

2017-2018 annual report



DamianoCenter
serving people in need



Dear Friend,

The Damiano Center has completed another fiscal year thanks to the support of the Twin Ports community, and especially thanks to you! You play a critical role in our success when you partner with us as a donor – without your support, we could not have served nearly 117,000 meals last year, given away hundreds of thousands of items of clothing, or fed more than 200 kids and their families in Kids' Kitchen.

Perhaps you are a volunteer as well as a donor. If so, hats off to you for pulling double duty to partner in the critical work of the Damiano Center. If you have not volunteered, I encourage you to try it out. Damiano volunteers enjoy their work so much that they collectively shared more than 8,000 hours of their time and talent with us last year. There are volunteers who are here multiple times per week, volunteers who have been working in the kitchen for 36 years and counting, church groups, school groups, court-ordered and community service workers, and many others who dedicate their time to achieving our mission. We wish we had the

Our year by the numbers



**4,926 hours were volunteered
in the Community Kitchen**



**116,778 meals were served
in the Community Kitchen**



**3,119 hours were volunteered
in the Free Store**



**Kid's Kitchen served 2,483
meals and was open 183 days**



**The Free Store gave away
225,093 items of clothing**

time and space to tell you about all of them, but we decided to focus on two volunteers, Arlene and Katie, whose faces we see frequently.

Damiano volunteers care deeply and put in the extra time that it takes to meet someone new, learn from them, and understand what they truly need. If you are like Katie or Arlene, this might include helping girls find birthday dresses, helping a gentleman find history books on the free book shelf, or simply supporting a space where families can make their own “Saturday morning memories.”

Everything that we do here truly is a community effort that is powered by contributions from people throughout the Northland. The Damiano Center was built by the community for the community. Whether you offer donations of time, clothes, food, or financial gifts, the Damiano Center is fueled by your generosity. Together, we can achieve so much.



Seth Currier
Executive Director



947 guests were assisted with transportation needs through our Community Services program



55% of participants believe that our Health Realization program has helped them change the way they think about their problems for the better



470 guests were provided with hygiene items through our Community Services program



930 people received apparel to help them attain or retain employment through our Clothes That Work program



An Open Heart and Mind

“Becoming a volunteer at this organization taught me how important it is to be grateful for what you have rather than what you do not have, and to never judge a book by its cover,” says Kaitlyn Thompson. Katie has volunteered with Damiano since 2016, primarily in Clothes That Work and the Free Store. She is originally from southern Minnesota, and she came to the Northland to go to the University of Minnesota Duluth, where she is studying pharmacy.

Katie initially connected with Damiano after she got in trouble for shoplifting and was required to complete eight hours of community service. She believes that everything happens for a reason, we all make mistakes, and “it is just important to learn from them and move on.” She learned to move on from that mistake, but fortunately she did not move on from the Damiano Center. Those first eight hours had such an impact on Katie’s life that she has been volunteering to provide services to Damiano guests for nearly two years.

She was and is still inspired to volunteer by the people she serves, saying, “I see many of the people who come to the Center around town and instead of being nervous because of their appearance or living conditions, I am compelled to reach out to them with an open heart and mind.” She says that when guests get the help they need, “You can see the smile on their face and the sparkle in their eyes.”

Katie sees the diversity of the people who visit the Damiano Center, from children who tell her about their school day, to the elderly who share stories about their lives, to a deaf man who loves learning about history through the free books on the shelf on the second floor. As a young woman with Hispanic heritage in a primarily Caucasian community, this diversity is important to her.

About becoming a volunteer, Katie says, “I learned to be strong and confident in who I was and what I had to offer in the world. I learned that in me giving back to the community and teaching others, the community was also giving back to me.”



