



As We Arrive at a New Season of Hope, Help Us Continue Our ‘Good Works’ for South Milwaukee

There are at least two bits of good news at this late fall time of year. We are at the advent of the wonderful holiday season; and perhaps better still, the election season is over! Give me turkey dinner, Christmas decorations and even snow over the barrage of political advertising and seemingly nonstop, inescapable “analysis.” I suspect we are all happy to arrive at this time and place.

Regardless if your preferred candidates won, lost or the election was a decidedly mixed bag of results, life in South Milwaukee goes on. My fervent hope is that we can heal, reconcile and continue to do the good works that will help our community to become an even better place to call home.

South Milwaukee Human Concerns provided so many of those good works. Throughout 2024 we touched the lives of 7,000 of your neighbors through our food pantry and the other critical services that we offer. What we do and the lives we positively impact is not guaranteed; SMHC exists because of the kindness of people like you who provide us with the monetary support to carry on for another year. Our doors and hearts are open for those residents who need us in times of personal pain and crisis. Receiving no taxpayer support, we rely on your generous and heartfelt donations.

Please consider a monetary contribution to help us keep giving kindness, help and hope to those in need in South Milwaukee in 2025 and beyond. Have a blessed Christmas and holiday season.

George Becker
 President, SMHC Board of Directors

Your Help is Vital to Fulfill Acute Needs in South Milwaukee

South Milwaukee Human Concerns partners with Hunger Task Force and Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin to help fulfill its mission of help and hope for South Milwaukee residents. A recent Map the Meal Gap study by Feeding America puts Wisconsin’s food insecurity rate at 10.5% of its population. That translates to almost 120,000 people in Milwaukee County. SMHC fills that critical gap in South Milwaukee, serving about 7,000 unduplicated clients annually, including many seniors and children.



We are supported completely by donations and volunteers. Monetary gifts are especially needed to help with expenses. Ongoing maintenance of our 80-year-old building is especially a challenge. In addition to its primary mission as a food pantry, SMHC also gives back to the community in other, important ways, all at no cost: men’s, women’s and children’s clothing; diapers and baby formula; modest Christmas gifts for children of clients; school supplies at the beginning of the academic year.

Help SMHC deliver its vital services in 2025 and beyond:

- Go the smhumanconcerns.org and click “Donate Now”
- Mail your donation in the enclosed return envelope (checks payable to: South Milwaukee Human Concerns)
- Drop off your contribution at the center during our open hours.



Children's Christmas Gifts, Memorials Are Ways to Show Your Support

There are many ways to support SMHC, including a donation to help make the holidays brighter for South Milwaukee children and honoring a family member or other loved one.

- We are accepting Christmas gift donations to give to the children of our clients. This season SMHC will provide about 800 children with modest gifts. Donations of gift cards in any amount to Amazon, Kohl's, Target, Walmart and Marcus Theaters are ideas, along with winter clothing. Bring your donation for this program to the center during our open hours. Our goal is to make the holidays brighter for South Milwaukee children, many of whom would not have the joy of gifts this Christmas.
- A memorial or an honorarium in the name of special person in your life can be made through center director Deb DeBoer at debrahcsomilw@gmail.com. Those honored are prominently listed at smhumanconcerns.org/memorials.

SMHC Director DeBoer Honored for 20 Years (and counting) of Service to the City

Debra DeBoer, director of South Milwaukee Human Concerns since 2016 and an assistant at the center for the 12 years prior, was recognized for her 20 years of service to the city and especially its residents in need.

In September a contingent of city employees and leaders visited Human Concerns to present DeBoer with a certificate of recognition, flowers and chocolates ... and most of all to say "thanks" for her critical work in serving those who have immediate and dire needs through the city's food pantry. The visit by members of the city's fire, police, administration and elected officials was a surprise to DeBoer. She also said it was humbling, heartfelt and "very thoughtful."

"My work here is a labor of love," DeBoer said. "I'm so appreciative for this incredibly kind gesture."

First District Common Council member and Council President Brett Briesemeister presented DeBoer with the official certificate of recognition, applauding her work of two decades.

Human Concerns Board member Dan Reszel said DeBoer's accomplishments as director are many, including:

- Advancing SMHC to a 100% choice pantry
- Strengthening the center's community connections and partnerships with Hunger Task Force and Feeding America of Eastern Wisconsin
- Enhancing and growing the Christmas gifting program
- Increasing the number of volunteers and donors
- Maintaining and enhancing the 80-year-old SMHC building
- Increasing community donors and successfully earning grant awards

"The most important work of a non-profit Board of Directors is to hire the right person to run the day-to-day operations and retain that person," Reszel said. "Deb exemplifies the best of what our Board can do."

Ever Thankful for Our Business, Civic and Faith-Based Partners

South Milwaukee Human Concerns thanks these vital partners who generously work with us to help keep our food pantry stocked and/or provided needed monetary and in-kind support in 2024. A big thanks to: Aldi's (SM), American Legion (SM), Aurora Healthcare, Azteca Mexican Restaurant, Bucyrus Erie Foundation, Carlisle Technologies, C3 Designs, City of South Milwaukee, Cousins Subs (SM), Divine Mercy Parish, Dollar Tree, Doug Proebsting Memorial, Eaton Corporation, Feeding America, First Congregational Church, Gordon Food Service, Hunger Task Force, JX Gives Back, Knights of Columbus, Kwik Trip, Lucas Milhaupt, Pick n' Save, Piggly Wiggly, PPG Industries, Inc., Ridge Community Church, Rotary Club of Mitchell Field, SM Lion's, SM Fire Department, SM Police Department, SM School District, SM United Methodist Church, South Shore Chiropractic, St. Luke's United Church of Christ, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Ryan's Tap Room, Trinity Lutheran Church, United Steelworkers #1343, Walmart. Please patronize the businesses that support SMHC.



