Volunteer helps make life tasty at Cornerstone

Volunteer Nancy Odegard loves to work with her friend Gail Mork at Cornerstone Community. One day a week Nancy makes life a little tastier when she helps prepare lunch for the six adults with developmental disabilities living there.

Back in 2015, Nancy called Bob Mark, Community Cupboard program manager, about volunteer opportunities with Upper Valley MEND.

When Bob told Nancy about Cornerstone, she knew that’s where she wanted to volunteer.

“I love special needs adults,” Nancy said. “I drove a school bus for special needs kids for 30 years.”

Cornerstone Community volunteer Nancy Odegard (left) and long-time staff person Gail Mork (right), prepare lunches at Cornerstone Community, a home in Leavenworth for six adults with development disabilities.

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For her first month volunteering at Cornerstone, Nancy prepared lunches alongside Cornerstone Community manager Carl Florea. Carl, who describes Nancy as a “super volunteer,” was glad to be able to welcome her back to Cornerstone this past April, once she was fully vaccinated.

Now, Nancy helps Gail, who has worked at Cornerstone since it opened in 2011, prepare lunch one day a week. Nancy is very fond of her Cornerstone family - Nora, Charles, Daniel, Nick, Micah and Joseph.

“Super volunteer Nancy Odegard helps prepare lunch at Cornerstone Community one day a week.

“I just love working with them,” Nancy said. “You can give so much of yourself.”

Pilot project expands MEND’s service area

Starting this July, Upper Valley MEND expanded its emergency assistance service area thanks to increased funding.

Chelan County awarded Upper Valley MEND $202,000 for emergency assistance services over the next two years, more than double past grant cycles. Traditionally, MEND’s service area is the Cascade School District, which includes the communities of Leavenworth, Dryden, Peshastin, Lake Wenatchee and Plain, and up to Blewett and Stevens Passes.

As part of the award, Upper Valley MEND will implement a pilot project to extend emergency assistance services to Cashmere. Historically, Cashmere has lacked access to emergency assistance funds, although MEND has occasionally helped in Cashmere.

“This is a big increase and points to confidence from Chelan County that we’re doing a good job in meeting rural needs,” said Executive Director Kaylin Bettinger. “These funds will support both the emergency assistance program manager position as well as direct aid payments for clients.”

The pilot project will determine if MEND can meet demand, and will be reviewed in 2022.
Your community. Your impact.

Leavenworth resident Robert, 50, lives on disability. A regular at the Community Cupboard food bank, Robert doesn’t just come for food, he comes for the social interaction too. “I love to talk,” Robert said. When he is feeling alone, a staff member or volunteer at the Cupboard is there to listen. Robert leaves with food, and he feels heard and valued.

When Kim came to the Upper Valley Free Clinic this spring, she had not been able to see a doctor for 15 years. She came to the clinic because of an acute medical condition, but when Free Clinic Manager Dr. Karl Kranz talked with Kim, it became apparent she hadn’t had a women’s annual exam or basic health screenings during that time. Dr. Kranz arranged for her to see a Cascade Medical Center doctor for treatment of her medical issue, and get help enrolling in Washington State’s Breast, Cervical and Colon Health Screening program.

From January through June 2021 you helped:

379 families with food, ensuring no one in our community has to go to bed hungry.

33 families with fuel or transportation costs, getting them to the doctor or work.

23 families with their rent or mortgage, preventing homelessness.

13 families with their utility bills, preventing shut-offs and keeping families safe.

8 families with shelter when they were homeless, providing rest and security.

3 families with medical and prescription costs.
Monthly donations work for donors and for the community

Bill and Sandi Kampen moved to Leavenworth as newlyweds in 1967. Their first home was a tiny apartment on top of a double garage that they rented for $47.50 a month.

“It had a Murphy bed,” Bill said. “You could barely turn around in it.”

Two years later, they moved into their current home. By budgeting carefully, they paid it off in seven years. They had some years when they struggled, but now they are in a position to give back.

Bill and Sandi know how hard it is for local families to make ends meet now and they want to help.

They like to donate using an automatic monthly donation because they know that most donations are made during the year-end holiday season. This means the first part of the year is well-funded, but funds dwindle as the year progresses.

Leavenworth residents and retired teachers Bill and Sandi Kampen converted to automatic monthly donations in 2017. Monthly donations help provide a reliable, steady stream of income to meet the community’s needs.

“Needs don’t happen once a year. They happen on a monthly basis”. Bill Motsenbocker, monthly donor.

Monthly donations provide a steady stream of income to meet needs year-round. And making them automatic makes a donor’s and MEND’s budgeting easier.

“We figured giving monthly will help with [MEND’s] budgeting,” Sandi said.

Bill Motsenbocker and Susan Ready are also committed to helping their neighbors. They have been making a monthly donation since March 2020, when the pandemic hit the Upper Valley.

“Needs don’t happen once a year,” Bill said. “They happen on a monthly basis. And, giving monthly keeps our attention on the fact that MEND is doing all the right things.”

