

# e-Volunteer Newsletter

## Community Thread

DECEMBER, 2009

### Holiday Bureau— Christmas Connection

#### Special points of interest:

- A tradition of caring - Holiday Bureau
- Community Thread Holiday Schedule
- The Story- Sign me up!

e-Volunteer  
Newsletter

is a monthly  
newsletter for  
individuals  
interested in  
volunteering,  
supporting their  
community —  
and  
making a positive  
impact on those  
around them.

“Connecting people, enriching lives” is Community Thread’s mission, and the Holiday Bureau exemplifies this theme. Every year since 1967, the Holiday Bureau has connected sponsors with participants needing food and gifts at Christmas.

For over forty years, the community has generously supported the Holiday Bureau. This year, the number of participants requesting help has dramatically increased, and additional sponsors are needed to join those who have given so generously for decades.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church has sponsored families since 1980 with a “giving tree” organized initially by Mary Trenda and the late Margaret Carlson. Support has doubled in the past 29 years, and the church plans to sponsor 8 families this year. In addition to food and gifts, the ladies of this church make quilts for each of their families. One of Mary’s memorable moments involved delivering food and gifts to a family where the little girls were barefoot, the home had no living room furniture except a table, and the children were thrilled with the groceries. Mary observed that poverty may not be visible, but it is definitely present in our county.

Another outstanding volunteer, Connie Paulson, has sponsored a family each holiday season for about 20 years. In addition, she volunteers with the Holiday Bureau during Registration Week when participants sign up for the Holiday Bureau. Some participants request only household basics like laundry soap and Kleenex, although they are encouraged to request a small gift for themselves. Explaining her dedication, Connie simply states “This is what Christmas is about”.

Other community organizations also support the Holiday Bureau. The Elks have been a program sponsor for the past 8-10 years and the Stillwater Public Library children’s department sponsors a book drive. The Afton-Lakeland Adventure Club, Withrow Adventure Club and the Chelakoot Bow Hunters gather toys for our efforts. Girl Scout troops cut snowflakes and shop for gifts. In addition, many other families and churches sponsor, donate or volunteer.

Participants visit with the Holiday Bureau to complete “wish lists” during Registration Week, and allow sponsors to deliver the food

and gifts to their homes, providing a personal connection for everyone involved. Participants include families with children, senior citizens and adults with disabilities who live within the Stillwater Area School District.

Sponsors specify the type of participant they would like to “adopt” (low-income senior, disabled adult or family). They may also indicate the size of family they prefer. Suggested donations are \$25 for gifts and \$10 for food per individual participant. Once the participant and sponsor are matched, information is provided for the sponsor to deliver the gifts and food prior to December 21, 2009. Financial donations of any amount and/or unwrapped gifts may also be given directly to the Holiday Bureau. All gifts must be new.

To ensure timely matching and shopping Holiday Bureau is seeking sponsors and donations from now until Monday, December 7, 2009— but the needs continue right until Christmas Day.

For further information contact the Holiday Bureau at [www.communitythreadmn.org](http://www.communitythreadmn.org), or by email at [holidaybureau@communitythreadmn.org](mailto:holidaybureau@communitythreadmn.org) or by telephone at 651.439.7434 x 213.

- Lisa Hoelscher, Oak Park Heights resident and Holiday Bureau volunteer.

### Announcements

The negative effects of the economy have made it necessary for Community Thread to temporarily close from December 24<sup>th</sup> through January 3<sup>rd</sup>. Community Thread will be open after the holidays on January 4<sup>th</sup> 2010.

While the board and staff of Community Thread have done a wonderful job of conserving resources and reducing expenses, those cost saving measures have not kept pace with the reduction in revenue. Two sources of revenue in particular have created a gap for Community Thread this year. One of our grant sources cut funding by \$25,000. And one of our contracts to provide

services to Washington County in transportation has been reduced by more than 75%.

In order to begin a new fiscal year on January 1, 2010 as financially healthy as possible, Community Thread will close the building between the Christmas and New Year Holidays. This will allow us to save energy costs and personnel expenses without disrupting programming. The Board of Directors and I believe that by doing this we can begin a new year without needing to make more severe or drastic cuts to programs, services, or staff. Our desire is to

to preserve these resources for you!

