



Volunteer Debbie fills up our new freezer in the food shelf



A Home Delivery volunteer shops requested items for a client

VEL Campaign Recap

Over two years ago, CES leaders came to the conclusion that we needed more resources to move the mission forward and support our committed volunteers.

The VEL Campaign was born to raise \$300K to hire staff

and systems that would help train, encourage and grow the relationships with our volunteers. This marks the end of that campaign as we celebrate what God has done through our donors. **\$318,829.00 raised!**



Cold weather can't stop our MOW team! Above, Bob greets drivers and gets them their meals. Below, volunteers pack up and get ready to deliver



MN FoodShare

Join us again with your family, church or work to do a food and hygiene drive from March 1-April 11. MN FoodShare March Campaign is a statewide food and funds campaign to help collect resources and remind us about those in our midst who need additional support.

Please visit:

<https://www.cesmn.org/help/minnesota-foodshare> for ways to engage and help our neighbors!



CES Mission

Rooted in God's loving grace, Community Emergency Service transforms lives by serving neighbors, sharing resources and becoming community

~
a place where people come hungry and leave hopeful.

February
2021



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Community Emergency Service

The Spotlight Newsletter

Beyond Bread to the Bread of Life . . . Beyond Ourselves to Jesus Christ

What are SoS Ambassadors?

Before COVID-19, seniors were the fastest growing group of visitors to Minnesota's food shelves. Many seniors experienced significant barriers to accessing the hunger relief system (i.e. transportation, mobility, health, etc.). The COVID-19 public health emergency has further exacerbated these issues. Seniors have been encouraged to self-isolate at home to minimize their risk of contracting COVID-19, thus becoming more isolated and in need.

Enter **Serving our Seniors Ambassadors.**

The goal of this initiative is to bring healthy groceries to seniors and to facilitate connections and companionship between participants and volunteers.

Through SoS Ambassadors, CES will find volunteers who will be paired with an isolated

and homebound senior in areas of South Minneapolis.

Each month the SoS volunteer will:

- make regular wellness phone call(s) to their senior
- "shop" in the CES warehouse and pack the senior's grocery order (being mindful of cultural and dietary preferences)
- deliver healthy and nutritious groceries to low-income seniors to meet their hunger needs

- engage creatively and safely with clients, decreasing isolation during COVID-19 via phone calls, socially distanced in-person visits, and helping unpack and put away their food if needed, all while maintaining CDC guidelines

Mary, the First SoS Ambassador

Last fall, Mary began looking for an opportunity to "practically help in an immediate way."

Enter Volunteer Match online and an introduction to **SoS Ambassadors.** Mary said, "I loved the idea of helping people, coupled by being an

Ambassador from CES to go into the community."

Mary became the first tester volunteer and has since moved into the role of not only being an Ambassador, but also introducing and training new volunteers. After a friendly conversation



Mary packing bags of groceries for her partnered seniors

with a senior, Mary comes to CES to pack the groceries with care, knowing what they like and dislike. "When I deliver, it is like going to visit a friend. I always look forward to seeing them monthly and have grown attached to each one. Some of them are storytellers, some love jokes, some love to talk about their families, while others are quiet."

Teresa* squeezes past her barking dog to be able to talk with Mary, telling her all about life during the past weeks. Often during the call prior to packing the groceries, Mary asks Teresa what she needs. Teresa's response is, "I think you know me well. Keep doing what you do."

Recently, Karen* became responsible for her grandchildren and said, "Knowing that food and hygiene are on the way each month is a load off my mind. It is one less thing on my plate. Thank you."

Mary ended by sharing why others should become SoS Ambassadors. "This is a very personal way to meet neighbors on a one on one level for five to ten minutes. It is a wonderful moment of great meaning when you know that you have made someone's day better."

Interested in becoming an SoS Ambassador? Contact khong@cesmn.org or call 612.870.1125 x120

*names changed for client anonymity



Director's Discourse

As I write this, we are early into our new year. The election is behind us, but the turmoil continues. We still struggle with the limitations of the COVID-19 virus on our volunteers, staff, and neighbors. We have not only survived the most recent surge in the virus, but are now optimistic as the vaccine is being distributed. Restaurants are partially open again, and signs of a more hopeful future lie ahead.