If you would like to become a recurring donor - monthly, quarterly, whatever works for you - go to www.uvmend.org/donate to sign up.

Thank you to all our donors for your support for those in need in the Upper Valley!
After a lifetime of independence, a heart attack five years ago left Peshastin resident Larry, 78, struggling to cope with daily life.

Larry had always been on top of things. He had run his own business with 35 employees at one point. Smart and capable, he was used to doing for himself.

But after the heart attack, Larry stopped doing anything other than the necessities to get by.


Larry kept his struggles a secret, so much so that even his family didn’t know. But when his granddaughter came to live with him last November, he knew that he had to get help to be able to support her.

“I had to change my way of spending,” Larry said. “But asking for help was extremely hard for me.”

Larry decided to come to the Community Cupboard food bank to get supplemental groceries. Larry said he cried after the first few times he used the food bank. He still has trouble coming to the Cupboard and receiving help. But shopping for groceries at the food bank frees up just a little bit of money each month to push him in the right direction.

Now, seven months later, he is almost caught up on his taxes.

“After a heart attack made it hard to stay on top of things, Larry fell behind on keeping life running. The Community Cupboard has helped him get back on track by freeing up a little bit of money each month that he can put toward other expenses.”

Did you know about MEND’s monthly e-newsletter? The e-newsletter brings you stories about the difference your donations of time or money are making, news, and current events, all in a quick email. Bill and Sandi Kampen love getting the e-newsletter. Bill said that whenever he reads about someone getting help, he thinks about how he was part of helping that person.

How great is that?
Subscribe today at www.uvmend.org.
Community connection through volunteering

James Cooper and Lori Cooks are new to the Upper Valley. They are getting to know their new community by volunteering with Upper Valley MEND.

James and Lori did their first glean with Community Harvest in October 2020.

“We’re new to the area so it’s nice to get a geography lesson,” Lori said. “And we’ve met some really nice people.”

Volunteering and environmental stewardship are important to the couple, so gleaning is a perfect fit for them. This year, they have gone on one to two gleans a week.

“We don’t want to see food go to waste,” said James. “People in need have a harder time getting fresh food, so that’s what we like about gleaning.”

Also new to Leavenworth last year, Laura Maguire has found that supporting MEND has helped her get to know her new home.

“I’m very fortunate to be able to take care of myself,” Laura said. “Donating is a way to participate in a new community and the gleans are a great way to get to know a different cross-section of people. Donating money can feel like it’s at arm’s length. But putting food on the shelf decreases the distance.”

Without volunteers, MEND would be unable to meet the food, housing, healthcare and emergency assistance needs of the Upper Valley.

Lori, James, Laura and a host of other volunteers have given over 2,726 hours from January through June to help their neighbors in need. Volunteers have supported grocery rescue, Das Thrift Haus sorting center, the Free Clinic, and served on committees and the Board.

Thank you to our volunteers for giving so much and making such a difference.
Community icon leaves legacy of love

Marydell Marson was a long-time supporter of MEND and the Upper Valley community. When she passed away in April this year, she had made sure she would continue to look after her neighbors.

As well as many other organizations, Marydell included Upper Valley MEND and Cornerstone Community in her will.

Marydell left $5,000 to Cornerstone Community, a home in Leavenworth for six adults with developmental disabilities. Her grandson Nick is part of the Cornerstone family.

Marydell also left $5,000 to the Community Cupboard food bank, and $5,000 to be Upper Valley MEND greatest need fund.

“We are deeply grateful that Marydell sought to watch over her community into the future by leaving such generous gifts in her will,” Executive Director Kaylin Bettinger said. “She was a generous supporter of MEND for many years, and helped a lot of people through hard times.”

Upper Valley MEND volunteer Judy Rector knew Marydell through the Leavenworth Methodist Church. She remembers how Marydell made everyone feel like they belonged.

“When we first attended the Leavenworth Methodist church, Marydell Marson greeted us with a wide smile and a sincere handshake,” Judy said. “I never heard her say anything negative about anyone— a true lady. She was always thinking about others and how she could help. She truly was loved by everyone.”

Rest in peace Marydell, and thank you for all you gave to your community.
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Jubilee Global Gifts
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Leavenworth, WA 98826
(509) 548-3508

Cornerstone Community
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Community Harvest hosted a glean at Snowgrass Farm for kids at a Wenatchee River Institute summer camp. The kids had fun learning about where their food comes from and helping to feed those in need.

Community Harvest beats the heat

Community Harvest gleaning season is in full swing, even with challenging weather conditions.

Gleaning is the harvesting of excess or unmarketable produce. In the Wenatchee Valley, thousands of pounds of high-quality fruits and vegetables are harvested by Upper Valley MEND’s gleaning program. This healthy produce is then distributed to food banks in Chelan and Douglas Counties, including the Community Cupboard in Leavenworth.

Gleaning coordinator Whit Jester said that even on the hottest days volunteers have shown up to help harvest with smiles on their faces.

Volunteers have gleaned over 5,600 pounds of produce so far.

“We’re so grateful for the help from each volunteer, and we’re looking forward to the rest of the season,” Whit said.