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West Central Wisconsin  
Community Action  
Agency Inc.

**2017 Annual Report**



Greetings from the West CAP Board of Directors and Staff;

We are pleased to present West CAP's Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2017.

For openers, when I first saw all the photos of yours truly, it was a bit unexpected, and being of Norwegian heritage, more than a little embarrassing. Yet, these were all taken on the job, a job requiring many hats, and sometimes a helmet, and is consistent with our in-house designer's scheme. So we're goin' with it. The motorcycle? Well, that was taken the exact moment I realized it was too dang small for my, er, frame, shall we say. But it is how I got to the staff training event where the dandy photo on the front and back was taken of all the great folks who really, really make West CAP the remarkable and effective agency it is and has been for over half a century.

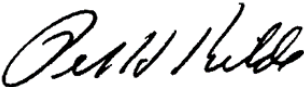
But on to the real work. This year and every year, life is tough for low income individuals and families in West Central Wisconsin. In 2017 we provided much needed assistance to well over 28,000 people in our seven counties; 2,500 more than we served last year with almost the exact same \$9.5 million budget. This year and every year, despite the common perception that the economy is booming and prosperity is here for all, it isn't. While the employment picture has definitely improved, prevailing wages are far below what it takes for many families to meet even their most basic needs. Odd shifts and high costs of child care still make life, even for our working families as most of them are, a constant, and sometimes losing battle. Added to this and the meth and opioid epidemic, lack of affordable, reliable transportation and housing, and the rising costs of many essentials. As I presented on the panel pictured opposite; "It's generally not a problem with the people not working, it's the math that doesn't work."

In this environment then, West CAP seeks to provide the best support for these families that we possibly can. We build and manage affordable rental housing, weatherize hundreds of homes, house the homeless, assist with education and job skills training, feed thousands of our hungry neighbors, help working folks get reliable transportation, provide fuel assistance for our long, cold winters, help children have a merrier Christmas, provide supplies children need to start the school year, and always look for other funding ways to be of service.

We also see it as part of our mission to engage with the larger community in the reality of poverty as we see it every day, and to enlist their support on our efforts to help create a more equitable society. West CAP staff are heavily involved in this larger policy realm on the local, state, and national levels.

So once again, In the year ahead as in many years past, the Board and Staff of West CAP look forward to working with all of you to help make this a great place to live for all who chose to call west central Wisconsin home.

With warm regards,



Peter H. Kilde  
Executive Director





## Our Mission

### **West Central Wisconsin Community Action Agency, Inc.**

***Serving Barron, Chippewa, Dunn, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, and St. Croix Counties***

***The mission of West CAP is to take action against poverty by developing the social and economic assets of low-income families and their communities and by working to create a more just and sustainable society.***

## **Fiscal Year Ending in 2017**

**Total Clients Served: 28,289**  
**Total Household Served: 12,083**  
**Total Economic Impact: \$9,535,728**

## Board of Directors

West CAP is governed by a 21-member board of directors. Directors are selected to represent low-income, government, and community constituencies in each of the counties we serve. Government representatives are selected by their county board; community representatives are selected by various organizations and businesses; low-income representatives are elected through a democratic process. Meetings are held the second Monday of each month (excluding July and December). All meetings are open to the public.

#### **Barron County**

Pam Fall  
Paul Streif  
Jessica Thyssen

#### **Chippewa County**

Dawn Hemm  
Kari Ives  
Tony Willkom

#### **Dunn County**

Katherine Dutton  
Vaughn Hedlund  
Felicia Otto  
Mary Van Norman

#### **Pierce County**

Benjamin Plunkett  
Jennifer Tweet  
Philip Verges  
Ruth Wood

#### **Polk County**

Todd Groat  
Larry Jepsen

#### **Pepin County**

Paul Hoch  
Bonnie Lange  
Frank Milliren

#### **St. Croix County**

Todd Johnson  
Dave Ostness  
Laurie Pelnar







Above left to right; Ann Kohanek, Sara Fathauer, & Kim O'Neill



Opposite left to right;  
Beth Dendinger & Stephanie Stark

**Sara Fathauer, Our Neighbor’s Place —Outstanding Partner Award**  
**Presented by Ann Kohanek, Homeless Prevention Case Manager**

Sara Fathauer from Our Neighbor’s Place in River Falls is not only an outstanding partner to West CAP’s Homeless Prevention Program, but has assisted in housing scores of other individuals and families in Pierce and St. Croix Counties. Sara has a unique ability to bring new landlords on board with subsidized housing programs, and has applied her boundless energy to provide housing search assistance and case management to five West CAP TBRA clients in Pierce and St. Croix Counties, as well as assisting other West CAP Homeless Prevention staff in finding housing for their clients. Sara does this as the only paid staff (besides the director) of Our Neighbor’s Place, while managing four units of their transitional housing, and managing their day center. Sara and Our Neighbor’s Place have been partners with West CAP and our clients in the truest sense of the word.

