GINNY SCHRAG TO RETIRE AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE GATHERING

“I was on The Gathering Board when Ginny was first hired as Site Manager and then moved into the Executive Director position. It is my pleasure to share a bit about her as she leaves at the end of April after twenty years with the organization.” Mel Johnson, Board Member Emeritus

As Ginny Schrag looks back over her years at The Gathering, beginning as Site Manager in 1998 then as Executive Director in 2001, the first thing she mentions are the people she has met including thousands of guests, and hundreds of volunteers and board members. Many are people she has served with, and many are people she has served. This work has been and continues to be supported by a community of financial donors, food donors, artists and faith communities, and so many more, all faithful to The Gathering as “People in community feeding the hungry”.

In reflecting on these two decades of work, Ginny states she is most thankful for being able to maintain this ministry through good financial times and difficult ones, through floods and moves, and through changes in corporate, foundation, and government regulations. To this she adds being grateful for the stability of the Fresh Produce Preservation Project, the Golf Event, and the bag lunch program. She is most thankful, however, that the guests remain the focus, and the ministry of hospitality continues.

Ginny’s work has given her a strong fundraising portfolio, strong strategic planning and board development skills, and furthered her experience in project and program development, all skills The Gathering needed to move forward. But more importantly, through all the years, Ginny has held the belief that this is God’s work, and like many of us who are involved with The Gathering she feels blessed to have had the opportunity to make a difference in another’s life every day. Her prayer for The Gathering is that the guests will always be first.

Now as she begins to look forward to what is ahead only a few plans have been identified, including some time in the Rockies this summer, learning to kayak, taking up classical guitar, and focusing on her Spanish.

From all of us in The Gathering community we thank Ginny for all she has brought to The Gathering and all she has given. May she now go with our blessing into her new beginning.

THE MISSION: of The Gathering is to provide meals and associated services or programs to those who would otherwise go hungry or without. WE RESPECT the dignity and values of every individual we serve and value our volunteers who allow us to serve the community. WE ACT directly and in concert with others to alleviate hunger and to address the root causes and related problems associated with hunger. OUR SUCCESS will be demonstrated by providing quality services to our guests and remaining a viable volunteer-driven organization.

VISION: We are a community of guests, volunteers and staff united by a common goal: to feed the hungry in body, mind and spirit.
PROGRAM FEATURE: TAPPING INTO THE CREATIVE SIDE

Volunteers, we love you! You do 98% of the work at The Gathering, cooking and serving meals, but that’s not all. You are joyful and creative people, and here are some of the ways you have creatively supported The Gathering’s mission and our guests over the past six months. What will you come up with next?

✓ Bus rental to transport meal guests to Salvation Army’s Coats for the Homeless distribution site.

✓ Sleeping mats made from plastic grocery bags - complete with carrying straps - for our homeless guests. (Check out YouTube for a “how to” video.)

✓ Street Supply Bags with the basic essentials – gloves, socks, hand sanitizer, water bottles, snacks, hand warmers

✓ Beautiful roses created from spoons to thank Gathering staff for their work

✓ Jefferson School Community Day with projects for all grade levels – placemats, bag lunches and scarves

✓ Donating Christmas Cards, stamps and the time needed to help guests connect with family & friends at Christmas

✓ Proceeds from a Charity Poker Tournament in honor of a beloved friend

✓ Decorating sites, baking pies & Christmas cookies, roasting turkeys for holiday meals

Thanks to Kathy Phillipson, Jefferson Community School, Stephanie & Byron Zieball, St. Paul’s Episcopal, Karen Dardy, Mira Meadows & Friends, Jeanne Baade, St. James-Mukwonago, Milwaukee College Prep, Immanuel Presbyterian, Fox Point Lutheran, St. Mark’s Episcopal, Spiritual Living Church, Jim Wahlen.

MOTOWN COMES TO THE GATHERING
VOLUNTEER CELEBRATION 2019
-Celebrating 2018 Volunteer Milestones-
Sponsored by Direct Supply

Friday, April 26
5:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Awards Program Starting at 6:45

St. Mark’s Episcopal Church
2618 North Hackett Avenue

PLEASE RSVP BY APRIL 19 TO:
soulfood@thegatheringwis.org or 414-272-4122
When RSVP’ing, please provide your full name, contact info, and which volunteer group you are a part of, if applicable.
REFLECTION: Living in the Ordinary
By Ginny Schrag, Outgoing Executive Director of the Gathering

It was the summer between my freshman and sophomore years in high school, and it was the final evening of church camp in southern Nebraska. Some type of church or Christian camp experience comprised a part of my summers from fifth grade through college and a few years after — whether as camper, employee or counselor. I loved it.

This final evening was highlighted by a huge bonfire with all of us sitting around it singing and sharing what we had found significant in our week together...some would call it witnessing. At some point I found myself standing up and announcing to all that I thought God was calling me to be a missionary nurse — probably because at that time the only way I understood that one could live a life of faith and service would be through becoming a minister or a missionary (both career choices uncles, aunts and cousins had made). I didn’t grasp yet that faith is lived out in the ordinary — that my mother with her teaching, library work, homemaking, Sunday school instruction and music, and my father with his farming, school bus driving, umpiring, poetry and drawing were both living out lives of faith.

