



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

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**Current Needs List**

- Silverware
- Pots and Pans
- Furnishing items
- Canned Meat
- Peanut Butter

**No Tupperware Please  
No Clothing Please**

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.

# Volunteer Voices

Churches United for the Homeless

January 2014

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## The Gift of Service

Sometimes someone says something so simply, humbly and by accident, but so perfectly it captures the essence of what we do. While reflecting on the close of 2013 an email appeared in my inbox. That email from a couple who have volunteered here for a number of years speaks to the community of CUFH in a way I never could. An excerpt from that letter:

*“To explain, a few years back, while helping on Christmas morning, Wade noticed a man in line for the morning meal. It was someone he grew up with. That day was pretty hard for (him). This really shook him up. (He) knew that the man had struggled through the years but seeing him at the shelter really drove home for Wade the needs in our community. Fortunately, I suppose, the gentleman didn’t recognize Wade, so there were no awkward moments for either. However, after that day, Wade has asked about doing gifts on Christmas morning every year that we are home at Christmastime.*



*I guess, above all, it bothers us and calms us simultaneously to see all the children come through the meal line. As a father and mother, it just hits home. If we can brighten a child’s (and their parent’s) face on Christmas morning—we’ll greedily sign up to do so!” Melanie Elsner*

As we move into 2014, may we all be calmed and bothered simultaneously. Let us do what we can to feed and tend those who come seeking shelter and support and let us work together to bring the voice of our brothers and sisters out of the shadows and into the light. Thank you to all of you who served in 2013. The work of 2014 is just beginning and the community center is warm and welcoming. Join us—there is much to do!

Faithfully,

Gina M. Powers, Volunteer Coordinator

## Opportunities to Serve at Churches United

- **Drop-In Sorting Times: Tuesdays 12-4pm and Wednesdays 12-6pm.** This opportunity allows for come as you are able flexibility. Whether you are a student needing service hours or just find yourself with some spare time and a desire to help, come on over to CUFH and let the welcome desk know you are here to volunteer as a Drop-In.
- **Donation Hosts: Saturday and Sunday 12-4pm.** A high impact opportunity for those who have been through CUFH orientation. Greet donors, receive and take donations to the appropriate area of the facility, provide receipts and interact with residents in the family area. **2 hour time slots are available.**
- **Administrative Assistant: Generally during weekdays 9am-5pm with some weekend flexibility.** Put those admin skills to use for a great cause! A high impact opportunity working with our staff providing administrative support in a variety of ways. **2 hour time slots available.**

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

# Partners in Advocacy



Over the next month Minnesota state Rep. Ben Lien has scheduled a number of town hall meetings (schedule below). If you are able, please consider attending one to voice your concerns about housing and homelessness in the FM Area. See advice below from Diane Wray Williams on how to have a successful town hall meeting encounter.

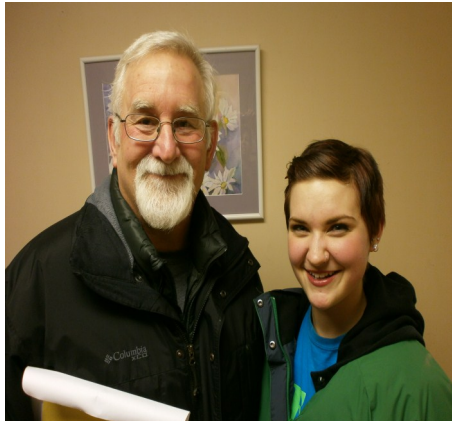
Jan 9	Robert Asp School library	7-8 pm
Jan 11	Hansman Park	10-11 am
Jan 14	Oakport Township Hall (with Sen. Eken)	7-8 pm
Jan 16	Moorhead High School library (with Sen. Eken)	7-8 pm
Jan 18	Riverview Estates Park	10-11 am
Jan 21	Horizon School library	7-8 pm
Jan 23	MSUM Comstock Memorial Union room 214	7-8 pm
Jan 25	Village Green Park	10-11 am
Jan 30	Probstfield Ed. Center board room #224	7-8 pm
Feb 6	Bethesda Lutheran Church	7-8 pm
Feb 13	Reinertson School library classroom	7-8 pm

## Thank You Volunteers: Our work together in 2013

- Meals and snacks served: 121,172  
(an increase of over 18,632)
- Average number of beds filled each night: 84
- Volunteer Hours: 16, 026  
(an increase of over 11,000)

Diane Wray Williams – former State Legislator had the following advice

“This is my advice to our members: Remember, first make sure Rep. Lien meets you, knows what information you are the master of, and establish yourself as his constituent. Give him your contact information. Follow up with anything that comes up that is timely that you can contribute to the process. If you give him your email address he will put you on his list and you will receive periodic reports....very helpful when you are trying to keep up with progress in St. Paul.”



Pictured above: Dr. Steven Grineski and one of his teaching students, Marissa Van Vleet. Steve is a member of First Congregational UCC in Moorhead.



Reading Time!

## Why I Serve

### Spotlight Volunteer– Dr. Steven Grineski

As a little boy, thinking of others was part of the family conversation. The idea that all people are needed and created to help each other was instilled by Steve Grineski’s mother and he carries that into the way he lives his life.

Steve has been a regular part of the CUFH landscape for well over a year now. He has led a major build—*cardboard dinosaurs*. He has connected with kids and parents. He has reached out to the community and created a way for families to access the public library. He comes to the shelter because “it’s the right thing to do”. He comes because he cares.

So when the professor of Education envisioned an opportunity to expose the future teachers he encountered in his classroom in a way that expanded their understanding of the various ways children experience life and some of the obstacles faced by children living in poverty or in a

homeless situation, he asked us the question—“Is there more that we can do?”

Because we knew Steve so well and had built such a strong relationship with him, it was easy to say ‘yes, there is more you can do’. Now, each week, students from Dr. Grineski’s class come to CUFH and work with the children living in our shelter. They help with homework and other enrichment activities. Steve recalls a 1st grader with whom he made a book based on a story the boy was telling. The story was compelling; a tale of an adventure. “How wonderful and talented ... “

Steve continues, “when someone has a problem, society thinks that’s who they are. But the children—they are multidimensional, ever changing and unfinished. They are not victims. Children are a group in our nation who are vulnerable. These will be the adults of tomorrow; we must do our best for them.”

With a personal goal of living in a socially just way, Steve has found two things must co-occur. Helping people when they need it is one; just as important is thinking about who and what you can influence to make things better and acting. “Churches gives me the opportunity to do that.”

On days when he’s worked a long day and even after a quick bite of supper he finds himself a bit tired, coming to the shelter gives him an opportunity to consider his own privilege. That is a gift he says, “it gets me thinking who and what do we value.” And then he settles back into what he calls the “wonderfulness” of playing checkers and talking about what that particular young person did that particular day.

Once, a staff person said to Steve as he was passing by, ‘thanks for loving our kids!’ “It’s really easy” said Steve.

Check us out on the Web!  
[www.churches-united.org](http://www.churches-united.org)

Don’t forget to like us on Facebook