

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.

Fall 2014 Newsletter
OperationHELP - (715) 386-0881
Phone Hours: Mon-Fri: 10am-1pm
The Drop-In 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

The SOURCE Officially Becomes Operation HELP

For those of you in the community that have supported The SOURCE from its conception in 2010, it may come as a surprise that this organization will no longer be known in name. However, The SOURCE's mission and heart will still exist within the arms of Operation HELP.

What does this mean for our clients? Our client's will see no change in the services that we provide. We will still offer our voucher programs, face to face support, computer usage and emergency provisions at the same location in the old library building at 901 4th Street in Hudson. Rent, utility, and car repair will continue to be managed over the phone.

What does this mean for our donors? All checks should now be written to Operation HELP. If you desire to have your donation designated specifically for one program, please note this in the memo

line of the check. The Board works diligently to be good stewards of the resources you entrust to us.

What does this mean for our volunteers? Volunteers will still have the opportunity to help out in our drop in center at 901 4th Street or to work strictly over the phone filling out intake forms for our callers seeking rent and utility assistance. We continue to be humbled by the willingness of those in our community to give of their time. If you feel called to do so, we are always looking for people to help us assist those in our community experiencing a financial crises.

Thank you for supporting The SOURCE, thank you for connecting with it's mission, and we at Operation HELP look forward to continuing the work that was started!



Pastor John Lestock



Mayor Al Burchill, Operation HELP Board Member Barb Van Loenen, Operation HELP Volunteer Skip James

Concert With A Cause Delivers

Over 200 people gathered on Saturday evening, September 27 at Bethel Highlands to hear the music of New Song Band and Hot Under the Collar. Mayor Al Burchill emceed the event at which the audience was treated to a wide variety of music including Cajun, country, Irish and rock from the 60's, 70's, 80's and even the 90's. The talented musicians played guitar, bass, drums and keyboard as well as steel guitar, mandolin and fiddle. The concert raised more than \$3,500 for Operation HELP.

In addition to the music the audience had a chance to hear more about Operation HELP and the work we do. They also heard from one of our newer volunteers, Skip James, talk about the value of the services we provide and the positive experience as a volunteer.

Operation HELP is grateful to the following for the success of this "first annual" **Concert With A Cause**.

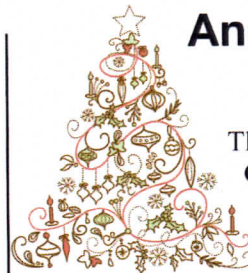
Pastor John Lestock – for his vision in orchestrating this event and for choosing Operation HELP as the cause

New Song Band members: Bill Jenkinson, Tracey Jenkinson, Heidi Selander, Katie Possehl, Eric Possehl, Rick Burt, Mitch Jones, Kevin Chukel and Lonna Possehl.

Hot Under the Collar members: Vianna Bohlen, Mike Chinander, Colin Whalen, Jessica Dant, Paul Kunkel, Kirsten Endrud, Andrea Van Gulder and John Lestock.

Bethel Lutheran Church: for their hospitality in allowing us to use their facility
Caribou Coffee for providing the hot beverages

Ellners Fashion Window Treatments for providing the cookies



Annual Christmas Campaign

The annual **Christmas Campaign for Kids** is underway! Operation HELP, sponsors, local businesses and churches, and dozens of volunteers are working together to help make this Christmas a merry one for hundreds of local children who might otherwise go without. Operation HELP coordinates the campaign, linking families in need who live in the Hudson school district with generous sponsors and supporters who can provide gifts and other items for each family.

Last year gifts were provided for 127 Families/319 children and the program is continuing to grow.

Sponsors are asked to bring items to St. Paul's Episcopal Church (502 County Rd. UU) on Monday or Tuesday, December 8th and 9th between 10:00 am and 7:00 PM.

Volunteers will organize the items through Wednesday for distribution to parents on Thursday, December 11th, between 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

You can help us "bring a little Christmas" this year.

Want to Help?
We've Made it Easy!

Visit www.operationhelpstcroix.org to sign up, or call during office hours.

Pet Food News



Thanks to Michele at St. Croix Animal Friends the visitors who stop in to Operation HELP's drop-in center are able to pick up dog and cat food for their four legged friends. This is a wonderful service for our visitors. It would be horrible to have to surrender a loved pet because you can't afford to feed them. We are so thankful that the St. Croix Animal Friends partner with Operation HELP to offer pet food.