**Kim O’Neill—Client Achievement Award**  
**Presented by Ann Kohanek, Homeless Prevention Case Manager**

So one day my phone rang, and it was Sara Fathauer, telling me that she had a potential client for the Tenant Based Rental Assistance housing program and wondering if I could meet with them at the Lutheran Home in River Falls where this client was currently residing. When I first met Kim O’Neill, she was recuperating from the amputation of her lower right leg due to complications from diabetes. She could not WAIT to get out of there and get on with her life.

Kim, a Navy veteran and single mother who previously held down a full-time job while running a farm and raising her (now adult) children, is no stranger to challenges. Since her enrollment in the TBRA program in September 2016, Kim has found housing, is learning to adapt to her prosthesis, and recently purchased a VW Passat through West CAP’s JumpStart program that will help her become even more independent.

**Beth Dendinger—Volunteer Award**  
**Presented by Stephanie Stark, Literacy & Skills Enhancement Coordinator**

Beth has volunteered as a tutor for West CAP’s Pierce County Jail Program since the end of December, 2015. The jail was seeking an education program for inmates. This is required by law, but they had no program. We met to discuss possibilities and ruled out GED testing since it wouldn’t involve all inmates, was costly and took a long time to achieve results. West CAP proposed a book reading program. Steve Albarado, Lt. at the jail, agreed to try a reading program. We were told inmates slept all the time, due to boredom and probably depression. Maybe a book reading program would help. Wisconsin Literacy gave West CAP some suggestions, and I looked for a tutor.

What a blessing to have found Beth. I told her we were more or less pilot testing this program. She was happy to try to make a difference at the jail and help shape what is now called the “Book Club”. Beth meets with inmates if they are interested, asks them about what they like to read or subject area they are interested in. She creates a list for the Ellsworth Library so they can gather a collection of books for the inmates. She goes to the library every week to pick up a tub of books, and delivers them to the jail. She meets individually with inmates to discuss what they have read, listens to their thoughts, sometimes helps with vocabulary or other reading issues, recommends authors, etc. She keeps track of all the books as well. She has maintained a very positive, professional attitude while working in the jail that has given her the respect of the jailers and inmates alike. She is hoping to start a knitting/crocheting program when Pierce County moves to their new jail. Knitting and crocheting require reading skills, sequencing, concentration, dexterity, and other good skills. She plans to have the inmates create yarn object to be donated to neo-natal units and other places so inmates can do something nice for other people. Beth is open to trying other educational programs at the jail in their new facility.



# Weatherization

Weatherization offers a range of services, including insulation and minor repairs. Each home or apartment receives a technical assessment and weatherization work to provide more efficient use of utilities including: insulation of attics, walls and floors; repair or replacement of furnaces; computerized energy audits; air infiltration testing; and a general health and safety inspection.

- **Clients Served: 2,642**
- **Households: 1,153**
- **Economic Impact: \$2,772,015**

- 266 homes weatherized in the past 12 months
- 699 received inspections and were deferred until homeowners can complete necessary repairs
- 188 received emergency furnace repair or replacement
- 50% of weatherized households are persons living alone
- 32% of the households are senior citizens
- 23% of the households are disabled
- 4% receive veterans benefits

“Thanks – our crew was awesome. My kids enjoyed having them around and said they were sad when the work was done. They worked quickly and efficiently and always took a few minutes at the start and end of the day to tell us where they were at and how the project was progressing. Thanks again! We are so appreciative.”





The Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) provides assistance for heating costs, electric costs, and energy crisis situations. Utility payments are made directly from the State of Wisconsin to vendors or customers. West CAP administers the program for St. Croix and Pepin counties.

