Have you ever noticed that when asked, “What set you on the path of volunteering your precious time, energy, heart and savvy to a particular cause?” many volunteers can recall a particular moment that nudged them in a particular direction.

Organizations like ours, the people we serve—and people all around the world—benefit mightily from those moments.

Moments that come together to create a powerful momentum of care that helps organizations and communities like ours and communities everywhere become the best version of themselves.

The so very good news we celebrate every day at Interfaith Outreach is the simply amazing volunteer momentum of care that, day in and day out, is helping precious families and kids of our community build strong and hopeful futures.

A momentum that we, along with communities across the country, call out for special celebration April 10-16, National Volunteer Week.

In this issue of Touchpoint you will get a glimpse of moments that sent a few wonderful volunteers in our direction at different stages in their lives. We celebrate them and their volunteer compadres whose faithful, generous and competent servant leadership makes the Interfaith Outreach world go ‘round.

Hooray for them! Hooray for us! Let’s celebrate the moments. And let’s keep the momentum!

We salute our volunteers! April 10-16 is National Volunteer Week.
What do you get when you match enthusiasm and passion with business savvy and community connections? You get Ben Johnson! Ben has been a volunteer at Interfaith Outreach in the Homework Club and a champion for the 2015 Sleep Out campaign. As a leadership volunteer, Ben meets monthly with other community members as a part of the Interfaith Outreach Development Committee.

This March he engaged the Wayzata Chamber who sponsored a Donation Creation event which rallied area businesses in a friendly “food sculpture” competition to support the Prevent Hunger campaign.

“Regular volunteer work is an integral value at RE/MAX Real Estate Nation. Making the community a better place is the right thing to do. And when the health of the community improves, so does business. It’s a win-win!” — Ben Johnson

No matter what the need, Ben jumps in to help with his contagious enthusiasm. “There are countless ways to leverage your business’ strengths and resources to help the community. You get to be a part of something bigger,” said Ben.

You may know someone in your community but are afraid to approach them because you think you might make a mistake when you say something. — Leslee Jaeger, M.D.

After coming back from a weeklong mission trip to Haiti, Leslee Jaeger, M.D. was struck by a recurring thought. “If I had not been there to perform that C-section for my Haitian patient, no one else would have been there for her. You can’t change a whole country but you can change lives, one person at time.” Leslee, who attends Messiah United Methodist Church in Plymouth, began to ponder what she could do to change lives in Minnesota. At the same time, Farhana Ali of the Northwest Islamic Community Center in Plymouth and Peggy Fairbourne of Plymouth’s Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were also seeking to make positive local change.

Concerned by the anti-Muslim political rhetoric and the dangerous misinformation about Islamic faith traditions, all three women decided to form an interfaith women’s group. Their first meeting was held shortly after the Paris terror attacks in November 2015. The goals of this group, called Tapestry Interfaith Women, are to build friendships, become educated about each other’s faith traditions and provide service opportunities. Recently, the women organized a teen service project at Interfaith Outreach to foster cross-cultural understanding and deepen respectful relationships. While the youth repacked laundry detergent for the food shelf, they began talking about their similarities and differences in a safe space. The Tapestry group is now 75 women strong.

Leslee Jaeger, Peggy Fairbourne and Farhana Ali (Photo courtesy of Kristen Miller, Plymouth Sun Sailor)

Ben Johnson enjoys leveraging his business skills to help the community

Learn more at www.IOCP.org
Pearl Brown watches energetic kids jumping all around as she prepares for story time. Through the course of “The Hungry Little Caterpillar,” the little one she’s paired up with leans in, eyes open wide, ears listening intently to her soothing voice. He’s engaged, enthralled, learning to read. Pearl is a mother herself and has always known she was destined to help children. Her heart fills to the brim when she sees the kids at Bloom Early Learning Center and Lakeview Commons where she volunteers as a reader and mentor.

Her goal? To foster a love of reading and sense of confidence early. Pearl remembers Lisa, a young lady she used to read with at an elementary school years ago. “Lisa was in 3rd grade and she made me a placemat that I still treasure. She was thirsty. She was hungry. She wanted to learn.” The artwork Lisa gave Pearl hung right alongside her grandkids’ work on the refrigerator. Today, that not-so-little girl is a sophomore in college and Pearl still remembers her fondly. Pearl and 339 other volunteers are the power and the passion behind Interfaith Outreach’s youth programs that serve hundreds of young people every year. “If you can, help a child. You won’t regret it,” cheers Pearl.

