

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

SALUTING TOM KRAMER

Since August of 1995, when he helped answer our first challenging call for help, Attorney Tom Kramer has brought highly valued guidance, wisdom, humor, and compassion to Sowing Seeds.

When the Salvation Army called us thirteen years ago regarding a disabled mom with three school-aged children, the family had no food or clothing, they were behind in their mortgage and utility payments, and the mom was driving against doctor's orders. Meanwhile, her ex-husband was living with his new girlfriend and ignoring his family by not paying child support. All it took was one phone call to Tom. He took this case on as he would a "paying client" and after many months succeeded in getting the ex-husband's wages attached directly at his place of employment. Tom's work was the key in stabilizing this troubled family.

Over the years, Tom has continued to give hundreds of hours of free legal service to Marshfield residents who struggle to obtain the basics of life and who could never afford the services of an attorney. He has faithfully served on the Sowing Seeds board of directors for over ten years. Tom, in the name of all those you have helped and from all the people of Marshfield, we thank you. You are a Marshfield treasure.



Attorney Tom Kramer

When you are finished reading our newsletter, please pass it on to a friend.

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SOWING SEEDS

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VOLUME 4, NO. 1

of Hope

From the Directors

VOLUNTEERING: Heart-to-Heart

You never know what's going on in other people's lives. One of the many pieces of wisdom I treasure, these words ring especially true at Sowing Seeds.

In my three short years of coordinating volunteers for Sowing Seeds, I have talked with over one hundred fifty extraordinary people willing to donate their time and talents. As I've come to know many of them, I've learned about personal hardships and blessings that not only have motivated them to volunteer but also have given them profound empathy for others. A driver who has struggled with cancer now takes others to chemotherapy appointments. A teacher with a wealth of knowledge about social services joins the home visitation team. A woman confined to her home with a disability makes needed telephone calls. A businessperson in town shares financial advice and makes regular donations. A mother blessed with a healthy family works at the Clothing Bank. Each has found a way to turn his or her private story into a position of strength and compassion, offering encouragement, giving hope to others. Collectively, these volunteers are the heart and soul of our organization.

"You never know" has another side: people who need our help. When I talk with friends about Sowing Seeds, they are continually surprised to learn of poverty and despair in our community. Forty families a week served at the Clothing Bank? They had no idea. More than three thousand calls for help in the thirteen years Sowing Seeds has been answering the line? All Marshfield residents? Amazing. As the calls come in to Sowing Seeds—clothing in short supply, eviction notices looming, fuel bills unpaid—daily economic hardship, physical challenges, and loneliness take on real names, with Marshfield addresses.

"You never know what's going on in other people's lives." The miracle of Sowing Seeds is that we are able to connect people's lives in mutually beneficial ways. Volunteers with their own challenges and successes work in true communion with those in need. And in this very personal giving and receiving, volunteer and neighbor in need are privileged to see the Christ in each other's heart.

—Karen Dunderdale

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

IN SERVICE TO OTHERS

"At age five, on Christmas Eve, I was tap dancing in the ward of the Soldiers' Hospital in Chelsea. By age ten, I knew I wanted to be in a career that involved helping others." These early recollections of Mary Doolan have come to fruition in a life of service to those in need. Mary has been a social worker at two state hospitals and a nursing home, and a career counselor in the co-op program at Northeastern University, but many in Marshfield have come to know her as a pastoral associate at St. Christine's, involved in parish outreach for 18 years. It was this ministry that brought her to a meeting in the fall of 1993. There, Marshfield church representatives, in response to growing numbers of residents with basic needs for food, clothing, and housing, formed Sowing Seeds.



Sowing Seeds president and founding member Mary Doolan

Has Sowing Seeds changed since its inception?

Sowing Seeds has remained true to its mission, and, because of the compassion and generosity of Marshfield residents, has grown and developed beyond anything we could have ever imagined.

Receiving the gift of what is now the Sowing Seeds building from the elders of the former First Baptist church in 2000 was a major turning point. We were given a home, a meeting place, and a permanent site for our Clothing Bank.

Have you seen the need in Marshfield change through the years?

What we see in Marshfield reflects national trends: many more single parents, severe cutbacks in state and federal services, and increases in domestic violence and substance abuse. Our materialistic, fast-paced culture leaves many individuals in need feeling ashamed, isolated, and hopeless.

Sowing Seeds has relied entirely on volunteers. Who typically offers to help?

We have been blessed with so many talented, generous, and caring volunteers—from children raising money and collecting hats and mittens, to professional people and retired individuals using their skills to make a direct difference in people's lives.

Where could you use more help?

We're looking for people who would like to provide support and companionship as mentors, and we always need drivers, attorneys, trades people, donations of usable cars, and individuals willing to help maintain our building and grounds.

What challenges lie ahead for Sowing Seeds?

In order to assure continuity of our services to those in need, our main challenge is to attract young adults willing to assume future leadership roles—as board members, officers, intake team members, and transportation, Clothing Bank and volunteer coordinators.

What is your vision for Sowing Seeds in the future?

