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January/February 2012

## January is National Mentoring Month

**T**hank Your Mentor Day™ will be celebrated on Thursday, January 26. On that day, many Americans will reach out to thank or honor those individuals who encouraged and guided them, and had a lasting impact on their lives. Here are ways to honor your mentor: 1) Contact your mentor directly to express your appreciation; 2) “Pass it on” by becoming a mentor to a young person in your community; 3) Make a financial contribution to a local mentoring program. Turn your lifetime of experience into the experience of a lifetime. Share what you know...mentor a child.

To be a mentor, you don't need any special skills—just an ability to listen and to offer friendship, guidance, and

encouragement to a young person growing up today. You'll be amazed by how much you'll get out of the experience. Share what you know, become a mentor. Call 729-5600 to learn more.

### CHILD READY TO BE MATCHED

Sarah is nine years old and in the fourth grade. She is a hardworking and friendly girl. She enjoys baking, coloring, arts and crafts, shopping, movies, music and she is also a member of Girl Scouts. To learn more about Sarah please contact Best Friends at 729-5600.

## Creating Lasting Friendships...



**B**est Friends of Neenah-Menasha asks for a one year commitment from a mentor. Following is an inspiring story of a match that has lasted much longer than that:

Joanie and Deven have been matched for 25 years;

both of them helping each other through difficult times as well as celebrating accomplishments along the way. They first met in 1986 during a Waiting List activity to Bay Beach sponsored by Thrivent Financial, where Joanie volunteered to be a chaperone, and Deven was a shy four year old little girl. That night on the way back to Neenah, Deven fell asleep on Joanie's lap and they have been matched ever since! Deven explained, “Joanie was like the Mom I never had.” When Deven was struggling in school, Joanie was always there encouraging her to do her best. She even made a deal with Deven, that if she wouldn't get any D's or F's on her report card, she would take her to Florida. Deven worked towards improving her grades and with determination received B's, C's and even an A in math! “If it wasn't for that deal we made, I truly believe I would have dropped out of school.”

“Years later when I received terrible news and was diagnosed with a terminal disease, I can't even begin to describe how Joanie helped me to cope. When everybody was turning their backs on me, she never left my side. Now I have a beautiful baby girl and

I only hope I can be half the woman Joanie is when it comes to raising my daughter. I hope I can instill the same values and morals that she taught me!”

Today Joanie and Devens' match is officially closed, however they are still Best Friends. Deven lives in Florida to be closer to her Mom, while Joanie continues to reside in the Fox Cities. Despite the miles apart, they stay in contact through emails and occasionally visits.

The last time Joanie visited Deven in Florida was for her wedding. “Deven met a wonderful man and she was a beautiful bride! I was so proud!”

Last summer was Devens most recent visit to the Fox Cities with her husband and two year old daughter Brianna. Joanie stated how lucky she felt to not only meet Brianna, but to throw a Birthday party for her! “She is just beautiful – I wish I didn't live so far away from them.”

Deven's visit included a trip for everyone to Bay Beach. There, Joanie and Deven recalled their very first meeting, looked back on their years spent together, and were grateful for all they had to look forward to. Mentoring has truly touched their lives and created a “forever friendship”.





DAWN GOHLKE,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## From the Director

**BEST FRIENDS OF NEENAH-MENASHA  
WINNER OF \$25,000 ENDOWMENT AND  
\$2,500 GRANT IN THE COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION'S 25 FOR 25 CONTEST**

The global Web community as well as supporters throughout Northeast Wisconsin have voted Best Friends of Neenah-Menasha to the top of their size category.

Based on 69,559 votes cast online between October 16th and 25th, 25 charitable organizations finished at the top of their respective size categories and will share in \$187,500 in endowment and grant money. They were selected by the public from among 157 worthy organizations serving the Fox Valley region as part of The Community Foundation's 25th anniversary celebration. The five winners were announced on The Community Foundation's website on November 22nd.

"It is such an honor for Best Friends to be one of the non-profit organizations to receive an endowment from the 25 for 25 Charity Challenge." said Dawn Gohlke, Executive Director of Best Friends of Neenah-Menasha. "When we were day dreaming about the idea of receiving these funds, we realized that the interest on this endowment would make it possible to take 2 of our young friends off our waiting list every year. That is a fantastic impact and we know the children will be the ones to benefit in the end but I am personally excited for all of our volunteers, our staff and our supporters. I think this award truly reflects the passion and commitment of those individuals because it was their efforts that made this happen. I truly thank each and every one of them."