I am always open to your ideas and suggestions for making Community Thread more financially independent and healthy.

I am sorry for any inconvenience the building closure may cause you. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me directly at (651) 439-7434.

If you are in need of assistance during this time, please call 211, the United Way’s First Call for Help. Valerie Jones, Executive Director, Community Thread.



## community thread

Connecting People. Enriching Lives

Lisa Thalacker, Volunteer Center Program Director  
Robin Halloum, Volunteer Center Program Coordinator

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### Many More Online Volunteer

#### Opportunities Available!

Simply go to:

[Communitythreadmn.org](http://Communitythreadmn.org)



Click on [1-800 Volunteer.org](http://1-800 Volunteer.org) and you will be guided through the login procedure. *Thank you for your*

**Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love. -Hamilton Wright Mabie**

**Tutor- Stillwater.** Can you help? Stillwater Rutherford Elementary school is looking for adults to help children who are struggling to read. The commitment would be 1 to 2 days a week reading to third and fourth grade children. Contact Stacy Maddux, teacher, at 651.361.6400, for more information.

**Application Assistant—Cottage Grove.** Are you looking for an opportunity that will make an impact in the New Year? The food shelf in Cottage Grove is in need of a volunteer to assist clients with paperwork needed for a recipient to enroll to use food shelf services. Tuesdays, 10:00—6:00, 2—4 hours, flexible. Contact John Jackson at East Metro Women’s Council at 651.459.4826 or by email at [jsjackson@emwc.org](mailto:jsjackson@emwc.org).

**Classroom Visitor – Blaine.** Do you have something about your cultural heritage or family history to share in a classroom setting? Head Start of Anoka County would love to have you come to their classroom! For more information contact Kishwar Bayunus at 763.783.4359 .

**Secretary – Stillwater.** Help Girl Scout Leadership continue to connect with others and take action to make the world a better place by providing them with administrative support. Time commitment is approximately 2-4 hours per month. For more information contact Sara Cash at 651-251-1276 or e-mail her at [sara.cash@girlscoutsrv.org](mailto:sara.cash@girlscoutsrv.org).

**Concierge Desk – Osceola.** Do you enjoy helping people in a hospital environment? Osceola Medical Center could use your help at the Concierge’s Desk. For more information contact Sara Cutts at 715.294.5757.

**Health Information Assistant— Stillwater.** Courage St. Croix is looking for volunteers with work experience in a medical setting to sort and file documents, prepare charts and provide other clerical support. Have the satisfaction of helping without direct client contact. For more information contact Lisa Gacek, Volunteer Coordinator, at 651.351.2337 or e-mail her at [lisa.gacek@couragecenter.org](mailto:lisa.gacek@couragecenter.org)

## Volunteering—The Story

### Boutwells Landing—Debra Campbell, Director of Volunteer Services

Volunteerism has been a hallmark of Presbyterian Homes and Services since its beginning more than 50 years ago.

No where is that more evident than at Boutwells Landing, its senior living community in Oak Park Heights. Nearly 500 volunteers enrich the lives of Boutwells’ residents at the same time they are building community in the greater St. Croix Valley.

Donations collected by volunteers who created a Social Justice Committee filled the Valley Outreach food shelves

with almost \$75,000 worth of food for needy families. Later, those same volunteers’ gathered truckloads of gently used clothing for Dawn’s Closet, a clothing assistance venture managed by Valley Outreach. More than 50 volunteers worked over a two year period to restore and furnish the McKean School, a one room school house from 1864 that now sits on the Boutwells grounds. Still more volunteers are working with Stillwater Public Schools to develop curriculum and programs to offer in the old “new” school.

On the Boutwells campus, volunteers are busy in diverse areas such as the full-service Library, movie theater,

Market, Beauty Salon, pet visits, gardening and Welcome Desk. Task Forces and Advisory Groups such as Dining Advisory, Education Committee, Energy Savings and Spiritual Life are all spearheaded by volunteers. Volunteer programs are taking shape in the new Gables Care Center, which opened this spring. In total, volunteers contributed an astonishing 39,315 hours of service to the Boutwells Landing community last year.

If you would like to be a part of this exciting and vibrant community, please contact me at 651.275.5023 or e-mail me at [dcampbell@preshomes.org](mailto:dcampbell@preshomes.org).