It takes a village…

People are the heart of ECM’s ministry of community building. Volunteers are a diverse and integral part of our ministry. Over the years, volunteers have helped translate, tutor kids, sort and sell clothes, glean donated food, and pick up needles and trash around the neighborhood. In the early and middle years of ECM (and still sometimes today!), volunteers were needed for lots of construction as well: they helped completely renovate a drug house (2001), our main office, that still remains our admin hub today. It was volunteers who built the garden shed (2002), painted the warehouse (2014), helped put on the roof (2018). Volunteers turned a old jewelry shop into our health clinic (2007) and helped build the first greenhouses (2004). Volunteers built creation park in one day (2010) and re-modeled a dance studio into a thrift store (2012). Young or old, coming once or for many years, we’ve had a plethora of volunteers get involved in ministry—and without them, we wouldn’t be where we are today.

And that has continued. In 2018 alone, we’ve had over 185 individual volunteers join us; in addition, another 110+ came as a part of various group events! These individuals include many clinic volunteers, both UMN students as well as medical professionals and administrative help. Our thrift store has around 45 regular volunteers! We also have volunteers that pick up food every week, help with our youth programs, and work on our never ending maintenance list. In the spring, we have a couple big work days where various church groups help with the farm—transplanting strawberries and petunias, organizing pots, and prepping greenhouses.

The expertise, enthusiasm, and joy we gain from our volunteers is palpable and flows deep within our DNA. We also strive to be a place where people can both serve and learn, and where barriers are broken down. We are grateful all of the help and the opportunity to learn and grow together.

**Volunteer Appreciation Dinner**

We want to invite all our current and potential future volunteers to ECM for dinner and fun times in March 2019 for our annual party to thank and celebrate all of you! More information to follow.
What do our volunteers do? And why?

**Mary Garrison:** Tutoring kids for 2 years

"I volunteer at ECM because I can see how you minister to people in tangible, practical ways. I believe that this type of ministry gives others an awareness of God’s presence, even more sometimes, than the affect of direct preaching. The thing that I have been the most happy to see is how Becky and Itzel greet the children when they arrive; I can tell that they can sense that you all are genuinely happy to see that they have come!"

**Rich Glantz:** Food pickups and delivery, Kirtland transport driver (a partnership with the air force base’s thrift store), and skunk removal! for 10 years

**Nancy Glantz:** Common Good volunteer and jewelry guru for 7 years

Why do they do it? “Cause we love you all and all you do for others in God’s name and seeing those who are helped by your work.”

**Doug Cloud:** Volunteer Dentist for 7 years

“I volunteer because I feel the community here needs the dental help. Many can't afford a REAL dentist (ha) so this way they can get the needed care for a lot less. Most meaningful part is when a patient is so happy to finally have teeth or get them fixed that they actually cry a little bit. I’ve only had one patient in all these years that I couldn’t please, and I don’t think she would have been happy anywhere. All the other patients are very thankful. That means a lot to me!”

**Jessica Rodriguez:** Bilingual Dental Assistant for 1 year

“I volunteer with ECM because they provide quality medical services to low income members of our community. The most meaningful part of volunteering is being able to facilitate the communication between our dentist and our patients. This language barrier plays a key role in our community’s health, making people afraid of not understanding their medical visits. Therefore, our team effort at ECM is unique and extremely valuable.”

**Cynthia Nava:** Interpreter, takes vital signs, salidas (patient consultations) for 1.5 years

“I volunteer because I want to give back to my community. My favorite part is assuring that patients receive and retain the information given by the doctors. Every Wednesday that I come to the clinic, I meet a patient who touches my heart, makes me smile, or gives me something to reflect on. I found my passion in medicine by working one-on-one with patients. It has been such a rewarding experience.”
Ariel Hurwitz: Kids summer cooking class and the One Hope Clinic for 1 year

“I initially volunteered with ECM because I wanted to connect with my local community through my passions (food, yoga, healthcare, and education). It has become one of the most rewarding parts of my week to see how enthusiastic and interested children are about learning, especially outside of traditional academic course work. I believe volunteering at One Hope has been incredibly meaningful to informing and solidifying my intent to pursue medicine. I am so thankful for ECM and what the organization has taught me about community.”

Why do they volunteer at The Common Good Thrift Store?

Andrea: 5 months as a cashier, “I am so passionate about showing people God’s love in real and tangible ways. Once I learned about ECM’s local focus, I knew I had to be a part of this mission! My favorite part of the work I do is getting to know our beautiful customers and generous donors. My shift at CG is always the highlight of my week!”

Choon Fritch: 5 years, “I like to support ECM knowing my work helps One Hope Clinic!”

Greta Vander Pol: Since the store opened! “My volunteer days began before the store was even open for business [in 2012], remodeling the space and making it welcoming to the public. My favorite part of volunteering is unpacking all the donations— it’s like Christmas morning, enjoying all the surprises! I also enjoy showing my smile to all and meeting the customers!”

Linda Van Klompenberg: Since the store opened! “I like volunteering because it’s for a good cause. It also gives me a place to donate stuff I no longer use, and I can find some things I need at a good price!”

Tigger 2: Resident couch warmer and best friends with Chaco for 6 months

Chaco: Feral cat chaser, beggar of all food, and shadow to the farm manager (Morgan) for 6 months

We love ECM so much that we are always on call for what needs to be done. We are the greeters, the comic relief, the pet therapists, the cleaners of the food that hits the floor, and great at keeping the couch warm.

Joan Christy: Prayer partner for 5 years

“My most meaningful times are those I spend with John and Morgan in conversation primarily about the issues occurring in ECM and the prayers for the Lord’s intervention in those issues.”
Groups from numerous churches gather for a Growing Awareness work day. Together we transplanted 280 petunia baskets and 500 strawberries!

**Alyssa Ammerman:** tutoring kids for 1.5 years and in the clinic for 5 months

"I like connecting with the kids, and I like the people who work here. I wanted to get involved with ECM because I like how it is comprehensive— for example it has the gardens, youth, health classes, etc."

**Lou Velarde**, one of ECM’s first volunteers and a dear friend of ours passed away on Sept. 5. She was 94 and lived a good full life. Lou first walked into our doors back in 2001 saying that she lived in the neighborhood and was curious about who we were and what we were doing. In those early days, Lou was my translator with our Spanish-speaking neighbors and volunteered in our food co-op and community garden. She would often tell me and others, “I worked in five different churches and ECM is doing the work that they always talked about.” She said she adopted me as her son since she never had her own children, and I gladly accepted that role. I felt it was an honor to help care for Lou especially these last five years, when she would joke that she was only suffering from “old-age-itis”. Lou joyfully lived out what ECM has always been working towards: building a community where everyone is valued and belongs. She will always remind me of this, and I am grateful for her life with us.  

—John Bulten

**Whether you are an ECM volunteer** or supporter or just encouraged by the community we are working to build together, I want to invite you to make a tax deductible gift to help us end this year financially strong. In these times with much meaningless chatter, it has always been important to me that our good work of loving, inviting, and connecting our community would say more than lots of words. I am confident that ECM’s actions do speak loudly because I have a great team with so many faithful volunteers that selflessly give and serve every day. While we have some programs like the thrift store and urban farm that financially help support other underfunded ministry programs, we still overwhelmingly rely on the generosity of our donors. Thank you.

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