



Volunteer Voices

Churches United for the Homeless

September 2013

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A Message from the Volunteer Coordinator

“Did something you saw or experienced while you were here change the way you thought about homelessness?” It’s a question I often ask when volunteers complete a service project. Two answers always seem to make the list: “The stereotypes of homeless people aren’t always true...” and the next most common, “it sure does take a lot to get all this stuff done!”

My name is Gina M. Powers and as the new volunteer coordinator, I must begin this first volunteer newsletter with a heartfelt expression of thanks to the many volunteers that make CUFH successful in providing service and support to our community. Indeed *it does take a lot* to get all this stuff done! Without you, the many hands and feet we call our beloved volunteer force, we simply could not accomplish what we accomplish—every day, week, month. It is your contribution of time and talent that make CUFH the place of welcome and service it has grown to be. I joined the team in May and have been working with many of you while developing relationships to bring even more people and groups into our most powerful workforce—our volunteer workforce.

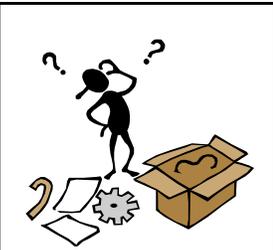
To get a sense of what we’ve accomplished together I’d like to share a few tidbits: *this summer, we have averaged 11,000 meals and snacks per month.* Our emergency shelter has overflowed with as many as *nearly 25% of our guests on temporary excess capacity.* These figures are staggering - the need is great and yet, to a person, the joy and energy of hospitality and love abound. Our serving groups, donations sorters, food pantry workers, generous project contributors, drop in for an hour to see if we need anythingers... all of you are awe inspiring. Here at CUFH it truly does take a village to offer “Shelter and Support in a Spiritual Setting”. So may this be one of many thank yous coming your way. We cannot do what we do without you!

With Joy, Gina

Opportunities to Serve at Churches United

- 7:00-8:30pm nightly—Overflow set-up. Volunteers assist with mat placement and preparing sleeping areas in the community center and assist with snack preparation.
- 6:00-8:30am daily—Morning breakfast and hospitality. Volunteers help set out breakfast and prep the kitchen (wiping counters, etc.) for the day.
- 9:00am-4:00pm daily—Donation/Thrift Store assistant. Volunteers sort, restock, and tidy in preparation for thrift store shoppers. This weekday option is flexible offering time options from 1 hour to longer.

For additional opportunities to serve, contact Gina M. Powers, Volunteer coordinator, at gpowers@churches-united.org or 218.236.0372 ext. 244



Current Needs List

- Diapers Size 5 and 6
- Pull ups/Goodnights
- Sippy Cups
- Boxed Dinners
- Canned Meat
- Shoes for small children

If you or your group would like to host a drive to collect needed items, please contact Steve Anderson, Donations or Gina Powers, Volunteer Coordinator.

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 * “Churches treats us like people *
 * here. That builds us up.” *
 * Wendy Blankenship, former GRH *
 * Resident *
 * * * * *



Thank you Moorhead Lions Club for updating our place space by enlarging it and making it a supersize sandbox! Another thank you to First Congregational UCC Mhd and NDSU for help in prepping the play surface. And last, but certainly far from least, thank you to Heidi Deplazes and Girl Scouts for the finishing with a play space makeover. Families are loving it!

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**“SHELTER AND SUPPORT IN
 A SPIRITUAL SETTING”**

Check us out on the Web!
www.churches-united.org

Don't forget to like us on Facebook

Please Donate Responsibly

We ask donors to “donate responsibly” and recognize there are some items we cannot accept—it actually costs us money to dispose of them properly. This includes Console TV’s and older TV’s without the A/V jacks, large computer monitors, outdated electronics, encyclopedia sets, cribs, and furniture that is broken, torn or stained.

Thank you Churches United Volunteers!

Because of you we are able to carry out our mission of Shelter and Support in a Spiritual Setting. Thank for being such a big part of what we do.



Stan doing one of the many volunteer jobs he takes on every week.

Stan is a member of Zion Lutheran in Towner, ND and a regular visitor at Trinity Lutheran in Moorhead

Why I Serve

Spotlight Volunteer-Stan Markusen

It began as a way to fill the too much free time problem Stan had found himself dealing with since retirement several years ago. Yes, he'd tried projects and thought about a part-time job. The truth was he loved people and wanted to do more. Stan had volunteered with a nursing home and had volunteered plenty at church so when the call came for volunteers to take a shift with FM Sheltering Churches, a collaborative effort to ensure all people have a safe shelter during our cold winter months, he said yes.

During that volunteer experience, a woman came in

visibly shaken. Another woman, a volunteer worker at the church came up alongside her and offered her privacy, comfort and a connection. “It helped and that strengthened me”.

Stan found himself in a position to assist with interviews for the Wilder Report (a Minneapolis based research foundation that does a great deal of research on homelessness). Again he said yes.

He interviewed a woman from a reservation. She'd been abused for over 15 years by her significant other. She'd dealt with drug and alcohol addiction. She was the mother

of 5 children; none of those children in her custody.

The interview was over—and then they talked. “What was so amazing to me”, Stan said, “she wasn't bitter. She was looking forward to beating her chemical dependency issues, and getting her kids back. The strength she demonstrated...well, everybody out there has a story.”

If you ask Stan he'll say “I need this as much as (you) need me. I've always had a passion for service, but this work strengthens me. Being in the trenches and seeing the need, it's deepened my commitment.”