Warm in Winter Program



Operation HELP has been providing new and gently used winter clothing, including boots, for children in need throughout St. Croix County for the last nine years. Last year 27 children ranging in age from infants to high school age and 5 adults received outer wear.

Many of the calls to the program coordinator come from school counselors who notice children coming to school not dressed for the cold weather. If you would like to donate to the program or know of a family in need, please call The Drop-In Center at 715-386-1300.

The Warm for Winter Program is able to offer this much needed service because of the financial assistance received from generous donors. A big thank you to Roberta Floyd with UAW Local 722 at the General Motor Parts Division located in Hudson, the Hudson Chamber of Commerce for supporting the program through their Winter Drive and the New Richmond City Employees.

Shop Amazon – Give a Gift to Operation HELP Through the Amazon Smile Program

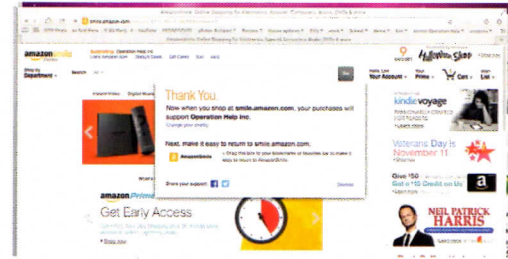
Are you an e-shopper? Is Amazon one of your e-shopping destinations? If you said “yes” to those questions your purchases may turn into gifts to Operation HELP. The Amazon Smile program Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice.

To take advantage of this program login to smile.amazon.com just as you would login to the regular Amazon site (same username and same password).

You'll see a screen that asks you to designate a charitable organization. Type Operation HELP, Hudson, WI (it is important to designate Hudson, WI as there are many organizations with similar names). You will see a screen with our name listed and an orange “SELECT”

button. Press that select button.

Once you select Operation HELP as your designated charity you'll see a screen that looks like this:



Then each time you make a qualifying purchase through the smile.amazon.com website a portion of the proceeds will be donated from Amazon to Operation HELP.

Who Does Operation HELP Serve?

Operation HELP is designed to be a “bridge” for families facing a temporary financial setback such as unexpected auto repair bills, family illness, or reduction in work hours. We provide financial help once over a twelve month period, limited to a total of three times - unless the client is willing to attend an approved budget class. The caller must be able to make up the difference between the amount of assistance we provide and the amount they owe. Our assistance is limited to \$450 in rent, \$350 in utilities, and \$300 in auto repairs. There are also residency requirements. Operation HELP has provided assistance to residents of St. Croix County and the city of River Falls for 30 years. Volunteers at the office answer many phone calls each month from area residents to determine what support they need. Before completing an intake form the volunteer ask questions to ensure their need meets our criteria. The Operation Help coordinator promptly reviews the information from the intake form and begins the process of determining if the client meets our criteria to receive financial help.

In September Operation HELP received 90 calls from people either seeking rent support, utility bill help and requests for information about other agencies that might be able to help them with their situation. During September the coordinator made 190 calls to utility companies, landlords, and clients to help her make the determination of who we could assist. As a result, we were able to help 22 families and paid out a little more than \$7,500 of assistance to families that had a short term financial issue preventing them from paying utilities or the rent needed to stay in their homes till they regained their financial footing.

Here are some examples of who we helped and why our neighbors needed help. A New Richmond woman's son suddenly got sick and was hospitalized. She had to miss work and purchase some expensive medicine, so she was short on her rent money. She paid \$346 of her rent and Operation Help paid \$450.

A woman from Glenwood City was put on bed rest due to complications with her pregnancy, and then had a C-section, so she missed quite a bit of work. She's back at work now, but her gas was shut off due to non-payment. She paid \$220 and we paid the balance to get her gas turned back on.

A Hudson man had an unexpected \$500 car repair bill and got behind in rent. Rent is \$625, he paid \$175 and we paid the balance of \$450.

The Operation HELP board works hard to use your donations wisely; 95.3% of the money donated goes directly to serve those in need; 3.1% to administration costs; 1.6% was used for fund raising/marketing. We thank you for your support.

