

theExchange

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2026

Seasonal changes & daily dedication

There's something magical about witnessing the seasons change in our region, where nature moves from buzzing activities into a steady calm of preparation. We see the same pattern in our work at theExchange. Summer brought the most furniture donations we've ever seen—we had to rent an extra shipping container to hold all your generosity!—and now we start to watch those items steadily trickle out as our partner agencies work diligently to get neighbors housed before the extreme cold hits.



I was told when joining six months ago that this work can be “feast or famine,” and while I can see a little more floor and shelf space lately, I'm still witnessing an abundance through the way each volunteer, donor, and advocate shows up to make sure our neighbors experience a sense of support and dignity. It's incredible to see the moments of vulnerability and personal connection that happen during appointments. Those opportunities to experience safety and community are in part possible because of the hard work and passion that my colleagues bring to their roles here, managing all the moving parts that make each day successful. Help me wish both EJ (four years) and Myra (one year) a happy work anniversary this month!

As we head into the holiday season, we're keeping our vision set to “feast” while we navigate growing community needs. Please consider us in your year-end giving plans. Your support of theExchange stretches beyond the walls of our warehouse and into the homes of our neighbors to create a stronger community.

*Thank you,
Anna Sprague, Executive Director.*



Mark Outzen (shown left)

sharing his passion for volunteering firsthand with his daughter, Julie and grandson's, Josiah and Zeke.



Mark Outzen

by Kathie Tyser

Mark began volunteering at theExchange about a year ago after retiring. He shows up almost every Tuesday and Thursday morning to go out with the delivery team, and helps most Mondays and Wednesdays in the warehouse loading the trailers. When he isn't doing that, he cleans or stains furniture, double-checks delivery addresses to ensure a smooth day, and even shows up for special events such as the Safe Families donation drive. At the donation drive, he was mentoring a young man who was volunteering that day. According to EJ, theExchange Operations Manager, **“He's always doing something helpful and worthwhile, and we are so grateful he is on our team!”**

So we asked Mark a few questions:

1. How did you hear about theExchange and how long have you been volunteering here?

“I have been volunteering with theExchange since last November, when I (finally) retired. I first heard about theExchange a few years ago from my wife, who happened to learn through an internet posting how to make a donation. I later learned that it was largely volunteer-operated and decided that this would be a good use of my time when I retired.”

~ cont. on page 2

Fall Open House

Welcomes the Community A Peek inside theExchange



On the morning of Tuesday, September 29, theExchange was abuzz. After the usual volunteer crew returned from delivering furniture to clients and picking up new donations, the doors opened to the public for a fall open house. If you stopped by, you know how welcoming it felt to be met with friendly faces and a table full of refreshments. Around 40 community members stopped in during the two-hour open house to tour the facility, asked questions, met and chatted with staff and volunteers. At least 10 of those stopping by were totally new to theExchange!

The idea was to celebrate our volunteers, share the successes of a busy summer season, recognize the tremendous value of the donations that continue to arrive and get quickly inventoried and distributed, and welcome more of the community into this work. As one person commented after the tour, "The inventory is impressive and so well organized to keep it all sorted and moving!" Just one look inside speaks to the important impact this work is having on our community. Almost 700 people have already benefited from theExchange services during the first nine months of the year.

Executive Director, Anna Sprague, said "the goal is to do this several times a year to give more people an opportunity to see first-hand what is happening here. TheExchange thrives on community household donations and the volunteers who make it all happen. Community is what makes it all possible."

If you would like to join the volunteer group, donate, or learn more, please email us at theexchange@shelterdevelopment.org and follow us on social media for weekly updates.

~ more photos on page 3



Mark Outzen

~ cont. from front page

2. What are some of your favorite or most rewarding parts of your volunteer work here?

I enjoy seeing donations come in and, even more, seeing them go out as we deliver them to people who can use them.

3. What do you like to do when not working at theExchange—any hobbies or activities?

I'm involved with various ministries and activities through Mary, Mother of the Church parish. Otherwise, I enjoy playing duplicate bridge when I can, usually with the La Crosse club; I'm not terribly good, but I enjoy the challenge! And, of course, spending time with family.

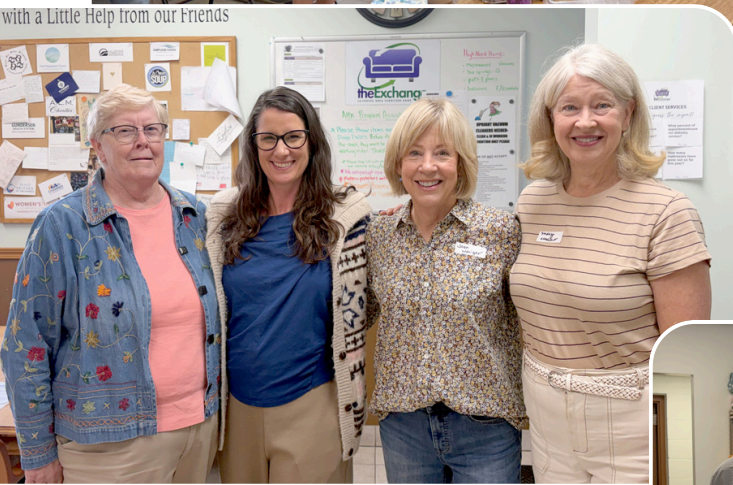
4. What would you tell someone who might be considering volunteering here but isn't sure?

TheExchange is focused on helping individuals in our community achieve a better life. If you think you MIGHT be interested in contributing to this effort, come in and talk with us. There are a lot of ways in which you can help, and there's absolutely no commitment - give a little (of your time), or give a lot, it's entirely up to you.

Take Mark's advice

—if interested, email theexchange@shelterdevelopment.org and talk to someone about opportunities that might fit your timeframe and interests. Meanwhile, THANK YOU, Mark!





Fall Open House Photos
top and bottom: welcoming visitors
above: Stitch, E.J. Joan and Mary
right: Sr. Karen and Sheila

3 ways you can support our mission:

- Make a gift to our 10 Year Campaign and help support 20 more families! [Give online here.](#)
- Do a household clear out to find unused items that can be rehomed before the holidays. [Learn what we accept.](#)
- Consider hosting a corporate drive or plan your tax-smart giving options. [Contact Anna](#) for more information.

Most Needed Items

- loveseats
- queen/full box springs
- kitchen tables
- microwaves
- pots and pans
- bakeware

By the Numbers (Jan - September)

- volunteer hours.....1972
- households assisted..347
- individuals served...728
 - 284 children
 - 444 adults

Our Thanks

Thank you to all our donors including some recent gifts from:

- Green Bay Packers Foundation
- Festival Foods
- PM Sleep Center
- Immanuel Lutheran Church
- Mary Mother of the Church
- St. Pat's Parish
- and many more

