

THE INSIDE

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AMERICA

# SCOOP



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# IMPACT: FAITH AND PERSEVERANCE

When asked to describe her life, “faith” and “perseverance” are the two words that Janet Van Epps settles on; but only after testing out “the good, the bad, and the ugly.”

## **FAITH**

“My personal belief is that joy is a choice regardless of an individual’s circumstances. My joy each morning when Rosie (her dog) and I sing and dance in the kitchen while I make my morning coffee comes from my relationship with my Savior, Jesus Christ. My strength to keep going on anything comes from Him.”

## **PERSEVERANCE**

To understand why she settled on perseverance you need to hear a little about her life, once you do, it will be clear why that word is a perfect word to describe her life. Her story is filled with a colorful mix of joy and tragedy.

In her mid-twenties, fresh out of college and on the front-end of her nursing career, she was diagnosed with Lupus, a long-term autoimmune disease. At the time the doctors felt she had maybe six months to live. But Janet had a little something to say about that:

“I told the doctors I respect each of you, but I put my faith in what God has in mind, and I think He’s got a few things in mind for me beyond six months. Boy did He ever because it’s been an interesting life.”

Unable to continue being a nurse because of the toll Lupus took on her body, Janet went back to school; eventually becoming an Epidemiologist for high risk individuals, a professor at UW Madison and Concordia University, and she had a career in Human Resources & Executive Recruiting. Her professional life was filled with very public fights over the privacy of her patients’ information, a chance meeting with the infamous leader of the Hmong community, and being on the forefront of the implementation of former Governor Thompson’s W-2 program.

Janet’s personal life has also been filled with ebbs and flows. From a brief eight-year marriage that ended badly, to being raped in her home, to losing multiple family members in a single year, life has not been all peaches and cream for her. But still she perseveres.

## **STRUGGLES**

Growing up, Janet’s family was a strong military family and rarely struggled. During her professional career she also rarely struggled with money, despite her Lupus and the significant healthcare bills that come with managing the disease. Now, because of a limited income, having unexpectedly and suddenly lost her savings from her professional life, and high medical bills she finds herself struggling. **“Sometimes it gets down to the point where I select food or medicine. I never thought I would be at this point.”**

Recently Janet reluctantly reached out to Second Harvest for help. We told her about a mobile food pantry in her area. It took some convincing, but she decided to give it a try.

“The experience was...strange. I parked, walked over, and with my luck I ran into someone I know very well checking people in. When I saw her I almost went back to my vehicle and took off. Very discreetly she asked for my initials, knowing darn well what my initials were. But the response I was given was perfect. It was not demeaning. It was not, ‘Oh I’m so sorry you have to be here.’ I was thankful that she handled it the way she did.”

Today, Janet is grateful. Grateful for the dignified way she was treated at the mobile pantry. Grateful for an understanding and generous landlord. Grateful for her friends and church family who check in on her to make sure she’s OK. And most of all, grateful for the peace she gets from her faith in God. “I don’t worry about it in a sense that I know God takes care of me. And I can’t worry about it because that would mean I don’t trust Him.”

**Thanks to our supporters, the Mobile Pantry Program is just one of the ways people like Janet receive a little help to make their lives better.** If you would like to make a difference in the lives of those facing hunger in our community, visit [SecondHarvestMadison.org/Donate](https://SecondHarvestMadison.org/Donate). To quote Janet, “These are good people!”

# FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

## HELPING WITH DIABETES

According to a recent Wisconsin Department of Health Services study on diabetes, it is estimated that 40% of all Wisconsin adults are expected to develop type 2 diabetes in their lifetime. Additionally, 28% of Wisconsin adults have diabetes and don't know it, and 37% more have pre-diabetes. **This is truly an area of concern to all of us.**

Those who struggle with food insecurity while attempting to manage their diabetes face a tight balancing act between their need to stretch their food budget, and their need to purchase diabetes appropriate food. Our **Diabetes Wellness Program** helps self-identified food insecure diabetics learn how to better control their condition through education, nutritious information, healthy recipes and boxes of diabetes appropriate food. The goal is to help them better control their A1C blood levels and reduce the chance for short and long term diabetes complications.

Why is this important? Rather than focusing on a bunch of numbers to help you understand

why, here are comments from actual participants in the program:

*"Please keep this program going. You will save lives and limbs and eyes."*

*"This program needs to continue!"*

*"I learned a lot about healthy eating."*

*"My blood sugar levels are in the normal range more often."*

It's thanks to your generous support that we are able to improve lives through programs like the Diabetes Wellness Program. Thank you!



*Jan*

## EVENTS

### Red Nose Day

On May 23rd support Red Nose Day and help Second Harvest receive a grant to help end child hunger! Visit [Rednoseday.org](http://Rednoseday.org) for more information.