Damiano Center staff

- Maria Alicea, Kids’ Kitchen Assistant
- Sandy Bennett, Program Director
- Johnny Brown, Kitchen Worker
- Seth Currier, Executive Director
- Ashley Grimm, Children’s Program Manager
- Kyra Gustafson, Administrative Specialist
- Doug Happy, Community Services Specialist
- Phillip Howell, Kitchen Worker
- Richard Howell, Maintenance Coordinator
- Keith McKenzie, Weekend Custodian
- Joanna Menchaca, Kids’ Kitchen Assistant
- Debra Moore, Free Store Assistant
- Katherine Mueller, Development Director
- Michele Naar-Obed, Cook
- Barb Parks, Accounting Associate
- Robin Tomczak, Free Store Specialist
- Paul Travaglione, Community Kitchen Assistant
- Richard Van Meter, Cook
- Donna Verhel, Clothes That Work Coordinator
- Flora Woodfork, Lead Cook

Making good memories possible

Arlene has been volunteering at the Damiano Center for almost a year. She began working in the Free Store every Tuesday, and she enjoyed herself so much that she started to work in the Community Kitchen occasionally as well. Arlene has two adult daughters and she is retired from her job at a dental clinic. She shared that she really needed something more in her life to keep her busy after her husband passed away. She had been his primary caretaker, and she said that after his passing “[she] lost purpose in life.”

Volunteer work is taking up plenty of her time these days. The Free Store and Community Kitchen are very different, but Arlene’s favorite aspect of both is that she is exposed to people of all ages. The Community Kitchen is always full of activity and the cooks keep volunteers busy. The Free Store is quieter and has a slower pace.

Arlene remembers working in the Community Kitchen one Saturday and seeing a family eating breakfast. She thought of her own weekend breakfasts as a child, when her family would have a big home-cooked meal together. At first she felt like the kids were missing out and felt sorry for them, but then she “noticed that they looked happy while they were eating.” They were making their own Saturday morning memories.

The calm work of sorting clothes in the Free Store gives Arlene an opportunity to socialize with volunteers and guests. She enjoys volunteering



alongside college and high school students and hearing about their lives. One of her favorite memories of the Free Store is of some “girls finding dresses for a birthday party,” and how excited they were to find what they were looking for. She also enjoys sorting the children’s clothes that are donated and helping mothers and soon-to-be mothers find clothing for their babies and children. Arlene says, “they are so appreciative of the help.”

Damiano couldn’t operate its programs without the generosity of Arlene and hundreds of other volunteers. Her hard work doesn’t just feed and clothe people in need, but it also makes good memories possible for the individuals and families who visit the Damiano Center.



Thank you to all of our volunteers, including our Board of Directors:

Matt Thibodeau, *President*
Thibodeau, Thibodeau & Feriancek

Sr. Lois Eckes, OSB, *President-elect*
St. Scholastica Monastery

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Duluth Police Department

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Center for Alcohol and Drug Treatment

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Our generous donors

\$100,000+

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\$50,000 – \$99,000

Head of the Lakes United Way

\$20,000 – \$49,999

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\$5,000 – \$9,999

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Superior Area Community Foundation
Benedictine Sisters Benevolent Association
Diocese of Duluth
Rotary Club #25
Emergency Food and Shelter Program

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Bethesda Lutheran Church
Bethlehem Lutheran Church Women
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Dougherty Veterinary Clinics

Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce
Duluth Owl's Club Auxiliary
Duluth Police Welfare Association
Duluth Superior Friends Meeting
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First Presbyterian Church
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Women's Association
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Order of Ahepa/Twelve Holy Apostles Church
St. John's Lutheran Church WELCA
St. Margaret's Guild/St. James Church
St. Mary's Catholic Church
Touchpoint
United Baptist Christian Church
United Protestant Church Women's Guild

Together, we can achieve so much!

Special thanks to participants of our Sustenance Partners program:

Anonymous · James & Julienne Abelsen · Maria Alicea
Marion Barta · Jennifer Beers · David & Pamela Benson
Liz Carlson · Julie & Tim Cerar · Erin & Seth Currier
Barbara Currier · Matt & Kay Doyle · Katherine Mueller &
Kevin Farnum · Ronald Gagne · Steve & Kelli Glonchak
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VonRueden · Luanne & Michael Wachula · Stephen &
Karen Wedel · Andrew Wheeler · Nola White
Women Living Our Faith of St. John's Church



Financial report

2017 — 2018 Revenue

In-kind donations	32%
Individual gifts	30%
Foundations and community groups	22%
Corporations	8%
Rental	4%
Government grants	3%
Miscellaneous	1%

2017 — 2018 Expenses

Program expenditures	85%
Administration	12%
Fundraising	3%





Damiano Center

serving people in need

206 W 4th St.

Duluth, MN 55806

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