

Prevention + Outreach + Shelter + Resources

CONNECTIONS

AT A GLANCE

1,700

PEOPLE VOLUNTEER AT HOMELESS CONNECTIONS ON AN ANNUAL BASIS

Lend your time and talents. Contact Volunteer Coordinator Beth Servais at 920.882.0346 or beth@homelessconnections.net

\$65,000

IN IN-KIND PRODUCTS WERE DISTRIBUTED IN 2013

Donate items from our urgent needs list. These items include hygiene products, linens, office supplies and gift cards.

80,541

MEALS WERE SERVED IN 2013

Bake or cook food for Homeless Connections residents. Non-perishable and perishable food is donated on a daily basis, which helps reduce our food budget. Food can be dropped off at any time!

OUR MISSION

Ending homelessness by connecting individuals and families to resources that promote self-sufficiency and prevent future homeless episodes



Homeless Connections is a non-profit, United Way Fox Cities partner agency

New Name, Same Mission



Homeless Connections' staff and board members gather to celebrate the new name and logo.

The 9th Annual Benefit Gala, "Hope has an Address," held on November 11, 2014 will be a date in the Emergency Shelter of the Fox Valley's history book. The successful fundraiser also served as the official, public launch of our organization's new name, Homeless Connections.

The founders of our organization were truly providing emergency shelter – vouchers for people who were homeless to stay in area motels on a temporary basis. But over the years, our organization has grown to include four core areas of impact – Shelter, Case Management, Prevention, and Street Outreach. Shelter is still provided to individuals and families in crisis situations, but we often operate at capacity with a waiting list. We also work through our case management program to connect individuals and families in shelter to community resources

that will give them a better chance at long-term success. Street Outreach and Prevention Programs have also been added to meet the needs of the street population and those at-risk of homelessness. While our name has changed, our clients and the community will continue to receive the same level of service through our programs.

The name Homeless Connections gives us the opportunity to grow and evolve to best meet the needs of those who are homeless or at-risk

of homelessness in our community. We not only want to be known as a connecting point for clients, but we also want to be a connecting point for volunteers and donors who want to end homelessness in our community. Because together, we can end homelessness in our community.

To learn more about our new brand and how you can connect to Homeless Connections, please visit our redesigned website: www.homelessconnections.net.



UPCOMING EVENTS

National Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week
November 15 – 23, 2014

Human Race
May 2, 2015

Thrivent Financial Campus
9:00 a.m. Registration
10:00 a.m. 5K walk/Non-competitive run starts

Homeless Connections receives a minimum of 75% of all money designated to our organization. The remaining proceeds benefit the programs of the Volunteer Center of East Central Wisconsin.

25th Annual Garden Walk
July 11, 2015

Eight gardens throughout the Fox Cities
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Enjoy a walking tour of eight local gardens. Tickets are \$15 and will be available starting in May at local garden outlets. A bus tour option will also be available. Visit our website for more information on ticket locations and this year's featured gardens.

10th Annual Benefit Gala: "Hope has an Address"
November 17, 2015

Radisson Paper Valley Hotel

Save the date for next year's Benefit Gala! Watch for more details as the event approaches.

Homeless Connections' Volunteer Dawn Malcolm was named Kiwanian of the Year.



Connecting Through Service: Volunteer Dawn Malcom

She may be small, but her heart is big and her impact is great. Dawn Malcom is one mighty volunteer! In 2013 she was honored as Volunteer of the Year as a member of Homeless Connections' Gala Committee. Dawn is not afraid to ask for donations on behalf of Homeless Connections' Benefit Gala and seems to know almost everyone in the community, so she knows exactly who to go to for whatever it is she is looking for. In addition to being a Gala Committee Member, Dawn volunteers at the front desk and is often willing to help with other volunteer opportunities such as sorting donations, preparing mailing materials, and other projects that come up throughout the year.

Not only is Dawn very involved with volunteering with Homeless Connections, she is also an active volunteer for other community

agencies. She is a member of the Appleton Fox Cities Kiwanis and helps to coordinate volunteer opportunities for the group. This year she was deservedly named the Kiwanian of the Year! On behalf of Homeless Connections we would like to congratulate Dawn and thank her for her dedicated service to our agency and the entire community.

