



**FLAT RIVER  
OUTREACH  
MINISTRIES**

**Fall 2018**

## FROM the Heart News

On June 20, over 130 people came together at Witt's Inn to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Flat River Outreach Ministries (FROM).

The party's Roaring 20s theme was a big hit with many attendees dressing the part and the photo booth gave everyone the opportunity to take home a small memento of the evening. A silent auction featured specialty items donated to Treasures Thrift Shop and all proceeds from the auction supported FROM programs.



The event was a great way to celebrate the organization that started in 1998 when thirteen local churches came together with the desire to help eradicate hunger in the Lowell area. Twenty years later, the mission has expanded to include over a dozen programs, but FROM still committed to addressing need in our community.

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In the early years, FROM served about 12 people each month in the food pantry in the basement of the Lowell First United Methodist Church. In 2017, families accessed our services **4,439 times** to address needs related to food insecurity, energy bill assistance, employment services, and more.



This impact wouldn't be possible without generous partners like you who give both financially and with your time. Last year over **348 volunteers** donated **41,000 hours** to help in the Thrift Shop, programs and around the office to meet the needs in our community.

Thank you to everyone who attended the event and to everyone who has helped make FROM a place dedicated to serving our neighbors in need.

### FROM MY HEART TO YOURS

*"I think Lunch Buddies is terrific and I just wanted to say thank you."*

**- Lunch Buddies Client**



### IMPORTANT DATES

- October 18, 1:00-2:00:** Volunteer Orientation
- October 20, 10:00:** Foodmobile at Fairgrounds
- November 5, 1:00-2:00:** Christmas Distribution Registration Begins
- November 7, 6:00-7:00:** Volunteer Orientation
- November 7-9:** Senior Food Commodities during Food Pantry Hours
- November 10, 10:00:** Foodmobile at Fairgrounds
- November 15, 1:00-2:00:** Volunteer Orientation
- December 5-7:** Food Commodities during Food Pantry Hours
- December 5, 6:00-7:00:** Volunteer Orientation
- December 12-14:** Senior Food Commodities during Food Pantry Hours
- December 15:** Christmas Distribution (must pre-register)
- December 27, 1:00-6:00:** Lunch Buddies (5 lunches will be provided)

For more information or to check our calendar, go to [www.fromlowell.org](http://www.fromlowell.org).

## SUPERHEART SUPERSTAR: MAIN STREET HOUSING VOLUNTEERS

FROM purchased two multi-unit homes on Main Street in late 2016. One of the homes was unoccupied, but the other housed nearly a dozen tenants and the building was in desperate need of updates.

FROM volunteers quickly sprang into action and began working on projects to improve the interior and exterior for the residents including painting, installing exterior lighting, adding locks to all the doors, installing a laundry room, updating bathrooms, installing fire extinguishers, and more.

In 2017, this volunteer team put in 1,099 hours and so far in 2018, they've logged over 1,200 hours!

Thank you so much for helping make a difference in our community and for the people who call Main Street Housing home.



*Pictured (from left to right): Dave Kleinpaste, John Stormzand, and Rick Briggs.*

*(Not pictured: Ken Ballema, Gordie Barry, Roger LaWarre, and Mark Mundt)*

***“THE VALUE OF A MAN RESIDES IN WHAT HE GIVES AND NOT IN WHAT HE IS CAPABLE OF RECEIVING.”***

***-ALBERT EINSTEIN***

### LUNCH BUDDIES

School breaks can put a strain on the grocery budget for some families. In order to help alleviate the stress, FROM offers five free lunches each week of school breaks to families living in the Lowell Area School District.

Over the summer, Lunch Buddies met every Tuesday from 1:00-6:00 p.m. from June 5 through August 14 and **over 10,000 lunches** were provided.

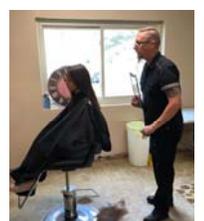
Arrow Readers on the Move were on hand to help children with their reading and the Alto Lions Club also provided free vision screenings for families.

### BACKPACK DISTRIBUTION



FROM's Annual Backpack Distribution Program, held August 7 and 14, was the biggest ever! With your help, **438 children** living in the Lowell Area School District received backpacks filled with school supplies and **34 children** received free haircuts. This is an increase of 130 children from 2017!