Even though I’m retired, I find I want to do more. I always leave feeling energized, knowing I’m giving kids a skill they’ll take with them for the rest of their lives.

— Pearl Brown

I have been blessed to be a stay-at-home dad to my son Cooper for the last five years. If people can do something during the day while their kids are in school, they would feel great about helping others who truly need it.

— Chris Peplinski

In the months leading up to his son Cooper’s first day of kindergarten, Chris Peplinski struggled with the age-old question. Should he return to work now that his son was in school…or not? For the previous five years, Chris was a stay-at-home dad, taking care of his family and home while his wife Chrissy went to work at General Mills. The summer before Cooper started kindergarten, Chris met Leesa Bequette, an Interfaith Outreach Food Shelf volunteer, at a birthday party for one of Cooper’s friends. Leesa began to tell Chris how much she loved volunteering at Interfaith Outreach and suggested he volunteer there, too. Leesa told Chris, “We could use some muscle to lift all the heavy stuff.”

Chris laughs about that conversation now but he is so glad he met Leesa that day. Chris began volunteering at the food shelf in September 2015. He volunteers two days per week and has become one of the go-to guys. But Chris has an even deeper passion to help people with financial planning. In September 2010, he was featured in Money Magazine where they highlighted his achievement of a perfect 850 on the FICO scoring system. His “heavy lifting” translates to more than just pallets and boxes. Alongside Chris, 174 food shelf volunteers dedicate an average of four hours every week and contribute their time and talent to keep core Interfaith Outreach programs strong.

An Interfaith Outreach volunteer told Chris, “We could use some muscle to lift all the heavy stuff.”

Want to get started? Need more information? Check our website at www.iocp.org/volunteer or call our Community Engagement team to discover how your unique skills and ideas can fit our program needs. Contact Liz at lerstad-hicks@iocp.org or call her at 763-489-7506.

What was your “aha” moment? Why did you join the Interfaith Outreach team? Like us on Facebook. Follow us on Twitter. Tell us your moment to momentum story.

MAKE IT SOCIAL: Go to Twitter or Instagram to post your “aha” moment using #IOCPM2M

Learn more at www.IOCP.org
Radical Hospitality – Interfaith Outreach Volunteers are Welcoming, Warm and Wonderful

The energy in the waiting room at the Interfaith Outreach Family Service and Learning Center is unmistakable. “Good morning,” the volunteers cheerily offer a smile and a greeting as guests walk through the front doors, “How are you today?” Program participants experience the energy of “radical hospitality.” For 37 years, Interfaith Outreach has been inspired by the generosity and kindness of volunteers, many of whom manage the front desk every weekday. These wonderful volunteers are the face of our organization to the public.

Julie Faxvog, one of the front desk smiling faces, recalls, “One time there was an older man who came in for help. He was a Vietnam veteran with a physical handicap. Then, right after him, a young man who was also in the military came in. While they waited in the food shelf line, I introduced them to each other. They connected and a healing conversation happened. That is the magic of Interfaith Outreach. It is all about the relationships.”

58 volunteers like Julie live out Interfaith Outreach’s radical hospitality. They are specially trained, culturally sensitive and critical to the positive client experience. Direct client support volunteers also include volunteers with our rides program, employment volunteers, social work interns and others who directly work with the people we serve.

The Prevent Hunger Campaign Needs You! Donations through April 8 count toward campaign goal

As of March 23, Prevent Hunger—our annual effort to address and prevent hunger right here in the western suburbs—is 65% to goal! By supporting Prevent Hunger, part of the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign, this fantastic community keeps our food shelf stocked and offers critical case management and Employment Services to struggling families in our area.

Thank you for keeping the momentum, friends!

GRANTS RECEIVED SUPPORT THESE PROGRAMS
DECEMBER 2015 - FEBRUARY 2016

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Have you considered naming Interfaith Outreach as one of your beneficiaries in your trust or will? It’s easy! Simply state our full legal name (Interfaith Outreach & Community Partners), address, Federal Tax ID number (36-3482724) and the nature of the gift (for example, cash or property). That’s it!