As we begin 2021, I am grateful for your support. Also, we are thankful for the work of those who volunteer and make our work fruitful, for our Board and staff and their perseverance throughout 2020, for the support of all of our church and business partners, but, most of all, for God's grace and provision.

Over this past year, the number of those we

provide services to has increased dramatically. In the foreseeable future, we do not see this changing. Consequently, we are working on plans to increase service to homebound seniors and improve the quality of the experience of coming to CES.

COVID-19 has made it more difficult for us to establish relationships with many of our neighbors. After a long period of hunkering down, it is exciting to plan for a post COVID-19 future. While we do not take the remaining risk lightly, there are still those in need of our help.

It is important for staff, volunteers, Board members and supporters of this work to remember that no matter what political or social unrest or effects of COVID-19 there may be, our calling must remain the same. Ours is a calling of service to those who suffer from physical, emotional, or spiritual want. There is much we cannot do about unrest and the ongoing pandemic, but the need and calling remain. As long as we are able, we will be here to serve.

In addition, we continue to work on succession planning in our organization, taking a fresh look at our strategic planning in the year ahead, increasing volunteer engagement, and expanding our

fundraising efforts to support all of this.

We thank you for your continued support in 2021. Please continue to pray for CES, staff, Board, volunteers and our neighbors. Without your partnership, we cannot fulfill our calling.

One last comment – I and the Board of Directors have worked diligently for the past several years to create a vision for the future of CES, assemble a talented leadership team and build a gifted staff to help shape and execute that vision for the ultimate benefit of those we serve. Although I will be going on medical leave for up to 6 weeks undergoing bypass surgery, I am fully confident that this leadership team and committed staff, with support of the Board of Directors, will carry on this work without missing a beat in my absence.

I look forward to returning in late February or early March to resume my duties.

Thank you all for your prayers and support of CES.

God bless you!

Mike Lloyd
Executive Director



Director John Bohnsack and Pastor Berg receiving money soon after CES opened

Remembering our History

Our founder, Rev. William Berg at the age of 103, shared his thoughts at CES' 40th anniversary celebration in 2012: "Many called CES the 'miracle in the inner city'. It surely did not begin with me . . . CES was born in the heart of God . . . it is centered in self-giving love. This is in accordance with 1 John 3:16, 'This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for one another.'"

In its first years, CES' staff was utterly overwhelmed by the constant need for food and financial help. Pastor Berg recalled that part of the 'miracle of the inner city' was Russel Lund, founder of Lunds & Byerly's, showing up at CES. Berg challenged Lund to fund his staff for three months and see if it was worth it – and if it was, to then support CES in a significant way. Lund saw the money was well used and in turn supported

CES for years. He once commented that the funds he gave to CES were the most effective of all the philanthropic work he did.

This foundational giving was the seed that started CES. It has been carried year after year, decade after decade, by our donors. You have helped our community care for our neighbors and their needs. It would not be possible without your support.

Meet Rhonda, Our New SOS Ambassador

Although not new to volunteering, Rhonda is new to CES. She has been a MOW volunteer for 10 years in Lino Lakes, but wanted more.

Searching for Minneapolis volunteer opportunities, she found CES and ultimately the SoS Ambassador program. After volunteering, Rhonda said that CES was very organized, has great training and is very welcoming.

Four clients receive the benefit of Rhonda's commitment. She begins by calling each one to find out what they want for their groceries, being sensitive to their cultural and dietary preferences. Then, Rhonda arrives to pull the desired food and packs about 40 pounds of groceries.

Recently, Rhonda delivered groceries to one client at

her door, one gentleman came out to her car to pick up the bags and wanted to chat, and another client in a wheelchair asked for assistance in unpacking. Each was super appreciative and thankful.

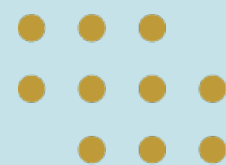
Rhonda stated, "This is a great, impressive program and I am looking forward to getting to know each client better."



Rhonda packs bags of groceries for seniors in the SoS program

Otto Bremer Trust Matching Challenge

CES donors responded in a big way to our December OBT 1:1 Challenge Grant. **We had over \$159,000 in qualifying donations.** Thank you for your generosity to our neighbors!!



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