



FLAT RIVER
OUTREACH
MINISTRIES

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FROM the Heart News

Spring 2020

FROM Welcomes New Executive Director

In the fall of 2019, Dawn Broene announced her resignation as the Executive Director of Flat River Outreach Ministries (FROM), a position she held since July of 2014. After a month long search process, the Board of Directors announced the appointment of Wendie Preiss who began in the role on January 6, 2020.

Dawn agreed to help with the transition and echoed the Board's excitement with the appointment, "Wendie's passion for the community and people of Lowell is evident any time you talk to her. There is no question in my mind that she is the right leader for the future of FROM. I cannot wait to see what is in store for the future of FROM under her direction," said Dawn.

Wendie and Dawn (pictured at right) worked closely together until Dawn officially stepped away from FROM at the beginning of February. Wendie says that having Dawn's support and guidance during this time was beneficial and "I've appreciated her support so much. She's been very helpful in this transition and it's comforting to know she's still in the community and just a phone call away if I need her."



Dawn Broene (L) served as the Executive Director until Wendie Preiss took over the role. Photo courtesy of Lowell's First Look



Preiss is passionate about making sure the organization is meeting the needs of our neighbors.

Preiss brings a fresh set of eyes and her own unique set of skills to FROM. She was a consultant to nonprofit organizations (such as Heart of West Michigan United Way and Michigan State University) and also worked for Amway for 15 years in a variety of leadership and functional positions, including an assignment in Tokyo, Japan.

Not new to FROM, Wendie's first experience with the organization was as a volunteer in the thrift shop donation room where she and her husband served for over a year. She also worked directly with FROM staff in the areas of cultural intelligence, data analysis in Treasures Thrift Shop, and team building.

Wendie, her husband and their two boys (age 14 and 9) have lived in Lowell for five years.

See the Director Spotlight article inside for Wendie's vision for FROM.

What's New

Food Fight 2020 Join the Fight!

Food Fight 2020 will be here soon and you have an opportunity to Join the Fight! This year we will focus on fighting for **healthy food**, **resource connection** and **family support**. These three focus areas encompass all of our programs (look inside for a complete list of programs and numbers served in 2019) and are all the ways we walk alongside our neighbors in need. Stay tuned for more details!



IMPORTANT DATES

- March 19, 1:00-2:00 pm: Volunteer Orientation
- March 28, 10:00-12:00: Mobile Food Pantry
- April 1, 6:00-7:00 pm: Volunteer Orientation
- April 7, 1:00-6:00 p.m.: Kid's Lunch Buddies
- April 8-10: Food Commodities
- April 8-10: Senior Food Commodities

- April 16, 1:00-2:00 pm: Volunteer Orientation
- April 25, 10:00-12:00: Mobile Food Pantry
- May 6, 6:00-7:00 pm: Volunteer Orientation
- May 6-8: Senior Food Commodities
- May 21, 1:00-2:00 pm: Volunteer Orientation
- May 30, 10:00-12:00: Mobile Food Pantry

for more dates, including holiday closures, visit www.fromlowell.org/calendar

Seasons of Giving: Donation Drives Support Vital Services



Northern Physical Therapy hosted a personal care drive.



GE Aviation donated canned goods as part of their "construction event."

The holiday season is a busy time for FROM as we partner with churches, local businesses, groups, schools, and more for many donation drives. These healthy food and personal care donation drives help us stock the shelves in our food pantry and provide lunches for school-aged children over school breaks.

We'd like to say THANK YOU! Thank you to everyone who hosted a donation drive (including those not listed in the photos) and also to all of those who participated by making donations of healthy food and personal care items that help support your neighbors in need. We are blessed to be a part of such a generous and giving community that takes care of its neighbors.

If you (or your group) would like to learn more about hosting a healthy food or personal care donation drive or if you would like the latest copy of our most needed healthy food/personal care items, please contact Arianne Hall, Development Director at (616) 897-8260 ext. 135 or arianneh@fromlowell.org.

Donation Drives pictured on back (from L to R) Ziegler Ford, Leggett & Platt Work Furniture, Lighthouse Foods, and Lowes.



Ada CRC hosted a food and paper products drive.



Betten Baker had a friendly donation drive competition between their locations.



Lowell Area Schools hosted a food drive for our pantry.



Wendie Preiss, FROM Executive Director

Director Spotlight

So far this year, we said "see you later" to some amazing FROM employees. They assure me they will visit so I refused to say goodbye. We wish them all the best and know that the best way to remember them is to continue to support the people and programs that they loved. Thank you to all of you that are keeping things moving as we go through this period of transition. We simply could not do this without you.

There are three areas that we will focus on together in 2020.

- Evaluating Programs.** Many of our programs have evolved over time; our volunteers and staff have made improvements along the way. We will further efforts in continuous improvement through partnerships and collaboration.
- Valuing People.** We will continue to make efforts to ensure that all participants, volunteers, donors, and anyone that walks through our doors feels valued and appreciated and are offered opportunities to share their unique gifts with the community.
- Addressing Housing.** What that looks like is still being explored and researched to determine the best way to meet our community's needs.

I continue to feel humbled and inspired by the generosity and service of this community. FROM really is the hub where every individual can exchange their gifts, skills, and resources for the common good. Thank you!!

Clients Are the of What We Do

In 2019, we were able to help individuals and families living in the Lowell area access healthy food options, connect to resources and receive family support. The numbers below aren't just statistics, these are our family, our friends, and our neighbors.

Healthy Food Options

Christmas Food Basket
268 families/households

Food Commodities
692 families/households
average 77 per distribution

Food Pantry
average 172 families per month

Kid's Lunch Buddies
329 children
(131 families)
7,920 lunches

Mobile Food Pantry
697 families/households

Senior Food Commodities
average 26 per month



"This helps me supplement my food budget and gives me the healthy food I need."

-Mobile Food Pantry Participant

Connections Office

Support and Referral Services

325 phone calls
131 appointments
49 households received one-time assistance

Family Support

Backpacks
329 children

Christmas Toy Store
390 children (162 families)

Taxes
306 households
\$451,946 in federal and state returns

Medical Equipment Loan
579 pieces of equipment

Neighbor to Neighbor
4 families/households

"You don't know how you guys just made me have a very Merry Christmas."

-Christmas Toy Store/Food Basket Participant

Volunteers

Number of Volunteers
over 350

Volunteer Hours
over 34,000

