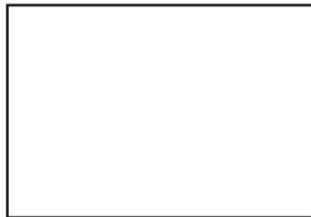


# STEP UP



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### STEP accepts donations

M, W, Th 8 AM-4 PM; Tu 12 PM-8 PM; F 8 AM-12 PM

### Special Thanks...

They say it takes a village. Here at STEP we have a first-hand view of community coming together to work towards good and common goals. Without the help of community we would not be able to serve those going through a difficult time. Special thanks goes out to Fresh Thyme for their new partnership with our Food Rescue Program. Thank you to CUB and Trader Joe's for the hundreds of thousands of pounds of food they have given us over the years.

The Holiday Train this year was an amazing success because of those that supported us: The Webb Group – Re/Max Results, Excelsior Group, St. Louis Park Community Youth & Development Fund, Anderson Companies, Citizens Independent Bank, Discover St. Louis Park, Kid Zone Early Learning Center, Park Tavern, the Shops at the West End, and many others.

The event would not have been successful without the support of the City of St. Louis Park.

### FIND STEP ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Get updates on needs, events & volunteering! Search for STEPslp.



**DONATE ONLINE**  
Support STEP through a one-time or monthly donation at [STEPslp.org](http://STEPslp.org).

### Save the Date!

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner is set for the evening of Thursday April 26, 2018! If you volunteered with us in the last year or are a new volunteer, we hope you can join us. Official invitations will be mailed out with all the details.



# STEP UP

A Newsletter for Volunteers, Donors and Friends of the St. Louis Park Emergency Program

Spring 2018

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### Meet Our New Crew Members

*Karmara Bauman, Mari-Claire Dart, Ben Kasper*

STEP has recently hired new staff to support our mission. We are happy to welcome and introduce them.



**Kamara Bauman** grew up in South Minneapolis. She received her BSW from St. Catherine University and is currently completing her master's degree in social work at the University of St. Thomas.

She joined STEP in November. Kamara has a passion for working with individuals as well as groups and advocating for better access to resources and services. Kamara's previous experiences include providing case management and mediation services.

Outside of work, Kamara values experiencing everything that life has to offer. She enjoys spending time with her family, traveling, reading and going for walks.

*New Crew Members continued on page 3*

### March FoodShare

*Derek Burrows Reise, Executive Director*



Minnesota FoodShare is a project of Twin Cities faith congregations to stock community food shelves.

Since 1983, Minnesota FoodShare has held a March campaign inviting faith communities, businesses, and community organizations to stock the nearly 300 food shelves in Minnesota.

In 2017, over \$8 million dollars and 4.7 million pounds of food were raised statewide during the March effort. It comes at a crucial time of year, when food donations are low, but the need remains.

We invite you to be part of this effort. Options include:

- Faith community "pack the pews" weekend, with empty grocery bags provided to members to fill.

- Workplace food drive contest. Department or employee with the most items wins a prize.
- Donations for an employee casual "jeans day."
- Discount or gift for customers bringing a food or financial donation for STEP.

For a group to participate, simply register at [mnfoodshare.org/supporter](http://mnfoodshare.org/supporter) and select **STEP** under Food Shelf name. We ask that donations be brought to STEP during our regular hours no later than Thursday, April 5. Contact Mari-Claire with any questions at [mari@stepslp.org](mailto:mari@stepslp.org) or 952-925-4899 x18. Individuals can participate by bringing a food or financial donation to STEP.

STEP was recognized as #2 in total donations in the mid-sized food shelf category last year. With the participation of community groups, workplaces, and faith communities, we can take that top spot in 2018!

## From the Director

Derek Burrows Reise, Executive Director



When I talk about STEP, my natural inclination is to describe each of our programs. They are tangible activities that have outcomes. We serve the community with social workers, the food shelf, emergency financial assistance, clothing, transportation, and seasonal programs.

We don't typically highlight our **values**. What are the key principals behind how we operate?

Writer and researcher Jim Collins has focused on how companies and organizations go from "good to great." Collins identifies *core values* as the "stake firmly in the ground" that guides the organization through changes, challenges and opportunities. Core values are enduring and pervasive throughout the organization.

STEP's *purpose* is "to empower lives and restore hope" in

St. Louis Park. We do that with the core values of **collaboration**, **compassion**, and **resourcefulness**.

