

Alley Shoppe News

1115 Greenbrier St. St. Paul, MN 55106

Winter edition



Feb. 2021

Where are we now?

So many ways to answer that question!

Things have changed quite a bit since our last newsletter, in our world and in our hallways as well. We were closed during the month of January and the first part of February but have reopened to limited shoppers like we did in the fall.

We will keep this lighter schedule of volunteers and clients for the remainder of this Alley Shoppe year. I think right now as I write this to you all! It may change again.

We are anticipating vaccines, getting vaccines and cheering for the people that are making it possible for us to be vaccinated. Even with that we will remain cautious in our interactions. Masks will still be required, social distancing measures will be taken and the number of people in the space will be limited.

We welcome Pastor Roger Hardy to Arlington Hills in an interim role until May 26, 2021. At that time another interim pastor will join us. I have invited Pastor Hardy to visit us on a Monday or Tuesday sometime this spring.

I realize we are still a bit nervous as we think about coming back together and how things will look but we know the Holy Spirit will be our guide as we welcome folks back.

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We are still here!

It is not business as usual, but we are still in the business of serving.

48 families have come through our doors since February 9!

How did we ever do 75,80,90 families each week? With you!

When you feel ready to rejoin the volunteer team please let me know and I will find a spot for you. Somehow the sorting pile is still there!



Marcia's displays could be featured in a magazine. Crystal at Alley Shoppe, of course!

The Power of Kindness

I have been reading a book entitled *The Power of Kindness: The Unexpected Benefits of Leading a Compassionate Life* by Piero Ferrucci. It isn't a large book and I bet most of us would say we know kindness goes a long way in life. The fun part for me these last few weeks has been seeing kindness played out so vividly in words and actions in our little basement free store. The book's author divides the book into chapters that have familiar titles: empathy, humility, patience, generosity, respect, service, and joy to name a few.

Here are some snippets of things I have seen and heard recently:

Rich, from Ramsey County Head Start, arrives on a day set aside for Head Start families. He is excited, thanking us over and over for opening for them. "Do people know that you are life line for my families" Rich says. "I have worked for 30 years with Head Start and have sent families here that whole time. This is such a fantastic place. I will tell anyone that needs to hear it. We need you to be open!" says Rich as he thanks all the volunteers that are there on a bitter cold Tuesday.

Donations of packages of bakery items are being dropped off from Cub foods because of an encounter in the Cub parking lot with Cheryl from the AHLC office. We have a new partner in the Amazing Grace Assembly of God Church. Packages of bread, cookies, brownies, and more have been sent home with families. Think of how much fun a donut hole is for an afternoon snack!

Who else might like baked goods? Volunteers have homebound neighbors, and we know large families that would love a sweet treat. Deliveries are made. Into the freezer with the rest for our next shopping day!

Raw hands from several hours cleaning donations that came in to us dirty. Making things lovely for others. Amazing. Is this generosity, humility, patience? YES, Kindness at its core.

A little girl waiting so patiently, the volunteer notices and finds her a special stuffed animal, recently purchased at the post Valentines Day sale at Walgreens. Compassionate and loving gestures.

Remember the Drake Hotel fire from last year? One of the victims who lost everything just got a new place to live. Two buses to get to us. So many things needed. A volunteer lives in the same direction. He can bring the items to her! Grateful service!

Our guidelines say 1 pot and 1 pan per family...Empathy allows the volunteer to imagine having 12 people to cook for, mother, father, husband, brother, and children. This time, a set of pans is the best decision.

Soccer balls on sale at Target. Mom should I get some? Absolutely!

The power of kindness shines brightly in our basement hallways. Thank you all for you do, have done and continue to do for others. Enjoy a few photos and start thinking about Spring.

Missing you all,

Pam



