

OPERATIONHELP

Operation HELP provides residents of St. Croix County with financial assistance, a place for personal support, and connections to community resources to alleviate short-term economic crises.

Spring 2015 Newsletter

Operation HELP - (715) 386-0881

Phone Hours: Mon-Fri: 10am-1pm

Resource Center - (715) 386-1300

901 Fourth Street, Ste. 214 • Hudson, WI 54016

(On the 2nd fl. of the Professional Bldg.)

Office Hours: M-F: 10am-1pm • Thur: 5-6:30pm

www.operationhelpstcroix.org



Partial Funding By United Way
We are a 501(c)(3) Non Profit Organization

Your Financial HELP Counts!!!

We are blessed with many local residents who share their time, talents and resources with Operation HELP. We could not do all that we do to help our struggling neighbors without your support! Together, donations from individuals in the community amounted to 21% of the 2014 total budget. It's amazing what we can accomplish when we pool together our resources!!! Here are some ways that you can consider continuing your financial support of Operation HELP:

- Send your tax deductible check directly to Operation HELP
- Network for Good – you can make a quick and easy donation right through our website using a credit card.
- Amazon Smile – When you shop at smile.amazon.com, Amazon donates .5% to your favorite charitable organization.
- United Way Designation through your employer

Stop by the office from 10am – 1pm Monday through Friday or call us at 715-386-1300 for more information. We would love to show you our Operation HELP Resource Center and answer any questions you may have. Thank you for supporting the work of providing temporary emergency financial assistance and support to struggling families in our own backyard.

4th Annual Les Berg Walk/Run

The fourth annual Les Berg Memorial 5K Run/Walk was held at Lakefront Park on May 20.

The event is a fundraiser for Operation HELP that honors the life of longtime North Hudson resident and community volunteer Les Berg. Berg was a member of the Operation HELP board for many years and served as its treasurer.

The race, run on a beautiful evening, included over 80 runners and walkers. The race course, which ran along the river, was organized by Kelli and Jeff Mutschler.

The top male finishers by category were: 1st place age 15 & under, George Bond (also the overall male winner); 2nd place age 15 & under, Ethan Vargas; 1st place age 16-39, Sawyer Massie; 2nd place age 16-39, Drew Klabin; 1st place for 40 & over, Andy Bradley; 2nd place for age 40 & over, William Stoffregen.

The top female finishers by category were: 1st place age 15 & under, Kya Busby; 2nd place age 15 & under, Maia Hermanson; 1st place 16-39, Jamie Hoff (also the overall female winner); 2nd place age 16-39, Camille Lenzen; 1st place age 40 & over, Darcy Vargas; 2nd place age 40 & over, Andrea Mohs.



Congratulations to the Race Winners of the 4th Annual Les Berg Walk/Run

A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR RACE SPONSORS:

- Thrivent Financial/Bjorn Nesvold • Weekes Family Foundation
- Ellner's Custom Window Treatments • Xcel Energy • First Presbyterian Church of Hudson
- Catalyst Sports Medicine • 1st American Bank • Wegleitner Law • Trinity Lutheran Church
- O'Neill Elder Law • Angela Olson Law • Mudge, Porter, Lundeen & Seguin Law • Eckberg, Lammers Attorneys at Law
- Kwik Trip • Best Maid Cookies



Front row from left: Marg Wopat, Peggy Yusten, Mary Blanchard, Barb Van Loenen
Back row from left: Laura Arthur, Vicky Erickson, Jean Schneider, Mary Ellner, Lori Campbell. Not pictured: Maureen Wegleitner, Julie Baum

Operation HELP 2015 Board of Directors

Chair: Barb Van Loenen

Vice Chair: Laura Arthur

Secretary: Julie Baum

Treasurer: Vicky Erickson

Assistant Treasurer: Marg Wopat

Board Members: Mary Blanchard, Lori Campbell, Mary Ellner,

Jean Schneider, Maureen Wegleitner, Peggy Yusten

The Operation HELP Board of Directors is an all volunteer board that works ongoing to provide services to its clients.

