What’s New at Stepping Stones?

Strategic Planning! Doesn’t that sound exciting? Wait... please keep reading! As preparation we conducted some surveys to learn how the community, our supporters, volunteers, and clients feel we’re doing. Thank you to all who participated. We learned so much and want to share some highlights with you.—

What Pantry Clients Said

Food Pantry clients feel good about their experience using the pantry overall.

- 82% said they eat more healthy food when they use the pantry
- 85% said they eat more fruits and vegetables
- 90% said using the pantry leaves more money available for other monthly expenses

Customer responses also remind us of the reality of the challenges people face.

- 62% of respondents said they sometimes have to skip meals due to lack of food
- 71% say the food they receive per visit lasts 4 days or less

The most frequent comment in answer to the question: ‘What changes would make using the food pantry better?’ was “more food”. Especially more fruits and vegetables, more meat, more variety, and more personal care products.

Stepping Stones’ annual food budget is over $70,000. Most of the food we purchase is from the Feed My People Food Bank in Eau Claire (part of the Feeding America network). By using the food bank we get 10 times the amount of food per dollar than if we had to purchase at retail costs. We also receive government commodity food, donated food, and ‘food rescue’ food—items that are seasonal or close to date but still perfectly good.

More Food Needed

Each year we distribute close to 1 million pounds of food through the pantry and its programs—Project SAM (Share A Meal—weekend kids meals), Senior Commodity Food Boxes, our remote pantries at rural low income senior housing sites, supplemental food to Meals on Wheels recipients, and free produce during the harvest season to anyone in need.

But it’s still not enough. The primary reasons pantry customers gave for using the pantry are:
1) living on a low fixed income
2) having a disability
3) that their expenses, like rent, are too high and
4) that they are working but their wages are too low

As we plan for the coming years, we will no doubt strategize about ways to procure and distribute more food to meet more of the need. And to provide more shelter space and support services, too! We know this will require more contributions and more volunteers.

Fortunately the other surveys showed that donors strongly agree that Stepping Stones is a good steward of their donated funds and volunteers report being very satisfied and that they would recommend that others volunteer at Stepping Stones!

More funding and more volunteers will equal more food and shelter for people in need of a ‘stepping stone’ to get back on their feet.

The Help Means A Lot

In response to the question: ‘In what ways does the food pantry help you and your family?’, one person wrote: “It reassures me that I’m not alone and that people do care and are here to help me.” That’s exactly what we’re here for. It’s not really ‘new’—we’ve been around 30+ years and counting. But it’s so necessary. And only possible because of the tremendous support we receive from those who care. Thank you!
You are cordially invited to
The Stepping Stones’ Garden Tour!
Saturday, June 23rd, 9:00 am—2:00 pm

This year’s gardens:
♦ Randy “Putter” & Tricia Bauer, 470th Ave.
♦ Dennis & Antoinette Ciesielski, 16th Ave.
♦ Doug & Nancy Blum Cumming, Wilson Ct.
♦ Swen & Nancy Erickson, North Shore Circle
♦ Loxi & Steve Smythe, 490th Ave.

Tickets—$15, available at:
* Stepping Stones’ Office
* Bobolink Nursery
* Bookends on Main
* Dick’s Fresh Market
* Kyle’s IGA Market, Colfax
* Lakeview Floral & Gifts
* La dee dah
* Season’s Harvest Greenhouse
* On site at all gardens on the tour on the 23rd

Tickets may also be purchased on-line at www.steppingstonesdc.org

Tour at your convenience, rain or shine. Volunteers & gardeners will be on site to answer questions. Maps are provided with tickets and routes are marked. Start at any garden, see as many as you choose.

Also lots of great door prizes and a Silent Auction!

View and bid on silent auction items at the gardens including a stone turtle and other lawn ornaments, a copper trellis, a patio set, artwork, a rain barrel, log cabin bird feeder, compost, tree trimming, jewelry, a Samsung tablet, gift certificates & gift baskets, and more!

2018 Garden Tour sponsors to date are listed to the right. Thank you so much to the sponsors, gardeners, volunteers, and all who attend and especially to the wonderful Garden Tour Committee: Cyndi Greening, Jan Harvey, Janice Kohnke, Tammy Pellet, Jane Redig, Denise Skinner, and Sharon Tripp.