I would like to see us build a simple structure for a much-needed furniture bank on our property; offer workshops and support groups to help our neighbors increase their self-esteem, improve their interpersonal relationships, and learn useful life skills to help them help themselves; and continue to attract compassionate volunteers willing to give the precious gift of their time.

My hope is that Sowing Seeds will always remain faithful to our mission statement and be conscious of the fact that all of us at some time or other need help. Whether we are giving or receiving help, we are all connected as neighbors. Every person has something valuable to contribute and, in our own way, each one of us is a giver and a receiver.

WHO WE ARE

Sowing Seeds is a nonprofit network of people who share their time, ideas and special gifts to help Marshfield residents in need. One seed, planted in fertile ground over 14 years ago, has produced an active, viable group of over 100 volunteers and scores of generous supporters.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Mary Doolan, President
William Last, Vice President
Julia Desmond, Treasurer
Mary Price, Clerk
Kim Kulp, Clothing Bank Director
Jacqueline Egan, Secretary
Connie Drapeau Kennedy, Publicity
Karen Dunderdale, Volunteer Management
Virginia Gill, Representative, North Community Church
Thomas Kramer, Representative, Marshfield Methodist Church
Donna Adams, Representative, Trinity Episcopal Church
Bitsy Bullock, Representative, Our Lady of the Assumption Church
Lorraine Sproul, Representative, First Congregational Church

NEWSLETTER

- Karen Dunderdale, Editor
Marianne Bakula, Designer

CLOTHING BANK

Located at 974 Plain Street, in the white church on the corner of Route 139 and School Street, Marshfield
Open for donations or needs
Thursday: 10 AM - 12 Noon
Saturday: 10 AM - 12 Noon

SOWING SEEDS, P.O. Box 1001, Marshfield, MA 02050
781-837-3337 or 781-83-SEEDS



Faces & Voices OF SOWING SEEDS

When our volunteers gathered for a morning of reflection last spring, we asked them about the role Sowing Seeds plays in their lives. Their remarks—insightful and caring—reflect the same spirit they bring to Sowing Seeds.

WE VOLUNTEER TO:

- Share with others the care and love that we have experienced
Give back to the community
Go beyond our own needs
Leave the world a better place

SOWING SEEDS GIVES US:

- The personal satisfaction of knowing we've made a difference
The opportunity to meet new people, work on committees, and share responsibilities
A way to give hope to someone else

SUSTAINING US IN OUR WORK IS THE REALIZATION THAT:

- We are answering God's call as instruments of God's work. We respond to others with humor, hope, and prayer
We can make someone's life easier
Our energy and time go toward an important mission

WHAT INSPIRES US?

- Wonderful and dedicated volunteers
The overwhelming appreciation of the people we support, and their success stories
The Clothing Bank director, who works even harder than her volunteers

WHAT DOES SOWING SEEDS DO BEST?

- Make big changes in small ways, so people have a reason to hope for a better future
Treat those we help with dignity
Bring people together: contributors, volunteers, and families in need
Listen, care, and empower people to help themselves

WE ARE CONTINUALLY SURPRISED BY:

- How many others are willing to give their time and talent
The enormous need that exists in our town
The creative, innovative ways volunteers have to solve problems
Our own personal growth and development
The courage of families in hard circumstances



APPLAUDING OUR

Volunteers



"You have made Marshfield a better place."
As guest speaker at our spring

Volunteer Celebration, State Representative

Frank Hynes enthusiastically acknowledged our volunteers' devotion to supporting their Marshfield neighbors.

"I salute you for your dedication and your strong energy in helping people...I applaud you for not only recognizing those who are not as well off as we are but also for doing something about it."

To all our volunteers: Thank you for the special gifts you bring to Sowing Seeds.

IN MEMORIAM

A gift to Sowing Seeds is an especially appropriate way to honor a loved one, while helping other families in Marshfield. In the past year, donations have been made in memory of:

Mary Cedrone
Muriel Drapeau

Jenny Fraggos
Catherine J. McDonough
Annette Marie Phaneu

Ted Shafto
Minnie Westmoreland

I'D LIKE TO HELP SOWING SEEDS!

- Transportation, driving locally or to Boston
Clothing Bank, on Thursday or Saturday morning
Home maintenance
Fundraising
Counseling, family, financial, career, or individual
Other (please tell us what!)
Donation (your tax-deductible check can be made payable to Sowing Seeds)

Want to make a difference in someone's life? Please tell us how you'd like to help.

Name
Address
Phone
E-mail

Please return this form to Sowing Seeds, PO Box 1001, Marshfield, MA 02050. Or, give us a call at 781-83-SEEDS.

Thank You, Thank You, Sowing Seeds

Thank you sincerely for providing me transportation to and from the Faulkner Hospital... Your volunteer was an excellent driver, very courteous and polite, and calmed all my fears of being late when the traffic became heavy... a perfect gentleman.

Thanks for all you did for my children. I couldn't do it without you.

To all my dear friends who have kept me dressed so well—Jesus bless you all!

You have done so much for my children and me. But, most of all, you have given us the gift of love, which we will never forget and which we will carry with us for the rest of our lives.