- **Clients Served: 2,807**
- **Households: 1,278**
- **Economic Impact: \$869,059**

*"I am writing to compliment one of your employees. I believe her name is Jill. She works with people who need assistance with their Xcel bill.*

*I talked to Jill yesterday and she was very understanding and patient. She heard me out, gave me good advice and took a HUGE burden off my shoulders. I am EXTREMELY thankful for your services, as I am a single mom of two and struggle financially.*

*You guys are awesome, if it wasn't for your services, I honestly do not know what I would do."*

*Thanks again!  
Heidi*





Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) provides development and asset management of affordable housing units throughout the West CAP service area. Through partnerships with private for-profit businesses and non-profit groups West CAP has developed, acquired or renovated 492 units of housing in Barron, Boyceville, Chippewa Falls, Clayton, Colfax, Downing, Ellsworth, Glenwood City, Hammond, Menomonie, New Richmond, Phillips, Rice Lake, Spring Valley, St. Croix Falls, and Oskaloosa, IA.

- **West CAP owned or managed properties: 284**
- **Clients Served: 678**
- **Economic Impact: \$1,496,186**

*“I clearly remember the first day I moved into Glenwood Commons: I had just gotten back to Wisconsin from my year of service in AmeriCorps serving down in Alabama. Fast forward one month later and Albin asked if I was still interested in the Resident Assistant position. It was at this point I knew my time in Rice Lake attending the University of Wisconsin-Barron County was going to be a life-changing experience. Roughly two years later, here is my experience living at Glenwood Commons also called the “Dorms.”*

*The most exciting time of the year is “move in” at the beginning of September. During this time, I get to see all the returning residents and meet all of the new residents moving into the Commons. Their eyes are so full of hope and excitement for the soon-to-start school year. This is a crucial moment for me. This is when I get to meet the new residents and their parents. This first impression is not only of myself but also the dorms. This is where the work of a Resident Assistant truly begins. Once the parents say goodbye to their kids the job of shaping their environment for academic success falls upon myself and the other RA’s. During the first month of class the other RA’s and myself are the most hands-on with the residents, and remain to be for the entire school year. After the first week, we have our first dorm meeting which gives people a chance to connect with the other residents. Usually we have activities like ghost in the graveyard every Friday night at the disc golf course right across from the property, and a cook out at the end of the first month. On a residential level, the dorms are the perfect match for students: the dorms have a positive atmosphere, a lot of my classmates live in the Commons, and it allows for study groups – academic advantages that would not be available if I had chosen to live in an apartment.*

*Living and working at Glenwood Commons has given me life experiences that I could not have found anywhere else in Rice Lake. Having the privilege to grow my own ability by serving my fellow classmates has given me lessons that no classroom can teach.*

*-Alexander Halbach”*



## Glenwood Commons Student Housing

One of West CAP's more unique housing projects is Glenwood Commons, our 24 unit, 96 bed student housing facility in Rice Lake, Wisconsin. When the co-located institutions of UW-Barron and Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College (WITC) reached out to West CAP for help in addressing their chronic need for safe, high-quality student housing near campus ten years ago, we teamed up with USDA Rural Development's Community Facilities program and created this state of the art, highly energy efficient geo-thermally heated and very "green" dormitory. In addition to our long-standing commitment to being good community partners, West CAP's Board and staff agreed that helping students improve their skills and earning potential through post-secondary education was very much in line with our anti-poverty mission.







The Housing Assistance programs help low-income families and individuals achieve housing stability through a combination of rental assistance, case management, and connection to community resources. Program staff work to match individuals and families with programs that meet their needs. These programs include:

- **Housing Choice Vouchers:** Long-term rent subsidy through HUD's Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8), available in Dunn, Pierce, and St. Croix Counties.
- **Rapid Re-Housing (RRH):** Medium-term rental assistance and supportive services designed to quickly move households from homelessness to permanent housing.
- **Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA):** Medium-term rental assistance and supportive services for youth (18-24 years old) and/or households with a disabled member. Can assist households experiencing homelessness as well as those at-risk of homelessness.
- **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH):** Long-term housing designed for chronically homeless individuals and families. Intensive support is provided to assist individuals who have a mental illness or substance use disorder in achieving housing stability.

