to discover there are 33 married couples who regularly volunteer their time and talents at Neighbors, Inc. That makes up 16% of our ongoing volunteer base.

It shouldn't be a surprise that volunteering and love go together. According to research done by the London School of Economics, people who volunteer are happier, have more empathy and build stronger social bonds – all factors which increase the feeling of love. GozAround, a volunteer opportunity matching web site, encourages couples to volunteer together to strengthen their relationship by: sharing experiences, discovering common values, trying new things together and gaining perspective on life. With all of these positive relationship reinforcements, it's no wonder that so many couples chose to serve others together.



Couples who volunteer together do a variety of tasks to keep Neighbors thriving – things like picking up food donations, assisting clients in the Food Shelf, participating in parades, dressing up as soup can mascots, running events and more! In almost every program and department, a volunteer couple can be found.

- According to Ken, who volunteers an average of 3.5 hours each week with his wife Deb, “Some people say you need time apart, but that’s not always true.”
- “Volunteering together (has been) an excellent way to grow our relationship by experiencing Neighbors together and sharing our thoughts and interactions with the clients, staff and other volunteers,” says Food Shelf volunteers Marlene & Larry.
- “We enjoy doing something together that makes a difference.” – Susan and Larry, Farmer’s Market volunteers

REMINDER: Volunteer Award Nominations Due February 28th

Do you know a volunteer that lives out Neighbors' core values of respect, fairness, compassion and empowerment? Nominate them for a Neighbors' Volunteer Recognition Award, which recognize individuals and groups who go above and beyond during each shift.

Anyone who has given their time to Neighbors in 2018 is eligible (except staff), and anyone can submit a nomination! Forms are available at the office and online at www.neighborsmn.org. This year's award categories include:

- Respect
- Empowerment
- Compassion
- Fairness
- Rookie of the Year
- Outstanding Youth
- Community Partner
- Program of the Year
- Neighbors Legacy Award

Additional information, along with descriptions of each category, can be found on the nomination form. Completed forms can be returned to the Volunteer Department or emailed to dylan@neighborsmn.org by February 28. A committee of volunteers and staff will review all nominations and select the award recipients. Winners will be notified in advance and recognized at the annual volunteer appreciation luncheon in April.

Welcome New Volunteers

Thank you and a warm welcome to our newest ongoing volunteers! We're thrilled you are sharing your time and talents with us.

Clothes Closet Thrift Store

Cynthia Edwards, Crystal Espinoza, Mary Connor, Mary Banaszewski

Dial-A-Ride

Dave Chapman

Food Shelf

Margaret Dixon, Barry Vaughan, Kim and Mark Buckmaster, Corey O'Donnell, Dana Gustafson

Welcome Center

Sandra Priebe, Kathryn Thompson

Groups

Waters Friends & Family, DCALS North



Ongoing Volunteer Opportunities

Clothes Closet Thrift Store

Receive and sort incoming donations, help families shop with free clothing vouchers and help raise money for our emergency services.

Dial-a-Ride

Enjoy flexible scheduling options and build 1-on-1 relationships with residents of northern Dakota County while transporting them to medical & dental appointments.

Food Rescue

Collect food donations from local grocery stores and transport them to the food shelf.

Food Shelf

Assist families as they select food from the shelves; unload, label and sort incoming donations; and keep shelves stocked.

Welcome Center Assistant

Help families register for services; welcome visitors and complete office tasks such as filing, photocopying and answering the phone.

For more information, contact our Volunteer Services Manager at 651-272-1133 or dylan@neighborsmn.org.

Holiday Gift Program

It was our busiest year ever in the Holiday Gift Program! 72 incredible volunteers worked for 2,387 hours to ensure that 1,697 children and 107 seniors received gifts this year. Thank you to everyone that volunteered, donated or adopted this year. Because of you, we were able to make the holidays brighter for many people in our community. Here is just one of their stories:

One couple came to apply for the program directly from the hospital. The mom was very tired, and they explained that she had just had surgery for a chemotherapy port to be put in. They had no idea what their medical costs would be, and the expense of cancer (not to mention the physical and emotional cost) was daunting. In spite of the incredible amount of stress they were under, their faces just lit up when they started talking about their kids. They told their intake worker that their kids love to make art and sing in the church choir, and together they came up with a list of gift requests. On Christmas Day, their children awoke to a pile of presents that had been carefully selected just for them!

Great Neighbors' Food Fight: 2019 Battle of the Burgers

It's not too late to get your card for the annual Great Neighbors Food Fight! Five local restaurants are competing for the coveted title of "Best Burger" – and you can help decide who wins! Plus, all proceeds from card sales benefit Neighbors, Inc.

Cards are \$30 each and can be redeemed for the selected burger at each of the restaurants between February 1st and March 31st. After determining your favorite, visit neighborsmn.org to vote by April 7 and the winner will be announced shortly thereafter. This year's amazing selected burger lineup is:

- **B-52 Burgers & Brew:** The Hangover Burger
- **BLVD Bar + Grille:** BLVD Bourbon Bacon Burger
- **Jersey's Bar & Grill:** Cheesiest Burger in MN

- **Kaposia Club:** Stockyards Burger
- **Mississippi Pub:** All American Burger

Cards are limited, so be sure to get yours soon by visiting neighborsmn.org/events or stopping by the Neighbors office during regular business hours.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors - Anne Ness



Anne Ness has a big heart. She has been supporting Neighbors for the past 12 years and has given a total of 71 gifts over that time! But her passion for our work began over 20 years ago when her grandmother participated in our former Home Visit Program. Those visits made a huge impact on her grandmother and the family still thinks of that time with fondness.

Currently, Anne is a part of our Community Building Circle by making monthly donations through her employer. "My company empowers employees to give back. This inspired me to look into all the ways I could leverage resources to make the biggest impact." Her employer also offers matching dollars for volunteer time spent here at Neighbors. She encourages people to research and utilize all of the resources offered by their employers, and "if you can't do that, look for ways to leverage your time and talents through volunteering."

Anne's reasons for her generosity and support of our work has many facets, however, two bubble to the top. "Stewardship is one of my core values both as a person and an employee." The other reason is that her support helps people locally. "Keep your giving local and you'll get to see the impact and you will feel connected and for me, giving back is the best way to give thanks for what I've been given."

The "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" column features members of the community who give of their resources in a variety of ways. If you'd like to learn more about different giving options, or tell us about someone who should be featured, please contact Beth Skwira, Director of Mission Advancement, at 651-306-2148.

It's Minnesota FoodShare Time!



From February 25 until April 7, Neighbors will once again be participating in the annual Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign. By donating to us during this time, you'll not only ensure that our food shelves are stocked for increased times of need, but you'll also help Neighbors secure funding that food shelves from across the state will be competing for. So that means a donation now goes even further. Here's how you can help:

- Organize a food and/or fund drive
- Host a speaker from Neighbors at a meeting or event
- Donate food or funds

Need supplies for a food and/or fund drive? Call Darcy at 651-306-2149 for:

- Collection barrels or boxes
- Posters / Brochures
- Stickers

Mailing List Updates

Neighbors News is a quarterly publication of Neighbors, Inc. If you are receiving duplicate copies of our newsletter, would like more copies or would like to be removed from the list, please call 651-306-2155 or email brigid@neighborsmn.org.

Note that Neighbors does not sell our mailing list to anyone or any organizations.

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Recipient Name

Street Address

City, ST ZIP Code