

# Assistance & Resource Center 2015 Annual Report



January 2016

## *To our Clients, Supporters, Donors, and Volunteers,*

In 2008, a small group got together to form an organization, today called ARC. In 2009, ARC began to provide financial assistance and resources to those living in the River Falls School District. In 2013, ARC expanded its service area to include the Ellsworth School District. ARC is the “go to” resource in both River Falls and Ellsworth for people who need that “extra help” to get back on their feet. Whether it is a gas card to get to work, help with their utility bill, or rent money to avoid an eviction, ARC is there. Out of a grassroots effort, ARC has become an organization that the people of River Falls and Ellsworth can truly be proud of.

2015 was a busy and fulfilling year for Assistance & Resource Center, Inc. (“ARC”), from receiving over 1,000 calls, to providing services for 914 families and individuals. Our mission is to provide short term financial assistance to members of the community to help meet their basic needs and provide access to additional resources.

As ARC adds additional services, it continues the focus on “partnering” with our clients. ARC wants our donors and supporters to know that **96 cents out of each and every dollar donated goes to serve those in need.** We have found that by encouraging our clients to set up payment plans, do matching payments, and access other available resources, we are able to help stretch the 96 cents even further. **ARC is 100% volunteer. ARC has no paid staff. ARC has no offices that require rent or utility payments.**

ARC is dedicated to servicing clients who need help and we truly want to thank those who support the ARC mission. More than the provision of financial assistance, ARC’s vision is to create, at some small level, both a greater sense of dignity and hope for those we directly serve and also solidarity in the community at large.

### *The ARC Board of Directors*

### **Our Clients**

Families and individuals who call ARC requesting services live in River Falls, Ellsworth, and the surrounding communities. To be eligible for financial assistance, callers must reside in the River Falls or Ellsworth school districts. Callers from surrounding communities will be referred to agencies in their area. A typical scenario may be the following: A family where the income just pays the bills. The brakes on the car are a safety issue and are replaced, resulting in the inability to pay the electric and gas bills. The next week, one of the children is ill and mom misses three days of work (unpaid) to care for the child. The electric bill goes unpaid yet again. ARC receives a call from the family that they are facing a shut-off notice and need assistance. ARC will work with the client and utility provider to meet the need. Another scenario, ARC receives a call from a family where there is an employment opportunity, but limited gas money to get to the job until the first paycheck is issued. ARC will support the client by assisting with “fuel only” gas cards. The majority of ARC’s clients are in a situation that involves the inability to fund a basic need, and that is why the organization was formed. ARC fills a very real need in the community which would otherwise go unaddressed.

## Services

The heart of ARC is the service we provide to those in need. In addition to rent, utilities, food, gas, laundry, auto repair, transportation, and clothing, we continue to find ways to meet new requests made by our clients. Whether it is the cost of the uniform for a new job, license plate tabs, dental bills, minutes for a tract phone, tires, or any one of an unending number of requests, ARC is committed to doing what we can to serve the community.

## Finances

In 2015, over **\$50,000** in services were provided to clients. ARC's goal is to be a good steward of the donations and grant monies that have been so generously given. **96 cents of each dollar donated is used to assist clients.** ARC has no paid staff, pays no rent or utilities for an office space, and has a Board that is focused on making certain our donors can trust the monies given are used for the purposes stated. Each month the Board reviews the Yearly Budget, factors in income and expenses (phone bill and postage), and votes to adjust the budget accordingly.

## Grant Writing

ARC has an incredible team of grant writers, Cheryl Dintemann, Paige Miller. Joining the team in August 2015, Peter Carr is researching additional opportunities. The sustainability and stability of ARC is dependent on the organization's ability to fund activities that are at the core of its mission. As such, searching and applying for new sources of funding are critical and ceaseless endeavors.

## Community Support

Underlying the entire mission of ARC is the continued generosity of area churches including financial support, staff assistance, facility use, and spiritual support. Thank you! Providers/vendors in both communities (utilities, landlords, car repair shops, grocery stores, etc.) help ARC meet client needs by their willingness to work with the client and ARC through challenging and often stressful situations. Thank you!

## Community Events

During 2015, two community supported events in Ellsworth contributed much appreciated dollars towards the ARC mission. In June, 3 ARC Board members manned the "Coke Wagon" at Nilssen's Foods serving brats, hotdogs, chips, and soda. Beautiful weather and generous customers made for a great experience. Homecoming Week at the Ellsworth High School brought another very successful fundraiser. The Diva Dudes pageant sponsored by the Just Do It student organization mentored by Ms. Anne Pechacek was attended by a standing room only crowd with all proceeds (\$1500) going to ARC. Thank you!

In the fall of 2015, River Falls Municipal Utilities, with sponsorship from ARC and Salvation Army, hosted 3 “Breaking the Cycle” workshops at City Hall. Attendees had the opportunity to learn from a Family Means financial educator who helped everyone review basic financial management skills and look at their own budgets and spending plans. The sessions were well attended and very well received. These workshops also helped ARC realize a goal of client education, which is a large part of the organization’s overall philosophy of a helping “hand up” rather than a “hand out”. ARC is hopeful about continuing a similar education piece in the future. Thank you RFMU! Thank you Rhonda Davison!