- **Clients Served: 1,239**

- **Households: 569**

- **Economic Impact: \$2,538,655**

"Shawn" is a single man in his late 30's living in St. Croix County. He has multiple disabilities, including mental illness, chronic health conditions, and a substance use disorder. "Shawn" was in and out of the local homeless shelter attempting to find housing on his own before he enrolled in West CAP's Rapid Re-Housing Program. The first time he participated he was unable to secure housing. He enrolled again a few months later and was able to find safe housing despite having a criminal background and poor rental and financial histories. West CAP assisted "Shawn" in obtaining housing by connecting him to landlords with whom we've worked in the past, providing a security deposit, and assuring the landlord that a Case Manager would be meeting with "Shawn" in his home regularly.

"Shawn" is now only \$55 away from getting his driver's license back. He has an active Comprehensive Community Services team, which includes the West CAP Case Manager. The team meets with "Shawn" monthly and works with him to attain his goals and manage setbacks as they occur. At his most recent team meeting, "Shawn" stated that his goal is to be self-sufficient with his housing, finances, and all aspects of his life by July. The team is supporting this effort and his Case Manager is working with him to apply for Social Security benefits.



## Food Access & Resources

Food Access and Resources addresses the issue of food security and support for local food production in our communities through a variety of programs.

- **Emergency Food Assistance Program** – staff support and food distribution assistance to 28 community-based food pantries, 5 shelters and 1 soup kitchen in west central Wisconsin, including West CAP's food pantry in Boyceville.
- **Senior Farmers Market Vouchers** – vouchers for low-income senior households to utilize at certified farmers markets and roadside stands.
- **Commodity Supplemental Food Program** – packages of nutritious foods delivered monthly to low-income senior households.
- **Menomonie Farmers Market** – management and coordination of summer and winter farmers markets for 20 low-income vendors.
- **Back-Pack Program** - West CAP orders and assists the Glenwood City and Boyceville school districts to provide weekend backpacks of food for low-income students. This program is solely funded through local donations.

- **Clients Served: 19,595**

- **Households: 8,456**

- **Economic Impact: \$1,157,139**



*In January 2017 West CAP's Food Access and Resources Center started a free produce distribution for families in need. After surveys had revealed that we needed to work diligently towards providing more fresh products, we were able to establish a relationship with Feed My People to provide weekly deliveries from a local grocery warehouse. On Wednesday evenings we set up anywhere from 4,000 pounds to 8,000 pounds of assorted produce and distribute from 5pm-7pm. On average about 130 households walk through each week.*

*In 2017, we distributed 242,796 pounds of produce to 6,095 household visits which consisted of 17,381 individuals (duplicated). The pantry is located in a town that does not have a grocery store and this produce has become an important nutrition assistance program to many local families. We have heard stories of people losing weight because they are eating healthier, reduced medications for diabetics, and improved over all health. We have a large population of individuals over 60 that utilize this program and their feedback indicates that this program has helped them to save on transportation costs going to other towns for healthier foods. The exciting part is watching children help families shop and get excited over fruits, salads and vegetables that they would go without if this program didn't exist.*





### Literacy and Skills Enhancement Program

Literacy – assistance to improve literacy skills for personal, educational or job related goals, and English as a second language

Skills Enhancement – case management and financial assistance for low-wage workers enrolling in short-term training to increase job skills and benefits

- **Clients Served: 193**
- **Households: 69**
- **Economic Impact: \$60,655**

“Joe” is a new Skills Enhancement client from Rice Lake. He just started online classes from WITC for an Associate degree in Human Services. “Joe” is a single dad with 2 small children; a 6 year old boy and a 1 year old girl. Currently “Joe” is working for a local bar as a bartender and as an occasional DJ. He makes minimum wage (\$7.25/ hour with a few tips) for 31 hours a week on average. He doesn’t qualify for Badger-Care himself, although his children do. “Joe” was asked if he needed child support information. He stated that he had to fight for custody of his children and is seeking no contact from the children’s mother since she is heavily into using drugs and the drug culture. That is one of the reasons he is going to school. He wants a better job so he can take good care of his kids.





### Community Initiatives

**Holiday Gift Drive** - for children ages birth to 18 years, West CAP helps with gift giving during the Holiday Season to income eligible families in the Boyceville, Glenwood City, and Spring Valley school districts. The program is funded by the generous donations of the community and local businesses. We also partner with the schools and churches in these communities to help teach the value of giving to those less fortunate. Some businesses have also made it a tradition to “adopt” families and purchase items on their wish lists.