Operation HELP's Funding

In addition to being funded by individuals, local clubs and organizations, United Way and grants from various generous foundations, Operation HELP receives donations from several local churches. These donations may be specified for programs such as laundry detergent for Operations HELP's annual Christmas Campaign or for the purchase of toiletry items for the Resource Center; one church provides hundreds of pairs of socks and underwear for the visitors to the Resource Center. Donations from other churches are used to meet the needs of Operation HELP - whether it be to fund the laundry, gasoline, or vouchers for farmers markets, or to help with the cost of the rent and utility assistance provided by Operation HELP.

Thank you to Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in Afton and Redeemer Lutheran Church in Burkhardt for their support. Hudson churches that helped fund Operation HELP during 2014 and the beginning of 2015 are Bethel Lutheran Church, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, St. Patrick's Catholic Church, United Methodist Church, Christ Center Assembly of God, First Baptist Church and First Presbyterian Church.

Operation HELP knows all churches have missions that work to meet the needs of people struggling financially; we are thankful many of our local churches have also chosen to partner with Operation HELP to serve others.

A Record Year of Service

Thanks to financial support from generous individuals, foundations, businesses, local churches, and clubs & organizations, Operation HELP was able to provide \$177,412 in client services for St. Croix County residents during 2014. This was nearly \$13,000 more in assistance than Operation HELP provided in 2013; over 95% of the donations received go directly to assisting our neighbors in need.

Emergency assistance with rent, utility bills, and minor auto repairs was provided to 353 families in 2014. In addition, visitors to Operation HELP's Resource Center received 294 gas vouchers, 127 laundry vouchers, and 109 Farmers Market vouchers. Other Operation HELP programs and services such as Warm for Winter outer clothing and the Christmas Campaign for Hudson children also had an increase in participants.

Recipients of Operations HELP's programs come from many St. Croix communities. Hudson, 33%, New Richmond, 27%, River Falls, 12% Somerset 6%, and Baldwin, 5%. The remainder of Operations HELP's assistance went to residents of Deer Park, Glenwood City, Hammond, Houlton, Roberts, Star Prairie, Wilson, and Woodville.

Operation HELP supported close to 3,000 individuals/families in various ways in 2014, and as impressive as these numbers are, the real story of Operation HELP's success is hearing the relief and thankfulness of the people we serve- this is what Operation HELP is all about. A typical situation that caused our callers to seek assistance in 2014 is, "Her children were sick and she had to take time off work to care for them. Operations HELP paid her utility bill." Another example is, "I lost my job May 1st, 2014. Although I recently went back to work, it has been 3 weeks since my last unemployment check. I was able to get assistance with my fuel and utility bill."

Your donation helps us make all this possible; thank you.

Car Seats & Port-a-Cribs

Operation HELP, with the support of St. Croix County Health Services, are excited with the fantastic turnout for the 7th Car Seat Distribution held in March of this year. Over 12 people were in attendance and 6 vouchers were distributed for Car Seats or Port-a-Cribs. Prior to receiving the new car seats, parent(s) completed a Baby Safety course to learn how to properly use a car seat, along with Baby CPR and other Baby Safety information.



Pictured from left: Class attendants and Board Member-Jean Schneider

WE MAKE A
LIVING BY
WHAT WE GET,
BUT WE MAKE A
LIFE BY
WHAT WE GIVE.

-WINSTON CHURCHILL

Did WE Help? You Decide!

Operation HELP sends out surveys to clients that received assistance. These anonymous survey responses help us improve our programs and services. Following are several responses to the survey question "**What has happened in your life as a result of assistance provided**"

A client's furnace went out: They had to pay \$600 to fix it and got behind on utility bill. *"As soon as I heard how much you could help with I slept good that night."*

Help with rent assistance: *"Thank you very much for helping me and my child from being evicted and out in the cold."*

A client lost her job and has been living on unemployment: We helped with utilities. *"I was so relieved to get help. Losing my job in January has really put me behind in my bills. Thank you for your help."*