City officials and first responders recognize Human Concerns director Debra DeBoer for 20 years of service to the city and its residents. Pictured (from front to back) Fire Chief John Litchford, City Administrator Patrick Brever, Firefighter Ryan Kurz, Firefighter Ryan Porter, Debra DeBoer, Fire Lieutenant Jared Rentmeester, Firefighter John Rhinesmith, Firefighter Carter Zawacki, Firefighter Craig Boschke, Fire Captain Nate Fager, Police Captain Chad Milow, Public Health Administrator Jackie Ove, and Assistant City Administrator Katie Crosby.



Leaders Extol Human Concerns' Critical Connection to South Milwaukee

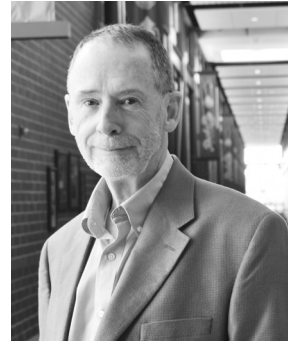
Community Volunteer David Maass Lauds its 'Essential Work'

As a life-long South Milwaukee resident and advocate for his hometown, David Maass believes rolling up your sleeves and getting involved is always a better plan and path to positively impact the community. He's living that principle. In March 2025, David will have completed his seventh of three-year terms on the South Milwaukee School Board ... 21 years of service to his hometown Rockets.

"I am so very grateful to have been able to serve our community as a positive voice for education for these many years," Maass said.

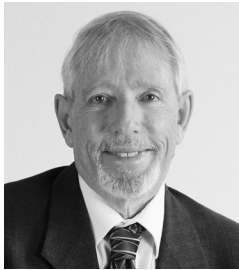
David's daughter, like him, attended South Milwaukee Public Schools from kindergarten through high school. She graduated and moved on to college and a career years ago. David not only continued with his involvement, he expanded on it. Since 2021 he has served on the city's Library Board and is the current president. Through his unique roles he's witnessed families and individuals who have needed help, some with life's basic necessities.

"Food insecurity is real in South Milwaukee," Maass said. "Our community is so fortunate to have South Milwaukee Human Concerns that truly does essential work."



David Maass

Mayor Shelenske: Here When 'All Might Seem Overwhelming'



Mayor Jim Shelenske

As South Milwaukee's mayor since 2022 and a lifelong resident, Jim Shelenske knows well the city's institutions. Human Concerns and its ongoing contributions to the community hold a special place for him.

"As the mayor of all residents of South Milwaukee, I have a great amount of empathy and concern for those who are hurting economically," said Mayor Shelenske. "A job loss, unexpected emergencies, perhaps even the loss of a spouse who provides a primary income can befall any of us. These are difficult, sometimes insurmountable situations."

He added, "I am so glad families can turn to Human Concerns when all might seem overwhelming."

Superintendent Dr. Roemer: Helps and Engages Our Students

South Milwaukee Schools Superintendent Dr. Deidre Roemer is fully aware of the unique connection Human Concerns brings to many students across the city's schools.

"Human Concerns plays such an important role in the School District of South Milwaukee. Our mission is to remove barriers to education for all students, and Human Concerns accomplishes that mission beyond the support our teachers and staff provide," Roemer said.

Roemer highlighted Human Concerns' work in providing 170 of South Milwaukee students with school supplies, and at Christmas she said Human Concerns helps parents and caregivers by providing more than 700 of the community's young people with holiday gifts.

"We know that students' learning is improved when they feel connected to their community and have a resource for their basic needs," she said.

Roemer added, "Each autumn our students organize and participate in a food drive to give back to their city, and help those in need. Human Concerns is an important community partner in that effort, and last year alone, our students donated nearly 7,000 items during the annual food drive. We are extremely grateful for the school district and Human Concerns partnership. Our five-year strategic plan calls for an increase in community engagement, and our partnership with this vital organization is a model as we work to integrate our students and schools into the community."



Dr. Deidre Roemer



South Milwaukee Human Concerns

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South Milwaukee Human Concerns is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization receiving no taxpayer funds that delivers critical help and hope to needs-based residents through emergency food, clothing and other essential services.



*South Milwaukee Human Concerns
is proud to be supported by
Hunger Task Force and Feeding America.*



**During the holidays,
South Milwaukee Human Concerns will be closed:**

Thursday and Friday, November 28 and 29
Tuesday and Wednesday, December 24 and 25
Wednesday, January 1



*May the Spirit of Christmas
be with you throughout the New Year.*



SMHC Open Hours:

Monday, Noon – 3 p.m.

Wednesday, 3 – 6 p.m.

Friday, 9 a.m. – Noon

Check with us for hours during the holiday weeks.

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Tim Schafer, Deb Wilhelm

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