**Back-to-School Supply Program** - for children in Dunn County and the Glenwood City school districts; our program assists income eligible families with supplies for Pre-K to 12th grade. This program is funded by the generous donations of the community and local businesses.

- **Clients Served: 1,031**
- **Households: 237**
- **Economic Impact: \$4,246**

*Volunteers (left) from Xcel Energy helped with the organization and distribution of school supplies in Dunn County for the last three years. Xcel Energy has a Community Giving Program where they not only provide volunteers to assist, but they also donate \$500 to the program each year. It is a win-win for everyone involved!*





2017 was a transitional year for our longstanding and highly acclaimed JumpStart program. Created and launched by West CAP in 1998, this facilitated car purchase program helps low-income working families acquire late-model, reliable and economical cars to meet all their transportation needs; and particularly the need to get to their jobs regardless of the challenges Wisconsin's climate might throw their way. Sadly, JumpStart's long-time director and dealership manager, Randy Roemhild unexpectedly passed away in early 2017. With his passing, and ongoing struggles to get this highly effective program adequately funded, we were forced to close our dealership and scale the program back to the level current funding supports.

Yet, there was also good news for JumpStart in 2017, as a member of our congressional delegation proposed legislation to fund not only our program, but a nationwide demonstration pilot for JumpStart. While the fate of this legislation remains uncertain at this time, we are working to move this along. Randy would be thrilled!

- Clients Served: 104
- Households: 37
- Economic Impact: \$637,773

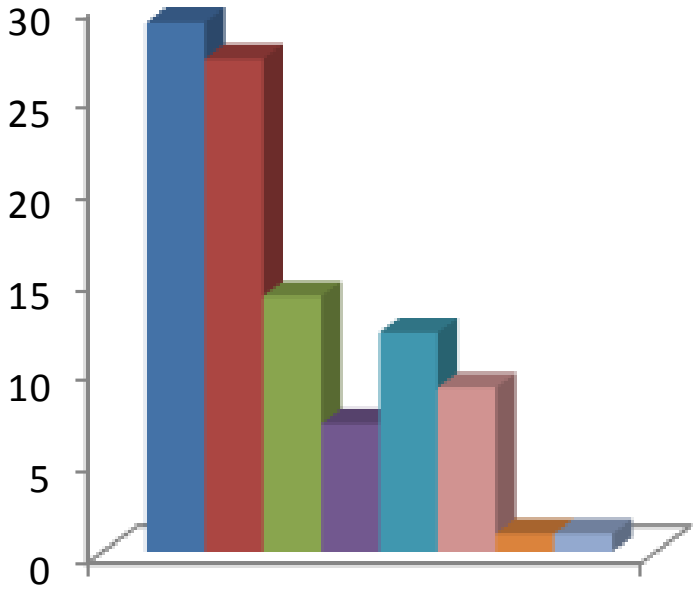
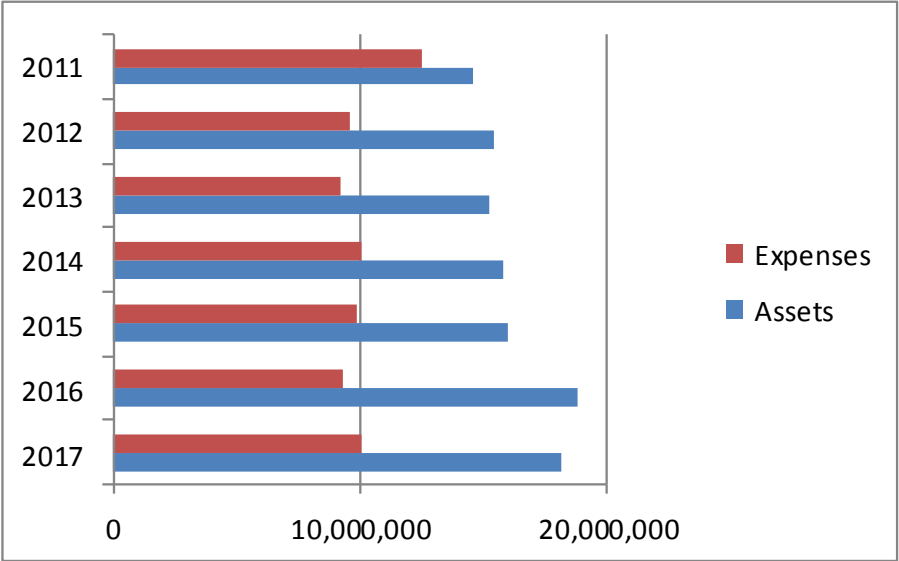
*"Randy Roemhild was the most kindest gentleman who I ever knew. He would work his hardest to deal with somebody to get that person into the vehicle that they wanted. I was so very thankful for Randy on getting the loan to go through for my van. Randy was a very good hearted person who we will all miss dearly"*

