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We’ve had a scare with the federal government shutdown. Will people get their March FoodShare benefits? Hopefully, but it’s not definite yet. If not, that could dramatically affect the number of people needing to use food pantries and the amount of food we need to distribute.

Many people receiving FoodShare (formerly called Food Stamps) already depend on the pantry because their benefits aren’t enough. Still, to miss a month of FoodShare, or longer, would really leave people hurting.

FoodShare Realities
• Wisconsin has the 6th lowest benefit rate in the country. For one person the monthly amount can be as low as $16.00.
• 87% of households receiving FoodShare have children in the household, someone with a disability, or an elderly person.
• FoodShare benefits cannot be used for personal care items including soap, shampoo, toothpaste, diapers, not even toilet paper!

Struggling to Provide
Just as we struggle at my house to keep our bird feeders filled because of all the traffic so, too, do we struggle at Stepping Stones to keep the pantry shelves full. Pantry use has remained steady even as unemployment rates go down because so many of the jobs are low wage.

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Photos by Jeanne Foley
Prints of some of Jeanne’s nature photos will be available at the Empty Bowls Silent Auction, Sat., 3/2.
There’s Still Time
...to help us get ready for Empty Bowls!

Sat. 3/2/19, 11 am-2 pm, MHS

You can:
• Paint Bowls or Make Placemats
  (great group activities for youth or adults)
• Make Soup or Baked Goods
• Become a Sponsor
• Contribute to the Silent Auction
• Volunteer to Help Set-Up
• Volunteer at the Event

For more information contact Kris Pawlowski at Stepping Stones, 715-235-2920, foodpantry@steppingstonesdc.org

A Bowl of Soup = A Bowl of Love!

Board News
New & Outgoing Members & A New Strategic Plan

We are so pleased to welcome Nina Koch, Retired Educator, and Jerry Porter, Retired 3M Engineering Manager to the Stepping Stones Board of Directors. Nina and Jerry may be retired but they bring lots of great energy!

Thanks also to outgoing board members Lora Benrud and David Williams, both of whom served two three year terms and brought a wealth of skills and experience. We also thank David Fly who had a short tenure due to new work obligations. We’re grateful as well as for the continuing members as listed in the sidebar on p. 3.

The Board recently completed a new Strategic Plan. They have identified many tactics to help accomplish these strategies, but the basic plan is very straightforward. We can do this, right? Yes, with your help!

Goal 1: Increase community awareness and knowledge of community needs related to hunger, homelessness, and other support services Stepping Stones provides.

Strategies 1) Develop a robust communication plan to tell the full story about Stepping Stones—programs, services, volunteers 2) Offer educational opportunities for the community and build relationships with local, state and federal government

Goal 2: Grow Stepping Stones programs to better serve more people.

Strategies 1) Create a plan to get more food out to the community, esp. rural Dunn County, and source more in-kind food donations 2) Increase our shelter capacity or help the community find other ways to provide more nights of shelter year-round

Goal 3: Ensure Continuity of Operations

Strategies 1) Maintain and expand funding 2) Maintain and expand the volunteer base

Rock the Riverfront!

This year Stepping Stones has been chosen as one of the beneficiaries of Royal Credit Union’s 25th annual charity classic, Rock the Riverfront.

Saturday, June 22nd
Phoenix Park, Eau Claire
8 am start for the 10k
10 am start for 2 mile team walk

Register at: www.rcu.org/event/rock-the-riverfront

Early bird registration prices through May 12th. All registered participants receive a free shirt, meal ticket, and charity vote. For the 2 mile walk the team name is Stepping Stones, team captain is Katherine Dutton.

ACTIVITIES
• Rock Hunt: your chance to win $500!
• Youth races
• Inflatables, dunk tank, face-painting, cash grab booth
• Food Trucks: a variety of trucks including healthy options
• Live music!

We hope you can join us but, if not, you can still vote at the website above! Proceeds from the event will go to: Stepping Stones, Eau Claire Public Schools Foundation, & The Open Door Clinic in Chippewa Falls. This year Stepping Stones will benefit, but YOU get to choose the big winner!

Get one free vote with race registration. Additional votes can be purchased for only $2 to help Stepping Stones get the most proceeds: 1st place - $15,000, 2nd place - $7,500, 3rd place - $5,000.

VOTE EARLY & VOTE OFTEN — it’s encouraged in this election! 😊

Thrivent Members Please Note

2018 Choice Dollars® expire March 31, 2019. Don’t miss this opportunity to designate yours to Stepping Stones to help support the food pantry and shelters. Go to thrivent.com/thriventchoice or call 1-800-847-4836 and say “Thrivent Choice” after the prompt. Thank you to all who have already designated Choice Dollars to Stepping Stones! Also, if you’re looking for projects for an Action Team let us know. We have ideas!

Get Your Taxes Done & Do Good at the Same Time

Through the H & R Block Nonprofit Referral Program, for every new client who mentions being referred by Stepping Stones, H & R Block will contribute $20 to us. Their local office is at Red Cedar Plaza, 2321 Hwy 25 N, Menomonie, 715-235-0021.

It’s Cold Outside but not at Winter Haven!

Thank goodness it’s warm inside at Stepping Stones’ Winter Haven shelter. Winter Haven has been very busy with all beds full almost every night. The need is so great.

Thanks to all the volunteer hosts who make it possible for us to shelter more people during the coldest months. Winter Haven is open through March and volunteer spots are still available. Contact Jill at 715-235-2920 or communityconnect@steppingstonesdc.org

Special thanks to these churches who have committed to a week of coverage or provided volunteers to fill regular shifts: Cedarbrook, First Congregational, Love Church, Our Savior’s, and St. Joseph’s.

Summer is Coming!

Mark your calendar for Stepping Stones’ Annual Garden Tour Saturday 9 am – 2 pm June 29, 2019
There’s Still Time ...to help us get ready for Empty Bowls!
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Stepping Stones
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Kris Korpela, President
Tim Eiden, Vice President
Diane Morehouse, Secretary
Mark Kalscheur, Secretary
Eric Atkinson
Michelle Becker
Sara Carstens
Andy Felton
Jay Ivens
Michelle Kloser
Nina Koch
Jerry Porter
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
Barbara Lyon
Part-time Development & Communications Specialist
Pang Kou Yang
Administrative Assistant
Henry Amberson
Part-time Maintenance & Warehouse Manager
Jim Car
Part-time Maintenance & Warehouse Manager

Discount Cards — Now only $5!
Get off all and other great savings at many local restaurants and businesses! Good through August, cards are now half off. Stop by the Stepping Stones’ office to purchase or order online at: www.steppingstonesdc.org

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