"I think that as human beings we should be helping each other. Volunteering gives me a sense of fulfilling that responsibility and makes me feel happy."

URGENT NEEDS LIST

- Alarm clocks (battery operated)
- Ethnic hair products
- Flashlights
- Flip Flops (toddler to adult size 14)
- Foot powder
- Hair ties, bobby pins, hair brushes
- Laundry baskets, shower caddies
- Lunch supplies: deli meat, fruit cups, fruit snacks, nuts, granola or nutrition bars, mini bagels, fresh fruit
- Men's and women's socks
- Mouthwash (alcohol-free)
- Sandwich bags, mini ice packs, reusable water bottles
- Walmart & grocery store gift cards
- White copy paper (8.5 x 11)

Help Homeless Connections raise \$30,000

Homeless Connections is partnering with SECURA Insurance to raise awareness and funds during National Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week. SECURA, through its corporate charitable fund at the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region, will match up to \$15,000 in contributions to Homeless Connections from November 16 to November 30. The goal is to raise \$15,000 in 15 days.

A long-time funder of Homeless Connections, SECURA is an ideal partner to lend its name and reputation to leverage donations for the organization. "Our company is committed to making our community a better place to work, live,

and play for us all," said Kathryn Sieman, SECURA's Executive Vice President, CFO & Treasurer. "Homeless Connections aligns with our commitment by connecting those most in need to resources that help them secure housing and become more stable members of our community. Our sponsorship of the 15 in 15 challenge strengthens not only Homeless Connections and the people they serve, but our entire community."

Donations can be made by visiting homelessconnections.net, calling 920.734.9603, or sending a check to Homeless Connections at 400 N Division Street, Appleton, WI 54911.

DIRECTOR'S FORUM

In late 2011, I applied for the Executive Director position with the Emergency Shelter of the Fox Valley. After I accepted the position, one of the first people I talked to was my mother. I told her I had accepted the job at the "shelter," and I was excited to begin a new chapter in my life. I will never forget my mother's response. She said she was happy for me. Then she said "Jer (she called me Jer), I just think you're going to get too attached to all those animals and want to take them all home with you." I was momentarily awestruck,



not knowing what to say. She thought I was going to work for an animal shelter. I had just experienced what anyone associated with the ESFV for any length of time has experienced. Brand confusion!

After I regained my composure, I explained to her I was going to be working in a homeless shelter.

The ESFV has been experiencing such confusion for many, many years. In 2008 when the Fox Valley Warming Shelter was established, the confusion heightened. We received each other's mail, donations, and some people were even confused about what organization they were volunteering for and where to go to volunteer.

In 2013, we began assessing our market position in the community and the non-profit sector. An analysis by a marketing company confirmed we needed to strengthen our brand. One thing we discovered was that the "Emergency Shelter" portion of our name didn't fully represent the services that we

offer to our clients and the community. When the organization was formed in 1981, providing emergency shelter to people experiencing a housing crisis was the only service provided by the ESFV. Thirty-three years later, the organization has evolved to best meet the needs of the community and now includes Case Management, Street Outreach, and Prevention Programs.

The name was chosen after a thorough process that included input from staff, board members, funders, clients, and other stakeholders. The name Homeless Connections is the essence of what we do every day. It better reflects our mission to end homelessness by connecting individuals and families to resources that promote self-sufficiency and prevent future homeless episodes.

Our new tagline, "Prevention + Outreach + Shelter + Resources," more accurately reflects our program's work. While our name and brand have changed, our clients and community will continue to receive the same level of service. At Homeless Connections, we strive to identify what led to a person's homeless episode and then connect them to resources in the community to make sure they never experience homelessness again.

In much the same way that we have nurtured clients and connected them to resources that have helped them grow, you have connected with us, and through your contributions and volunteer efforts have helped us grow and evolve. Together, we continue to build on the strength of what you have helped create to best meet the needs of those who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness in our community.