- Anonymous JumpStart client



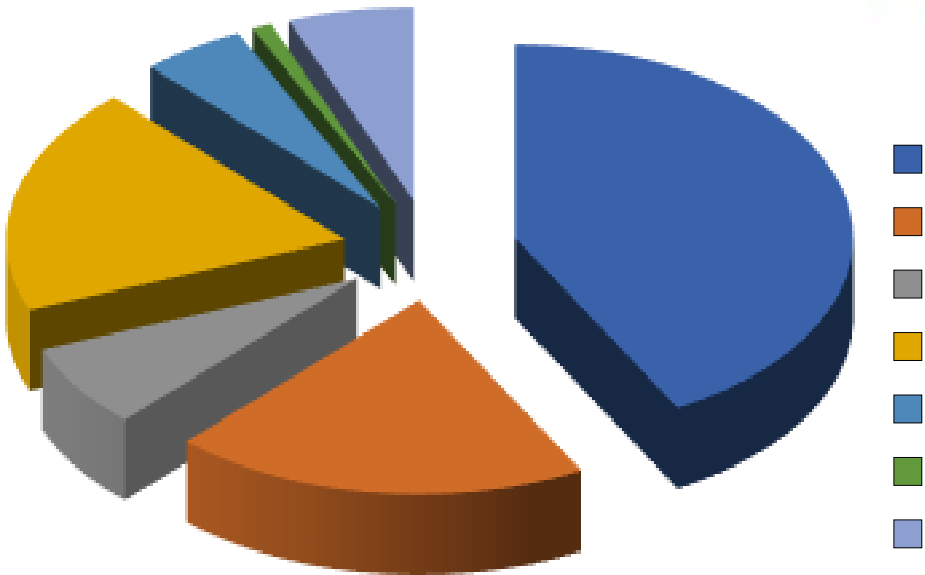


Assets vs. Expenses for FYE 2011-2017



West CAP Programs: ranked by % of total economic impact

Chart of Revenue for FYE 2017



Donations/Foundations/United Ways - funds received during FYE June 2017

<strong>\$1,000+</strong>		<strong>\$1,000+ (continued)</strong>	
Barron County .....	\$4,000	Holy Cross Church & Congregation .....	\$1,150
Chippewa County .....	\$4,000	Derrick Rewerts—donated vehicle .....	\$1,000
Polk County .....	\$4,000	Glenwood City Lions Club—food fight challenge.....	\$1,000
St. Croix County.....	\$4,000	Karen & Ken Hansen .....	\$1,000
Xcel Energy Foundation .....	\$4,000	Pepin County.....	\$1,000
United Way of Rice Lake .....	\$3,940	<strong>\$5,000+</strong>	
United Way St. Croix Valley		United Way of Dunn County .....	\$7,001
—donated food calculated at \$1 per lb.....	\$3,182	<strong>\$10,000+</strong>	
Roberts Food Drives—donated food calculated at \$1 per lb .....	\$3,002	United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley.....	\$38,000
Dunn County .....	\$3,000	Fred C. & Katherine B. Andersen Foundation .....	\$35,000
Pierce County .....	\$3,000	United Way St. Croix Valley .....	\$23,770
Kenlyn Kjesbo—donated vehicle .....	\$2,500	Donaldson Foundation .....	\$15,000
Joyce Hall .....	\$2,100	Andersen Corporate Foundation .....	\$12,000
Patrick Lyons .....	\$2,000	<strong>\$50,000+</strong>	
Anonymous Business donation .....	\$1,500	Feed My People—donated food calculated at \$1 per lb.....	\$337,712
The Henkel Foundation .....	\$1,500	Hugh J. Andersen Foundation .....	\$62,500
Food Harvest Ministry Inc—donated 3 door cooler to pantry..	\$1,700	Total Donations/Foundations/United Ways .....	\$586,520
Trinity Lutheran Church & Congregation .....	\$1,663		
Annmarie Foundation .....	\$1,300		