I do now, and...I didn’t become a missionary nurse... and I didn’t go to a faith-based college. In fact, I intentionally made the choice to go to a state university (University of Kansas) that at that time was experiencing the unrest of Vietnam protests, an increasing drug culture, and a rising black student movement. I intentionally chose a place where everything I knew would be challenged — and, admittedly, it didn’t hurt that I was a huge college basketball fan. I graduated from KU with a degree in social work and a commitment to live out my faith in service.

Scroll to now — when I am retiring from the work that brought all of this together, and that returned me to the ordinary. For what could be more ordinary than cooking a meal and inviting another to eat? What could be more ordinary than washing pots and pans, and pouring coffee? And yet in every step it takes to get that meal out, in every person that walks through our doors, in every volunteer and donor and vendor and group and collaborator and staff person and guest, in every little ordinary thing, God’s kingdom is breaking through... every...single...day. I could not be more thankful for this opportunity, for the ability to give and for all those angels among us.

Thank you

Ginny Schrag

THE GATHERING AT WORK

Bag lunches prepared and donated by Hmong Consortium

Dinner is Served

Produce Donation from Shepherd’s Purse
Guillermo, a native of Mexico, came to the United States in 2004 as an expatriate with the Kohler Co. He moved to Sheboygan in 2006 and it was there where he met Ellen, born and raised in Wisconsin, whom he married in 2011. Today, Guillermo works as a Senior Talent Development Consultant at Baird. His day-to-day work includes coaching and training his teams toward success and cultural diversity.

Guillermo’s passion for cultural diversity developed at a young age. He lived and worked in four different countries before coming to the US and immersing himself in American culture. As a Mexican immigrant he has experienced seeing the world with different perspectives and enjoys sharing his Mexican culture with his American friends and colleagues.

When Guillermo first joined The Gathering’s Board of Directors, The Gathering was actively working to diversify its Board, and Guillermo took the opportunity to bring his talent and passion to the organization. Guillermo is currently serving as The Gathering’s Board President.

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL
MOTOWN COMES TO THE GATHERING: Volunteer Appreciation Event - Friday, April 26 (see page 2)

JULY
2019 GATHERING GOLF CLASSIC
All proceeds benefit The Gathering’s meal programs for Milwaukee’s hungry and homeless
Monday, July 15, 2019
NEW VENUE: BROWN DEER GOLF COURSE, Milwaukee County
7625 N. Range Line Rd., Glendale, WI
Online registration open April 15; www.thegatheringwis.org

AUGUST
HUNGER BOOK SALE
All proceeds benefit local and global hunger relief organizations
Thursday, Aug 1 – Tuesday, Aug 6
All Saints Cathedral, 818 E. Juneau Avenue, Milwaukee, WI
To donate books contact All Saints Cathedral at 414-271-7719

OCTOBER
2019 MILWAUKEE EMPTY BOWLS
All proceeds benefit Milwaukee area hunger relief programs
Sunday, October 2019; 11:00 am – 2:00 pm
(check website – www.milwaukeemptybowls.org for exact date)
MSOE Kern Center, 1245 N. Broadway, Milwaukee
OUR DONORS

THE GATHERING BOARD OF DIRECTORS THANKS THE FOLLOWING GENEROUS SUPPORTERS
GIVING $250 OR MORE BETWEEN OCTOBER 16, 2018 AND FEBRUARY 28, 2019

We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of all donor names. If we have missed you or spelled your name incorrectly, please let us know.

$15,000 - $25,000
Catholic Community Foundation-JCC Fund

$10,000 - $14,999
Emmanuel United Church of Christ-Hales Corners
Herb Kohl Philanthropies

$5,000 - $9,999
1 Anonymous Donor
All Saints’ Cathedral Hunger Book Sale
Christ Church Episcopal – Whitefish Bay
Mel and David Johnson
Komatsu Mining Corp.
Jane Bradley Pettit Foundation
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St. Paul’s Episcopal-Milwaukee
Donor Choice-United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County

$2,500 - $4,999
2 Anonymous Donors
Direct Supply
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St. Mark’s Episcopal-Milwaukee
John Zacher

$1,000 - $2,499
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St. Matthias Parish-Milwaukee
Gary and Maureen Shebesta

Keep the Gathering’s Meal Programs Going Strong

Please Give a Gift

Use the ENCLOSED ENVELOPE (check, cc, cash); give ONLINE at www.thegatheringwis.org;
TEXT “gathering” to 501-55 on your mobile device; shop AMAZONSMILE (select The Gathering as your charity of choice); MATCHING GIFTS (ask your employer if they will match your donation); host your own FUNDRAISER; designate The Gathering as a BENEFICIARY in your will or trust.

Continued on Page 6
$500-$999 continued
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Editor: Ginny Schrag
Photography: Gathering Staff & Friends
Layout, Print/Mail Coordinator: Jerry Smith
Office Address: 804 E. Juneau Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202
Phone: 414-272-4122
Fax: 1-888-352-3716
Email: soulfood@thegatheringwis.org
Web Site: www.thegatheringwis.org

GATHERING STAFF
Virginia Schrag, Executive Director
Jim Ardis, Dinner Coordinator
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Ed Kowach, Dinner Cook & Security
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