

Winter  
2024

# Stepping Up

"People helping people strengthen the Dunn County community by providing food, shelter and support."



## Stepping Stones

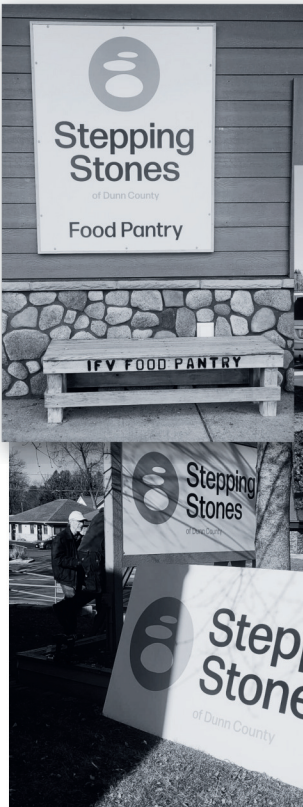
of Dunn County



# Stepping Stones

of Dunn County

*New Logo. Same Dedication*



Change is a symbol of progress. It signifies a willingness to reassess our strategies, improve our services, and respond to the evolving needs of our community.

"But it's just a new logo," they said.

But it's not *just* a new logo. It's not *just* a new homeless shelter. It's not *just* a new sign on Stout Road or in front of our food pantry.

It shows that Stepping Stones is here to stay. We are a staple in this community because you have made us one.

As we move forward with our updated visual identity, we are excited for the possibilities it holds for our continued impact. Thank you for being an essential part of our organization. We are excited to embark on this new chapter with you, because, yes it is a new logo, but it's the same dedication.

*A note from Assistant Director, Dana Neil*



### Board of Directors

- Barbara Fagan, President
- Jerry Porter, Vice President
- Nichole Manson, Secretary
- George Brewe, Treasurer
- Bev Deyo-Svendsen
- Kate Kramschuster
- Maggie Fisher
- Matt Swenson
- Nina Koch
- Stacy Nelson
- Paul Schwartz
- Rod Smeltzer
- Rachael Taylor
- Wendy Slaback

### Staff

Padraig Gallagher  
*Executive Director*

Dana Neil  
*Assistant Director*

Mai Nou Hang  
*Admin Assistant*

Henry Amberson  
*Maintenance Manager*

Pantry Team  
 Angela Wolf, *Pantry Manager*  
 Amanda Davis  
 Jon Oakland  
 Kris Pawlowski  
 Mike Racette

Shelter Team  
 Heidi Hooten, *Shelter Manager*  
 Katlynn Pichler  
 Brit Blankenheim  
 Katie Jo Walker  
 Rochelle Weber  
 Drayden Schrader  
 Chianti Gordon  
 Troy Dawson

Autumn Metoxen  
*Community Connections Manager*

AmeriCorp Members  
 Claudia La Seure  
 Kaleb Holley  
 Cassandra Schnulle  
 Quinn Waznik

Stepping Stones Volunteers!

### Thank you to our Outgoing Board Members!

Mark  
Kalscheur

Tara  
Bergeson



Michelle  
Kloser

Loren  
Barker

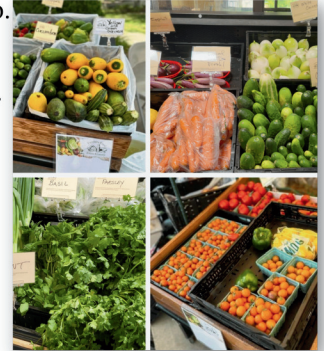
*"After ten years of serving as the Food Pantry Manager, I have decided to retire {in March}. My time here at Stepping Stones has been the best job I have ever had, and I will miss it and all the great people I work with!"*

## Pantry

Kris Pawlowski,  
Pantry Consultant



2023 had the food pantry staff and volunteers showing us how quickly they could adapt to change! The excitement of the summer-long construction of Cairn House meant dealing with unpredictable parking for our pantry shoppers. We dusted off our COVID curbside model and seamlessly continued operations. Now, we are operating under a hybrid model of inside shopping and curbside pickup. Our pantry provided food to 1,579 households in Dunn County, and averaged 475 kids a week in our Project SAM (weekend kids meals). Currently, we are distributing more than 550 SAM bags a week - an all-time high! Our pantry program continues to meet the needs of our communities.



**1,071**  
**Households**

signed up for pantry  
(in-person and pop-up)



**14,187**  
**SAM Bags**

packed and delivered  
during the Spring 2023 and  
Fall 2023 school year



**179,094**  
**Pounds**

of food donated from  
community members and  
organizations



**4,888**  
**Individuals**

served thru  
pantry and pop-  
ups

\*all statistics reflect 2023



## Shelter

Heidi Hooten,  
Shelter Manager

*"I have heard from a handful of past clients that they thought I was retired. I think it's the gray hair? I'm still alive and kicking."*

2023 was a wild ride! The Shelter Staff wound up a very active motel program just in time for the opening of Cairn House. We continue to have a long waitlist for all the shelters, but overall, the shelters are going well. Serving food to 20 people at Cairn House was mind-boggling at first, but the various Church Tables have been providing dinners Mon. - Thur. and volunteers have been signing up to serve food Fri. - Sun nights. The shelter itself with its individual rooms and bathrooms has been a big hit. The guests at the shelter have been a true joy – a mingling of creative and interesting folks, very respectful and helpful around the shelter. Not a single day goes by that I don't learn something new or laugh. I walked in the shelter at the crack of dawn on a very cold and gray day and told the folks sitting there that if I didn't love them so much I wasn't sure I would have been able to get out of bed. To a one, they all turned to me and said "We love you too." How great is this job? You could get that kind of response too if you wanted to volunteer!