- There is a spirit of **collaboration** at STEP. We are stronger when we work together and focus on building trusting relationships.
- We have **compassion**. STEP staff and volunteers are committed to treat all people with dignity and acceptance.
- We are **resourceful**. We are thoughtful and prudent in how we use time and resources.

I believe these values pervade STEP's staff, board members, and volunteers. We set high expectations to live out these values in everything we do.

I am confident STEP will continue to effectively serve our community in the years to come. I ask for your continued support of STEP living out these values.

## Empty Bowls

Mari-Claire Dart, Volunteer & Community Relations Coordinator



The 17<sup>th</sup> annual Empty Bowls event is just around the corner! The gathering will be held on **Thursday, March 15** at Westwood Lutheran Church (9001 Cedar Lake Rd, St. Louis Park) to spotlight hunger aware-

ness within the St. Louis Park community. A simple meal of soup and bread will be served. Attendees have a choice of attending **lunch (11:30am-1:30pm)** or **dinner (5:00pm-7:30pm)**.

Empty Bowls raises awareness and educates communities about our neighbors experiencing food insecurity. It is St. Louis Park's largest hunger awareness event. The event has become a staple within the St. Louis Park community bringing together residents, the city, businesses, places of worship and schools to fill the empty bowls in our community.

Attendees will receive a *passport raffle ticket* when they arrive. There will be a list of stops to make on the Empty Bowls journey. At each stop guests will have their passports stamped. Once the passports are complete, they will be turned in with the opportunity to win a variety of fantastic prizes. Winners will be contacted after the event.

Local artists and community groups generously donate handmade bowls for attendees to take home as a reminder of the need to fill empty bowls in our community. The meal of soup and bread is generously donated by local restaurants.

There will be fun activities for children and entertainment provided by St. Louis Park musicians for all participants to enjoy. Please attend and help raise hunger awareness within the community while enjoying a warm, simple meal with friends and neighbors. **See you there!**



## Volunteer Spotlight: Norma Kaplan

Maryanne Abeid, Operations Manager

It's been almost 10 years since Norma Kaplan began volunteering at STEP, and it's difficult to imagine the Clothes Closet without her.

Norma grew up in Alexandria, Virginia. She received her B.A. in Music Education from Indiana University, and has sung in choirs from high school to Oratorio Societies in Washington, DC and Minneapolis; she currently sings with the Twin Cities Jewish Chorale.

Now that she is retired, Norma enjoys traveling, but especially enjoys spending time with her granddaughters. She also loves to sew!

Norma started volunteering at STEP in the spring of 2008, and she has enjoyed every day since! In her early years at STEP, she co-chaired the Winter Coat Campaign for 4-5 years. She now works every Tuesday morning sorting

clothes and every Friday morning staffing the Clothes Closet.

"Volunteering at STEP fulfills a part of me that I do not receive anywhere else, and I feel that I receive back much more than I give. It is truly satisfying to help a guest find an outfit for an interview that afternoon, complete from shoes to skirt and top.

Many times the social workers will compliment a guest on something they are wearing and are told that the item was found in our Clothes Closet. We are so fortunate to be able to provide good clothing in addition to sustaining families with food. And the atmosphere at STEP is so welcoming, both from staff and volunteers. It is truly a 'win-win' for all."



Norma Kaplan with the table cloth she made for STEP to use at outreach events.

## New Staff (continued from page 1)



**Mari-Claire Dart**, our new Volunteer and Community Relations Coordinator, hails from the Chicago area and has her bachelor's in Environmental Studies from the George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Mari moved to Minnesota just over a year ago and has loved every minute of it (except for the extreme cold this winter).

Mari loves to garden and explore the many lakes and parks of Minnesota. When she is not at STEP Mari is baking different kinds of breads and whipping up strange concoctions in her kitchen for others to enjoy. She loves good food and experimenting with recipes in her free time.

Mari already feels completely at home at STEP and feels very grateful to have found such a fun and caring group of people to work with, staff and volunteers included. The dedication and passion of the volunteers impresses her daily. She is looking forward to getting to know them better in the months and years to come.



**Ben Kasper** is our newest staff member with the new role of Food Rescue Driver. Ben drives to the stores that are a part of the rescue program to pick up produce and bread that would otherwise be thrown away. He brings the food back to STEP to be sorted and stocked into the food shelf. Ben was born and raised in Minnesota. His most recent job was in IT.

Ben started at STEP as a volunteer doing data entry and working in the warehouse. Even though he is on staff part-time, he still volunteers here in other capacities! In his free time Ben likes to do wood working, fix cars and do general home remodeling. He likes to learn things by getting to know people with skills and watching what they do. He also enjoys hiking and being outside.