9th Annual BENEFIT GALA

Hope has an Address Raises \$90,000

Thank you to everyone who helped make Homeless Connections' 9th Annual Benefit Gala a success:

- > **J. J. Keller Foundation** for sponsoring a \$15,000 Challenge Grant, which helped raise **\$26,500** during our services auction
- > The time and talents of the **Gala Committee** volunteers who dedicate countless hours to making the Gala a success
- > **A2Z Design** and **Red Shoes PR** for helping develop and launch our new brand into the community
- > **N.E.W. Printing, Angela Schumacher (Smoky Lake Maple Products),** and **Krista Seidl Design Co** for in-kind printing and graphic design donations
- > **91.1 The Avenue, Judilynn and Jim McDermott,** and **Strategies Ltd.** for their in-kind donations to the event
- > **More than 100** individuals and organizations donated silent and live auction items, and wine for our "mystery wine" auction
- > Emcee **Liz Neuman,** Auctioneer **Les Van Eperen,** and speakers **Janice Jackering, Jerome Martin,** and former Homeless Connections' client **Todd; 4 North** for their performance
- > **Kimberly-Clark NEON** volunteers for providing volunteer support the night of the event
- > And the **276 guests and donors** who contributed generously to help achieve over **\$90,000** in net proceeds to connect individuals and families to resources to promote self-sufficiency and prevent future homeless episodes

Gala Sponsors

Challenge Grant Sponsor
J. J. Keller Foundation, Inc.

Future Builder
Affinity Health System

Hope Builders
Kimberly-Clark Cares; U.S. Venture, Inc.

Dream Builders
Thrivent Financial; Associated Financial Group;
Fox Valley Hematology & Oncology





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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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HOPE FOR A BETTER FUTURE: A SUCCESS STORY

Todd, a Neenah native, entered Homeless Connections' shelter after four years of homelessness. Todd's genuine smile and hearty laugh made it easy to forget his struggles with homelessness, chronic health issues, depression, and anxiety. A Marine Corps Veteran, Todd had overcome many difficult situations, but at age 50, it was time to tackle Todd's struggles and help him find a home of his own.

Todd and his case manager worked to develop a plan while he was in shelter. Immediate employment would be difficult for Todd given his multiple challenges, so he focused on stabilizing his health by connecting to ongoing health care. Through referrals and recommendations from his case manager, Todd began meeting with a primary care physician as



Todd is finally home after four years of homelessness.

"There are a lot of hands reaching out to help you. You just need to grab one."

well as seeing a therapist for ongoing counseling for his depression and anxiety.

Todd began to work toward employment by enrolling in Food Share Employment & Training (FSET) and getting on the waiting list for the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. Even though he was busy with medical appointments and searching for work, Todd volunteered at Riverview Gardens and earned his first bike.

While Todd was not yet connected to income, the case management team helped him find a home of his own in the It Takes a Village Program. Todd is still living in his own apartment and he's taking tax preparation classes to increase employment opportunities. Todd

often talked about his days as a "dog whisperer" and carried around pictures of dogs he'd worked with over the years. He said his time at Homeless Connections "restored his faith in humans," and he praised staff for doing little things to "brighten his day." Homeless Connections was honored to feature Todd as the speaker at the 9th Annual Benefit Gala on November 11, Veterans' Day.

"Todd's one of those people who has a lasting impression on everyone he meets," said Client Services Coordinator Chris Lashock, "We appreciate his willingness to share his story. His hard work and determination will inspire people to make a difference in their own lives and the lives of others."



I AM Project participant, Tanya, checks out her new look.

The I AM Project

People experiencing homelessness often don't have access to the luxuries that many of us take for granted. When you're in poverty, things like shampoo, styling products, makeup, and professional clothing aren't as important as food, diapers, and transportation. Your physical appearance is secondary to survival and caring for your children, and as a result, your self-esteem and self-confidence suffer.

Alison Mayer, a Homeless Connections volunteer, created the I AM Project to give individuals experiencing homelessness a day of pampering and luxuries that are not often within their reach. Bold Salon provided 13 clients with

haircuts, color, and styling as well as makeup application; Disciples' Closet hand-picked clothing to fit each individual's personal style; and SEEK Careers/Staffing offered onsite job counseling and interviews.

Image Studios created a short documentary about the project that aims to lift the stigma of homelessness in the Fox Valley, pursue the idea that people aren't defined by their living situation, and move away from *I am homeless* to *I am strong. I am beautiful. I am a hard worker. I am enough. I am ME.*

To view the documentary and see the results of this transformative day, please visit our website: homelessconnections.net.