Proceeds benefit Stepping Stones’ Food Pantry, Shelters, & Community Connections Program.

A Few of the Silent Auction Items Available on the Tour
Garden Tour Sponsors

Iris

Anonymous
Anthem
Checker Flag Farms-Marilyn Fanetti
Dennis & Antoinette Ciesielski
Janice Coker in memory of Charles Coker
Sherry & John Cole
Greg & Jane Corning in memory of Grandma Elaine Corning
Expert Tree Service & Science
Mame Gale
Roger & Sue Jenrich
Lisa & Ted Ludwig
Mayo Clinic Health System
Northern Wisconsin Hosta Society
Jerry & Kim Porter
Ron & Luanne Prochnow
Shefchik Builders
Bill, Jennie, & Tori Stewart in memory of Shirley K. Stewart
The Smolarek Family
Dave & Amy Whelan
John M. Williams & Jane Redig

Lilly

5 Star Dairy, LLC
Bobolink Nursery
Bremer Bank
CliftonLarsonAllen
Jan Harvey
Hybben Photography
Junction Liquor/Dave Micek in memory of Anne Micek
Knights of Columbus - Menomonie
Howard & Charlotte Lee
Diane Morehouse
Lynn & Dick Nehring in memory of Shirley K. Stewart
Robert Giede Design
Skinner Law Firm, LLC
Martha Stewart
John Thomas & Kathy Ruggles
Walmart Distribution Center
Charles & Kathleen Weber

Trillium

Katherine Dutton
& Jeanne Foley
Dick & Pat Edwards
Toby & Marian Ellison
Fairmount Santral
Sandy Haesly
Pinckney & Susan Hall in memory of Dan Riordan
Bill & Janice Kohnke
Greg & Colleen Lentz
Diane Light
& Kathleen Remund
Menomonie Ace Hardware
Ruth Morey
Olson Funeral Home
Ross D. Olson - Bremer Investment Services
Dave & Tammy Pellet
Red Cedar Landscape
Rod & Trudy Smeltzer
State Farm - Jackie Hunt Agency
Tangles Hair Studio
Jim & Patti Walker
WESTconsin Credit Union
Xcel Energy

Violet

Tom & Barb Johnson
Leslie Koepke in memory of Russell Lasocki
Kyle’s IGA Market
La dee dah
Leipnitz Dental Clinic
MU Barn Quilts
Northtown Ford
Mark Palma
Peoples State Bank
Helen & Bob Redlich
Season’s Harvest
Carol & Dale Seppa
Tanglewood Greens
Wagner Law, LLC
Terrence & Elizabeth Witt
Continued on the Insert

Stepping Stones Board of Directors

Kris Korpela, President
Tim Eidon, Vice President
Diane Morehouse, Treasurer
Dave Williams, Secretary
Eric Atkinson
Michelle Becker
Lora Benrud
Sara Carstens
Andy Felton
David Fly
Jay Ivens
Mark Kalscheur
Michelle Kloser
Glendy Thompson
Heather Wigdahl

Staff

Katherine Dutton
Executive Director
Kris Pawlowski
Assistant Director & Food Pantry Coordinator
Heidi Hooten
Stepping Stones Shelter Program Coordinator
Jill Seichter
Community Connections Program Coordinator
Cyndi Greening
Development & Communications Specialist
Pang Kou Yang
Administrative Assistant
Jim Welch
Food Pantry Assistant & Warehouse Coordinator
Henry Amberson
Maintenance & Warehouse Coordinator

Save the Date!

5K Walk/Run
Sat., Sept. 29
9 am, Red Cedar Trail
Followed by a yummy Chili Feed!

STEP UP TO HUNGER!
Look Inside to See How We’re Stepping Up Together!

Tickets available at Stepping Stones and online at www.steppingstonesdc.org

Saturday, June 23rd, 2018 • 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. • Rain or Shine!

Stepping Stones Garden Tour (see page 2 for details)

Tour 5 beautiful Dunn County Gardens on the 17th Annual Garden Tour