In December of 2015, a group of UWRF Marketing/Communication students, under the guidance of their professor, David Bonko, put on a “Casino Night” at Junior’s Bar and Restaurant. The event raised \$1200 to be put towards ARC’s mission, as well as raising community awareness. ARC very much appreciated being selected as the recipient. We look forward to working with UWRF students in the future. Thank you students! Thank you Junior’s Bar and Restaurant.

### **The ARC Board**

The ARC Board of Directors is currently made up of nine dedicated individuals who have strong ties to the area and believe we are a community of neighbors who should care for one another in time of need. We welcome anyone who is interested in learning more about becoming involved with ARC to contact a board member.

### **Dedicated Volunteers**

ARC has an amazing group of phone volunteers, many who have been with the organization from the beginning. Their commitment and compassion plays a major role in why ARC has been, and will continue to be so successful in fulfilling the needs of those less fortunate. A big Thank You to all our Phone Volunteers who received over 1000 calls in 2015!

### **ARC’s Process**

When a client calls ARC, a phone volunteer fills out an intake form, recording basic information and the client’s request. The Client Service Coordinator, Ronna, then reviews the request, verifies the information, and calls the client back within 24 to 48 hours. If the request is approved, Ronna emails Lori, ARC Treasurer, who writes a check and mails it to the provider i.e. landlord, utility company, automotive repair shop, etc. Funds are never given directly to a client. Information recorded on the intake forms is entered into a database to track the number of times a client has requested assistance and has been given assistance. The process has been revamped, refined, and streamlined into an efficient, effective, and equitable way of distributing financial assistance for those who live within the River Falls and Ellsworth School Districts. Those clients living outside ARC’s service territory will receive referrals to the appropriate agencies in their community.

## Key ARC Operating Statistics for 2015

### Financial and Referral Services Provided

Families	569
Individuals	345
<b>Total</b>	<b>914</b>

### Breakdown of Services Provided (Number of Households)

Rent	121
Utilities	148
Transportation (gas, repair, tabs, registration, taxi)	176
Food, laundry, other	39
Referral	430
<b>Total of Services Provided</b>	<b>914</b>

### Client Service Expenditures

Housing	\$ 24,577.17
Utilities	\$ 14,763.43
Transportation (gas, repairs, tabs, titles, and renewals)	\$ 7,928.75
Food, laundry, other	<u>\$ 2,919.65</u>
<b>Total Services Provided</b>	<b>\$ 50,189.00</b>

### Accumulative Expense Report

Year	Client Services	Admin Expenses	Total	%Client Services
2009	\$ 19,744	\$ 1996	\$ 21,740	90.82%
2010	\$ 29,503	\$ 1102	\$ 30,605	96.40%
2011	\$ 24,831	\$ 1088	\$ 25,919	95.80%
2012	\$ 34,641	\$ 1363	\$ 36,004	96.21%
2013	\$ 38,276	\$ 1681	\$ 39,957	95.94%
2014	\$ 49,584	\$ 1395	\$ 50,979	97.26%
2015	\$ 50,189	\$ 2157	\$ 52,346	95.95%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$246,768</b>	<b>\$10,782</b>	<b>\$257,550</b>	<b>95.90%</b>

The accumulative chart shows a continuing and ever growing need for ARC services. The increase beginning in 2013 reflects the addition of the Ellsworth community. The chart documents our low administrative costs and since the first year when we had start- up costs, including filing for tax exempt status, we have maintained a 95% plus client services standard. Administrative expenses this year included postage, a computer, computer software, and a cellular phone plan. ARC has no paid staff and relies on donated office space.

## ARC's 2015 Donors

Abundant Life Church  
Ezekiel Lutheran Church  
First Congregational Church  
First Covenant Church  
Luther Memorial Church  
St. Francis Catholic Church  
St. Bridget Catholic Church  
St. Paul's United Church of Christ  
Svea Lutheran Church  
United Methodist Church  
First Presbyterian Church  
Family Fresh Market – Nash Finch  
Hugh J. Andersen Foundation  
Zach Wateski Memorial  
Otto Bremer Foundation  
River Falls Lion's Club  
River Falls Community Fund  
United Way of St. Croix Valley  
The Traveler's Matching Fund Program  
Lori's Day Spa  
Ellsworth High School Just Do It Students  
Jim and Ronna Ellis  
Paige Miller  
Lori Rodewald  
John and Connie Holck  
Jim and Judy Erickson  
River Falls State Bank  
Colleen and Kevin Westhuis  
Gordan and Laura Lenneman  
R & J Rommel