**186**  
**Households**

sheltered  
(apartments, Cairn House &  
hotels)



**57**  
**Children**

sheltered  
(apartments & hotels)



**734**  
**Households**

seeking shelter



**884**  
**Referrals**

looking for services (Shelter,  
Rental Assistance, Permanent  
Housing)



**1,628**  
**Calls**

Case Management for non-  
residents

\*all statistics reflect 2023



It's been a busy, crazy 2023, but I've loved every second of being here at Stepping Stones! We partnered with WestCap on a new Homeless Prevention program. Through this program, we were able to help 4 at-risk families and individuals transition into stable and secure housing. For the next two years, they will remain in this program, learning the skills needed to maintain housing.

We have hit a higher number of volunteer hours this year than we ever have, and it wouldn't be done without the 200+ active volunteers we currently have!



**12,435 = 6**

**Volunteer Hours**

**Full-Time Employees**

**912**

**Group Project & Senior Delivery Hours**

*"Although I've only been here for the past 8 months, I've gotten to know so many of the volunteers and how crucial their part is in keeping Stepping Stones alive and moving!"*

## Community Connections

Autumn Metoxen,  
Community Connections Manager



## From the Director's Chair

It is always important to share our service numbers with you. They tell a story of community-level need and a community-level response to meet that need. In 2023, our Pantry Program provided food to 4,888 of your neighbors. That's right, one-in-ten people in Dunn County received food through Stepping Stones and more than half of the recipients of this nutrition were seniors, or children. We also ended the year distributing meal bags through area schools to more than 500 children each week through our Share-A-Meal program.

During the same year, Cairn House was completed. Its 20 rooms, added to our five family-focused shelter apartments, means that Stepping Stones will provide approximately 12,000 shelter-nights in 2024. Twelve-thousand times, heads will hit pillows in warmth and safety. Twelve-thousand times, an individual will wake-up to a day being supported in finding stability and a better situation.

The Community Connections program has expanded, as well. In 2023, we added a homelessness prevention program, pairing case-management and direct assistance to aid those at risk of losing stable housing. Additionally, our volunteers provided 912 hours of projects and home visits to low-income seniors. This includes food deliveries and welfare check-ins, combating isolation and difficulties making ends-meet for these vulnerable individuals.

Going into 2024, Stepping Stones needs more involvement from you, your friends and your family. We need your donations to break-even as hundreds-of-thousands of dollars in government grants are no-longer available to our programs. We need you to volunteer on a regular basis, as these same programs face growing need while stalwart contributors reduce their hours due to age and health. We need you to give to your neighbors because of two things: you care and you can.

Please help us to continue our important work.  
More-accurately, please contribute and make the work your own.



Padraig Gallagher, Executive Director



## Welcome New Board Members!



**GEORGE BREWE** is the Market President and Business Banker for Bremer Bank in Menomonie Wisconsin. He is a graduate of UW-Stout and has been a Menomonie resident for the past 39 years. George is active with several other community and non-profit organizations. When not working or volunteering, George enjoys traveling, camping, racing, and boating. He and his wife Jane have two grown children.

**STACY NELSON** is the Director of Food & Nutrition Services at the School District of the Menomonie Area. Different life experiences influenced her to pursue her Bachelors of Science in Dietetics at UW-Stout and she has been in the Menomonie area since relocating in 2011. She is a licensed Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and her Masters in Professional Practice in Dietetics '21. Stacy resides with her family and stays busy keeping up with her active children, dogs and cat. She enjoys reading, traveling, and continuing to learn and grow.



**MATT SWENSON** is the IT Operations Supervisor at WESTconsin Credit Union. He grew up attending the Boyceville school system then later graduated from UW-Stout with a BS in Technology Education (2002). He is still living in his hometown of Boyceville (44 years) and operating a small business with his wife, Julie. Matt and Julie work on metal art, landscaping, home improvements, and gardening (veggies and flowers) for fun.

**RACHAEL TAYLOR** is a Physician Assistant at Mayo Clinic Red Cedar, and has been with Mayo since 2016. She works mostly in Family Medicine, but also spends time in the Urgent Care and PreOperative Exam departments. She grew up in Spencer, Wisconsin and attended Marquette University for undergraduate and graduate degrees. Outside of work, she enjoys hiking with her children, both human and canine. She is also an avid reader and member of the Chippewa Valley Book Festival Authors and Events Committee.





**Saturday, April 6th**  
**Menomonie High School | 11am - 2pm**  
*\$10/ticket for all-you-can-eat soup!*  
*Quilt Raffles | Online Auction | Live Music*



**Saturday, November 9th | TBD**

Introducing our new fundraising event - **Give Me Shelter!**  
 Teams will raise funds to "purchase" items to survive outside during a homeless simulation night.  
 Stay tuned for more information from our committee!



**Saturday, July 6th | Wilson Park**

**Featuring  
 UnCommon Denominator**

This community event celebrates the good work being done. Join us for music, food trucks, and beverages before the Menomonie Chamber Fireworks!

Keep up-to-date on everything Stepping Stones and our events.



Stepping Stones of Dunn County

@steppingstones.dc

www.steppingstonesdc.org

Scan to donate today

*For event information or sponsorship opportunities, contact Dana Neil.*

*Dana Neil, Assistant Director*

*Look Inside to See How We're Stepping Up Together!*

Or Current Resident



1602 Stout Rd | Menomonie, WI 54751  
 715.235.2920 | www.steppingstonesdc.org  
 development@steppingstonesdc.org