### Forward Madison FC

Join us on June 1st for a Forward Madison soccer game! A portion of ticket sales will be donated back to Second Harvest. Purchase your tickets today to reserve your seat at [SecondHarvestMadison.org/Soccer](http://SecondHarvestMadison.org/Soccer)

### NRSSH Your Community

Young Professional looking to get involved? Every 3rd Tuesday of the month, Second Harvest's YP group, NRSSH, volunteers at Second Harvest. Come and join us! Find out more at [SecondHarvestMadison.org/NRSSH](http://SecondHarvestMadison.org/NRSSH)

**SAVE THE DATE: Go Orange on September 12th!**

Mark your calendars to help end hunger this September on Go Orange Day.



Adopt  
a **DAIRY**  
**COW**

Help Second Harvest Foodbank by giving dairy—a rarely donated and nutrient-rich product—in an easy way.

Here's how it works: Choose a cow from [GiveDairy.com](http://GiveDairy.com) to "adopt," then decide if you'd like to donate a morning's (\$20), a day's (\$36), a week's (\$252) or a month's (\$1,080) worth of milk production. So far, **up to \$22,500 in "adoptions" made in June will be matched** by Clack Corporation, Compeer Financial, Madison Horizons Rotary, Roth Cheese, and Sysco - Baraboo.

Learn more about Ruby, Tia, and all the cows, as well as how to donate, at **GiveDairy.com**



# IMPACT: RIPPLES

**“Everything that you do, positive or negative, makes a ripple.”**

According to one of their co-coordinators, Autumn Giddings, it’s this ripple-effect that is the base of everything they do at the Vine Street Marketplace, a food pantry located in the Wisconsin Dells High School.

More on Autumn’s “ripple effect” later, first, she wants to make it very clear that theirs is not a school pantry, it is a marketplace where students who are food insecure can come to get help with food, in a non-judgmental and stigma-free space. According to Autumn, “the school district and the Marketplace program have been very focused on emphasizing that using a pantry is not shameful, it’s not because somebody failed or made bad choices.” The Marketplace opened in November of 2018, and is currently providing about 1,400 pounds of food to 250 students each week.

“Our school district in particular has a student body where more than 60% of them are living below the poverty line. That is a huge number of children experiencing food insecurity. Food insecurity leads to behavioral problems, and an inability to learn. When you are worried not just about where your food is coming from, but where your siblings food is coming from, where your parent’s food is coming from, how do you concentrate on your history lesson?”

When you hear Autumn talk about the kids they serve through the Marketplace, you can hear a familiarity in her voice. It is the voice of someone



who grew up facing hunger herself. When she was very young her father passed away. Her mom, now suddenly a single mother of three young girls, made what Autumn calls, “the most amazing decision I’ve ever heard of in my life,” she not only moved back to Wisconsin to be near family, but she also decided to stay at home and be present for her kids. - **RIPPLE**

“She decided that she was going to raise us on almost no money at all so that she could be fully present every day of our lives. She was on every school trip, she was always the room volunteer, she was at every sporting event for me and my sisters. But all that came with a choice; that choice was that we did not always have enough money for what we wanted.” - **RIPPLE**

Thanks to the support her family received from others in their small town, they were able to make a life. According to Autumn, “you found out people were in trouble, and you took care of them. “ This idea of the community giving back is what drives the Marketplace today. She continues, “that’s what we’re working towards in our Marketplace, we want to identify people who need a hand, and help them in a way that does not impact their pride, or how they see themselves.” - **RIPPLE**

It’s these ripples in her life that drive her to be a positive ripple in the lives of the kids they help at the Marketplace. Why? **“If these kids’ ripples started every day positive instead of fearful, it would change their lives forever, and it would change the world.”**

## FORUM: FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS BEYOND 2019

Join us during Hunger Action Month for a free presentation on ‘Financial Considerations Beyond 2019.’ This session will offer insights into planned gifts and tools for charitable giving. The hour-long presentation will be offered twice on September 19 at Second Harvest Foodbank, at 2:00 p.m. and again at 5:30 p.m.

Matt Underwood, estate planning attorney at Underwood Legal, will share information on planned gifts including what to do now to start the process of your estate plan.

Beth Norman, CFP at The Droster Team of RBC Wealth Management in Madison will discuss the advantages of making charitable gifts through donor-advised funds, IRA accounts and other investment accounts.

This information is about how you can impact the future through planning now. Take action during Hunger Action month by joining us for this educational event. *No solicitation will be made.* **For more information and to register, visit [SecondHarvestMadison.org/Plan](http://SecondHarvestMadison.org/Plan) or call Chris at 608-216-7244.**