English Lutheran Church  
Crossroads Church  
Bethlehem Eidsvold Lutheran Church  
Rush River Lutheran Church  
Our Savior's Lutheran Church  
River Falls Knights of Columbus  
Zion Covenant  
Unitarian Universalist Society  
United Methodist Women's Group  
River Falls Women's Bridge League  
Pierce-Pepin Cooperative  
Aladtec  
Red Wing Shoe Company  
Nilssen's Foods  
UWRF Marketing/Communications  
Ellsworth Order of Eastern Star  
Judy Perkins  
Dale and Sheila Olson  
Karen Rickard  
Cathy Cliffe  
John Hansen  
Dave and Cheryl Dintemann  
Stuart and Joann Lentz  
Don and Ellie Richards  
Sharon and Joel Schulze  
Royal Credit Union  
Bohannon Group LLC  
Edina Realty – Betty Most  
Greg and Jen O'Malley  
River Falls Masonic

## Members of the ARC Board:

**Lori Rodewald**, Treasurer. Lori has a Masters in School Counseling as well as a Masters in Special Education. She has strong community ties to both Hudson and River Falls. Lori works for the Science Museum of Minnesota as a Talent Resources Specialist and is substitute teacher for the Stillwater and South Washington County School Districts.

**Ronna Ellis**, Client Service Coordinator. Ronna is one of the founders of ARC. A 34-year-resident of the Hudson/River Falls area, Ronna has been involved in numerous volunteer organizations. She received her degree from UWRF, focusing on Sociology and Criminal Justice.

**Paige Miller**, Grant Coordinator and Secretary. Paige is a professor of sociology at UWRF and is actively involved with a number of groups on campus including the student chapter of Habitat for Humanity, Women's and Gender Studies, and International Programs. Each summer she travels to India as part of her National Science Foundation funded research project.

**Cheryl Dintemann**, Grants and Publicity. Cheryl and her husband Dave are residents of River Falls. Cheryl is busy with 3 young children and a business, Johnnie's Bar. She enjoys raising her children in a smaller town environment where a sense of community is important. She enjoys helping with their business and does her best to remain active in the community.

**Sharon Schulze**, Chairperson. Sharon and her husband, Joel, live just outside of Ellsworth. Their 3 children and families reside in California and the Twin Cities area. Sharon retired from Public Health nursing (PCPH) in Jan. 2012, after 32 yrs. The Schulzes left ownership of Ellsworth Village Pharmacy at the same time and are enjoying retirement.

**Don Richards**, Member-at-large. Don served as Mayor of River Falls from 2004 to 2012. He was a teacher in River Falls, Prescott, and UW Whitewater. A River Falls native, educated in the River Falls Public Schools, graduated from UW-River Falls, and earned advanced degrees at UW-Madison. He is married to Ellie, and has four children.

**Jim Erickson**, Member-at-large. Jim and his wife Judy, live outside of Ellsworth. Two of their children live in Kenosha, and one in Prescott. Jim retired from SNAP-ON INC in 2003 after 30 years and moved to Ellsworth. Jim has been very involved in the Northwest and Greater Milwaukee Church Synods.

**Judy Perkins**, Member-at-large. Judy lives in Ellsworth. She is retired from the Ellsworth School District where she worked in Early Childhood Special Education, and continues to volunteer her time. Judy is President of the Ellsworth Public Library Board. She has 3 children and 5 grandchildren.

**Colleen Westhuis**, Member-at-large. Colleen and her husband, Kevin, relocated to River Falls in 2013. They previously resided in Fort Collins, Colorado where they raise their two children. Colleen has a degree in Economics and several years of experience in the financial services industry. She served as the Director of Education and Professionalism for a Fort Collins non-profit organization.

**John Holck**, John resigned in April after serving 5 years in the Treasurer position. He and his wife relocated to Michigan to be near family.

### **Board Support:**

**John Hansen**, Outreach. John is a Substitute Librarian for Hennepin County Library System. He has an MLIS from Louisiana State University. John has worked as a public librarian in charge of nonprofit and grants literature. He has been active in working with various foundations.

**Sheila Olson**, Volunteer Coordinator. Sheila and her husband, Dale, are 27 year residents of River Falls. Sheila has a degree in Business with an emphasis in Management from UWRF. She is an election worker in her township and currently works part-time at Associated Dentists.

**Peter Carr**, Grant Research. Peter is a retired epidemiologist. He most recently worked for the MN Dept. of Health as the AIDS and STD Director. Peter serves on the Pierce County Board of Health and is a technical assistance provider for the Natl. Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Director's Global Program.

**A big Thank You to our dedicated volunteers:**

**Cathy Cliffe**

**Cheryl Dintemann**

**Don Richards**

**Mary Japs**

**Rhonda Davison**

**Patricia Kjosa**

**JoAnn Lentz**

**Karen Rickard**

**Jim & Judy Erickson**

**Kristen Miller**

**Leslie Clauss**

**Terry Mithun**

**John Hansen**

**Colleen Westhuis**

**Sheila & Dale Olson**

**Jessica Weberg**

**Paige Miller**

**Jackie Slocum**

**Jim & Ronna Ellis**

**Virginia Hilden**

**Phil Cernohous**

**Peter Carr**

**Lori Rodewald**

**Judy Perkins**

**Sharon & Joel Schulze**