Thank you to Amway, Great Clips, and all the businesses and individuals who made donations of backpacks and school supplies. Thank you to all the volunteers who donated their time and to our Backpack Committee for all their time planning and orchestrating all the details. We could not have done it without each and every one of you!



## GROWING GENEROSITY

Mark had gardens all of his life, but this garden is special not just because it's tended by four of the tenants at Main Street Housing, but because the garden shows generosity can grow when people come together.



*Mark shows off the Main Street Housing gardens*



*Collin poses with a completed garden bed box.*

The project was led by Eagle Scout Candidate Collin Clark, with support from his brother Carson (an Eagle Scout), and his parents Christopher and Jennifer Clark (troop leaders). Collin planned and budgeted for the project and also secured donations and discounts from Standard Lumber and Supply, Timpon's,

Tip Top Gravel, the Clark family, and anonymous donors.

Lowell Boy Scout Troop 102 and their parents helped build and install the raised garden beds, remove fencing and level the ground around before adding soil and mulch to the area around the boxes.

Main Street Housing tenants then planted three varieties of tomatoes, six different herbs, peppers, melons and squash. Each of the four tenants looks after each other's plants, waters, and weeds (they haven't used any pesticides). Mark says the garden gives him something to do and he enjoys coming out in the morning and evening, "it's a peaceful spot to sit."

"We were hoping to grow enough to be able to donate to the [FROM] Food Pantry," he adds. In fact, they grew enough to not only donate back to the pantry, but also hand out their bountiful crop of tomatoes to many people they meet. It truly has been an example of how generosity can grow and bloom when the community comes together.



*The troop assembles the boxes.*

## CHRISTMAS IS COMING!



FROM is gearing up for our annual Christmas Gift and Food Basket Distribution for those living in the Lowell Area School District. Sign-ups will start **November 5** during regular Food Pantry hours. Please bring I.D. and proof of residence (current piece of mail) when registering.

Gift distribution allows parents to shop brand new gift items for children (infant through High School senior). Food Baskets provide a holiday meal. **Call (616) 897-8260 with any questions.**

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

As we wind down our 20th anniversary year and head into the season where many of us pause to give thanks, I'm reminded of all we have to be thankful for at FROM.

We are thankful for a community that rallies around its neighbors and for everyone who comes through our doors each day. Whether you are in our building to shop, seek services, volunteer, work, or donate; we are thankful for you!

Our 20th anniversary wouldn't be possible without those who worked tirelessly in the early years to get the organization up and running and those who continue to help the agency grow and expand in new ways to meet the needs of our community.

At its core, FROM is about bringing people together to address needs in our community. We couldn't do that without those who donate items, food, time or finances. But we also couldn't do it without those who come to FROM to access services and allow us to walk alongside them during this season of life.

When I think of what I'm thankful for, it's each and every one of you.

Warmly,

Dawn  
Broene,  
*Executive  
Director*



## ABOUT US

Our mission is simple: "We are a Christian organization helping our neighbors in need by walking alongside; helping them improve their quality of life."

We do this through a variety of programs, services, and events.

We offer food, financial, medical, and educational support, as well as help with clothing, home repair projects, taxes, utilities, and job coaching .

We believe not in a transactional model, but a transformational one that empowers individuals to make good decisions and create a life and career path that promotes sustainable change.

## Mission

*FROM - a Christian organization helping our neighbors in need by walking alongside; helping them improve their quality of life.*

## Treasures Thrift Shop Hours

Tuesday—Friday: 10:00 am-6:00 pm

Saturday 10:00 am– 2:00 pm

## Pantry Hours

Monday/Tuesday/Thursday

2:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Wednesday 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Friday 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

## FROM Board of Directors

Ryan Kresge - Board Chair

Annie Link- Board Vice-Chair

Robert Rogers- Board Secretary

Paul Mundt- Board Treasurer

Ken Ballema

Brad Brillhart

Shari Peal

Jodie Seese

Cheryl Emmette

Diane Sherlock

Ethel Stears

Jim Hodges

Joshua McCracken



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