Your legacy will have a lasting impact on the lives of thousands of children and families for years to come.

Learn more at www.IOCP.org
Volunteers: Thank you for being a part of the movement…

The magic begins with the first “aha” moment and continues through the momentum of deciding “I want to volunteer at Interfaith Outreach.” Half of the work required to serve 2,033 families at Interfaith Outreach is done by devoted and highly skilled volunteers. Volunteers are the movement behind Interfaith Outreach’s growth over the last 37 years and for that… We thank you!

WHERE DO VOLUNTEERS COME FROM?

- faith communities
- businesses
- family and neighborhood groups
- schools and service learning programs
- civic groups
- all over this fantastic community

WHY DO VOLUNTEERS HELP OUT?

“To give back to the community that helped my family”
“Interfaith Outreach does the kind of work I believe in”
“I like to use my strengths to benefit the cause”
“We all do better when we all do better”
“I love being here—I get more than I give”

EXAMPLES OF VOLUNTEER IMPACT

**Food Shelf**
880 volunteers served 4,452 individuals and distributed 909,453 pounds of food

**ReSale 101**
430 volunteers generated sales of $325,873 and served 1,062 individuals with gift cards, winter gear, household essentials and career clothing

**Youth Educational Programs**
316 volunteers tutored, mentored and read to pre-K and school age kids to foster a love of learning

**Special Projects and Seasonal Programs**
333 volunteers ran the Holiday Gift Program, Back-to-School Drive, Baby Layette effort, Birthday Shelf and more

**Events, Boards, Committees, Consultants**
135 people served on leadership committees, boards and special event teams

**Interfaith Outreach & Community Partners**
1605 COUNTY ROAD 101 N., PLYMOUTH, MN 55447-2708
763-489-7500 www.IOCP.ORG
Comments? Omissions?
Contact Deb Sakry Lande at dlande@iocp.org

Do YOU volunteer?

Stop by ReSale 101 to get 30% off your purchase on the same day you volunteer with Interfaith Outreach! Our simple way to thank you all year long!
Caring for Kids Initiative Breakfast

Please join us for the 10th annual fundraising breakfast of the Caring for Kids Initiative (CfKI). CfKI provides scholarships for quality early learning and parent education and support.

A dynamic and inclusive leader and the first African American President of Hamline University, Dr. Fayneese Miller, Ph.D., will share her personal passion for education from her life experiences and the impact early learning opportunities have on students throughout their academic careers.

Thursday, May 12, 2016 / 7:15 - 8:30 a.m.
Complimentary Breakfast Served
Wayzata Country Club, 200 Wayzata Blvd West, Wayzata, MN 55391

Register at iocp.ejoinme.org/cfkibreakfast2016 or call 763-489-7515. If you cannot attend but would like to make a donation, donate online at www.iocp.org/donate.

Thanks to our generous sponsors:
Allina Health / Bremer Bank / Cargill Ag Supply Chain N.A.—Community Team / Meristem Family Wealth / New Horizon Academy / Wayzata Education Association

Girls, Glamour & Giving

An evening of fashion, food, fun and philanthropy including unique vendors, appetizers, celebrity purse wall, sit-down dinner and fashion show. The program will feature a former Interfaith Outreach program participant who will share her journey of hope. Donations support Project Success, our transitional housing program.

The event is sold out. Please contact Cate at cfossing@iocp.org if you would like to be added to the waitlist or donate to Project Success.

Thanks to our generous corporate sponsors:

PRESENTING: Schuler Shoes
SILVER: Oakdale OBGYN / Rapid Packaging
BRONZE: Park Nicollet Women’s Center

Interfaith Outreach’s Annual Community Meeting

Thursday, April 21, 2016 / 6-7:30 p.m.
1605 Hwy 101 N, Plymouth

Wayzata Empty Bowls

Thursday, May 19, 2016 / 5-7 p.m.
Wayzata High School / Tickets $10 (at the door)

Annual Plant Sale

DROP OFF YOUR EXTRA PLANTS: Plant donations and good quality garden items collected at St. Philip the Deacon Church / 17205 County Rd 6, Plymouth on Thursday, May 12 and Friday, May 13 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Please call ahead for plant ID tags at 763-475-7100.
BUY PLANTS: Saturday, May 14 from 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Proceeds from the plant sale benefit Interfaith Outreach