

theExchange

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2026

A Season of Need

We have all shared both the excitement and challenges of winter in Wisconsin! At theExchange, winter presents an additional challenge in maintaining adequate inventory to support visiting households. And while cold weather and holiday schedules present challenges to maintaining inventory, winter also coincides with an increased need for the services offered by theExchange.

In October 2025, theExchange received referrals for more than 70 households in need. We need your support this winter to ensure theExchange maintains basic household items for neighbors in need through these cold weather months! Please see some of theExchange's current high needs items listed to the right.

- microwaves
- recliners
- couches and loveseats
- small kitchen tables
- pots and pans bakeware



Reuse

In addition to providing support for households experiencing hardship, theExchange also serves as an important point of reuse for the community.

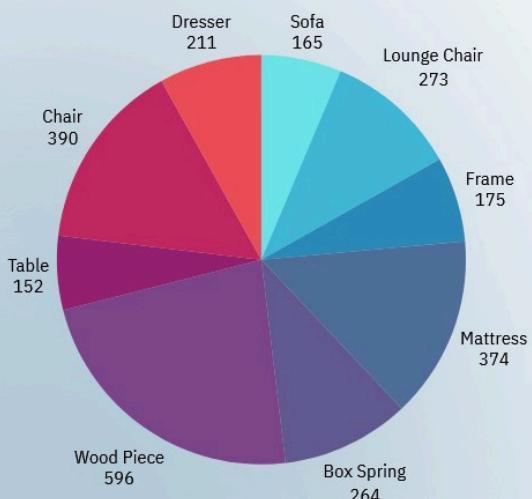
The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that more than 13 million tons of household goods are disposed of in American landfills each year.

theExchange is doing our part to give new life to gently used items that may otherwise be destined for local landfills.

In 2025, theExchange served as the point of reuse for more than 173,305 lbs (86.6 tons) of large household goods.

Reuse at theExchange

Furniture by Item



2,656 Individual Items Repurposed

Totaling **173,305 lbs**
86.6 Tons



Jan 1- Dec 31, 2025



JIM and JULIE WAGNER

About five years ago, newly retired from careers and ready to lend some time to a community cause, Jim and Julie heard about theExchange from a friend. So why theExchange? Julie quickly responded: "It serves such a need—you're helping others and can also enjoy the social contact with like-minded volunteers. And the clients are so appreciative!" Julie recalls being touched by a shopper commenting, "I haven't slept in a bed in over a year". Both added that it's an easy way to make a noticeable difference as the volunteer role is so flexible—you can sign up only for as long or as often as fits your schedule or even at the last minute, which they both like.

Jim has a knack for turning broken items into treasures. He often repairs vacuum sweepers—many times it's fixing a simple clogged hose—or mends broken hinges on doors. These restored items find new homes with clients moving into an apartment. He also recalls the "pink bed story" where a neighbor commented that she wanted to get rid of her daughter's bright pink bed that needed some repairs and was wondering what to do with it. Jim quickly saw its potential, fixed it, and donated it to theExchange. And sure enough, it made the day for a mother with a young daughter who finally had a bed of her own at home.

cont. on page 2



Volunteer Spotlight - cont. from front page

Many people don't realize the difference they can make by donating items they no longer need or want. Julie invited her book group to tour the Exchange and they were surprised to learn of all the used items they could donate. Jim also added, "I've got a pickup and am always on the lookout for items. If I can get it into my truck, I can make it happen."

Jim retired after a career as an HVAC designer with Bernie Buchner Inc. and Julie as a kindergarten teacher at Cathedral, where she continues to substitute teach on occasion. Their three adult children and 11 grandchildren now live in various places in Wisconsin and add much joy to their lives. And their time at the Exchange couldn't be more appreciated. Erin Lisota, Operations Manager, says, "Jim and Julie give their time and talents so freely, and will always leave you with a great story, good laugh, and a smile on your face."

Work Made Possible by You

As we begin a new year, the Exchange would like to thank you for your generous support!

Each donated household good, volunteer hour and financial contribution supports our mission of providing home essentials for community members in need.

2025 SERVICE SUMMARY

Volunteer Hours 2650	Households Served 495
Individual Donations 1417	Individuals Served 1047
	Miles Traveled 2833

Furniture Poverty in America

Last year, the Exchange was grateful to provide input for an effort called "Furnish Together". Spearheaded by The National Furniture Bank Coalition, this effort sought to quantify both the need and impact of community furniture banks. Central to this effort has been to add definition to the concept of "furniture poverty". This is the state in which members of a community are lacking access to one or more essential household furniture items.

Through a comprehensive survey effort, the National Furniture Bank Coalition has identified that 32% of United States residents are currently experiencing furniture poverty. Two in 10 American families do not have enough beds for every household member to sleep on. Four in 10 American households are missing multiple critical items needed to maintain a functional, safe home.

Ultimately, community furniture banks like the Exchange believe that the resources exist within the community to support basic needs and contribute to positive physical, mental and social impacts for our neighbors.

Time and Talent

Volunteerism is at the heart of the Exchange's ability to provide support for those in need! In 2025 the dedicated team of the Exchange volunteers contributed nearly 3,000 hours of their valuable time to ensure the Exchange remains a reliable resource for the La Crosse Area.

With more than 1,200 individual volunteer shifts logged last year, the Exchange volunteer team demonstrates the impact generous neighbors can have, by offering their time and talents to support others.

In 2026, the Exchange is excited to announce a new volunteer position:

Warehouse Operations Assistant! This volunteer role will support the management of our furniture inventory, receive community furniture donations and support the safe use and organization of our program space.

Learn more about the Warehouse Operations Assistant role and all volunteer opportunities at www.shelterdevelopment.org/volunteer-theexchange



theExchange
LA CROSSE AREA FURNITURE BANK