## NOVEMBER/DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Andrea Verhasselt	Hunter	1-25-10
Peter & Sue Thelen	Johannah	1-12-09
Cheryl Miller	Emily	1-5-09
Steve Dreger	Nicolas	1-16-08
Bud Wurdinger	Bryan	1-11-06
Mary & Nicole Daubert	Michaela	1-28-05
Dawn Ebert	T.C.	1-27-05
Carla Hartman	Melissa	1-26-05
Sally & Rachel Podoski	Corinne	1-6-05
Hilary Kopczenski	Calista	2-18-11
Salvatore Mirto	Nathan	2-2-10
Renee Schroeder	Alexandra	2-7-05
David Meyer	Austin	2-7-05
Gregg Bott	Derek	2-19-04

## Thank You for your Support!

### DONATIONS & GRANTS:

In honor of Sue Robinson's birthday: Merry Beverlin, Mrs. Charles Littlefield, Clara & Glenn Gustafson, Lois Thoman, Sue Vande Sande, and Mary Piper. The 4Giving 2Gether 4Women Fund within the Women's Fund for the Fox Valley Region, MaryComperini-Stoffel in honor of Mark & Molly Griffin, Susan Thelen, Elizabeth Barczak, David & Karen Thomsen, Don & Jean Koskinen, Lois Thoman, Thomas Prosser, Mary Jane Waite, Burt & Ginnie Westover, Earl & Laurel Stahl, Henry & Beverly Yunk, Rosemary Simonis, Evelyn Peterson in memory of David D. Peterson, Tony Ansems, The Robert W. and Susan T. Brown Family Foundation, John Werner, Keith Wilk and Jane Jacobson, Martha W. Sparks, Rosalie Schramm, William & Donna Rankin, Cindy Rieck, Eric & Michelle Bauer, Mowry Smith III, Richard Batley, John & Liane Butitta, Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Smith, Michael & Beth Brown, Jody Hoppe, Susan & Robert Brown, William & Julie Bickel, Matthew & Jennifer Camp, Rosemarie & Maung Win, Delores Einerson, The Finley Family, The Bruss Family, Frances A. Bachman and Joseph F. Bachman Charitable Fund within the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region, Ann & Michael Hoernke, Kimberly Clark Foundation, Galloway Company, ITW Foundation, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Foundation, Neenah-Menasha Noon Optimist Club, Quarry Quest, GoodSearch, Kiwanis Club of Neenah-Menasha Round Table, The Real Estate Group Foundation Fund within the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region, Infant Welfare Circle Kings Daughters Donor Advised Fund within the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region, Wisconsin Energy Foundation, Bemis Company Foundation, Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region 25 for 25 Charity Challenge



## Give an Enduring Gift

Some causes are so good that supporting them for a lifetime just isn't enough. If that's the way you feel about Best Friends of Neenah-Menasha a gift to our endowment can enable you to extend your charitable support forever.

Building the endowment creates a permanent base of support for the work we do. We are able to use the interest earned on the endowment to help children thrive, but the principal remains as a permanent source of income. It provides more stability to weather difficult times. Since our endowment was created in 1982, Best Friends of Neenah-Menasha has received more than \$600,000 in revenue from our endowment to support our mentoring programs.

Establishing an endowment within the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region and Associated Wealth Management assures that the funds will be invested safely and wisely. Dollars are managed by local investment professionals, and your charitable intent as a donor will be followed even if our organization changes.

Giving to our endowment can be as simple as contributing monetary gifts from a birthday or anniversary party, or as intricate as planning your estate. We offer a wide variety of gift options:

**Cash:** Make a gift by check (made payable to Best Friends of Neenah-Menasha/Endowment) in any amount and mail it to: Best Friends of Neenah-Menasha 181 E. North Water Street, Suite 225, Neenah, WI 54956. You may also contribute through convenient automatic bank withdrawals, by credit card over the phone, or online through the Community Foundation's web site [www.cffoxvalley.org](http://www.cffoxvalley.org).

**Securities:** Donate appreciated stock or bonds and avoid capital gains taxes. You may claim a charitable tax deduction for the securities' current market value. Please call Best Friends of Neenah-Menasha for assistance before making these types of gifts.

**Real estate:** That vacation cottage your family no longer uses, or investment property that has appreciated in value over the years may offer you the greatest tax advantages.

**Estate planning:** Consider gifts through a will or trust, retirement assets or insurance policies. You can also accomplish your family, financial and charitable goals with a gift that provides income for you or a loved one for life.

Contributing to Best Friends of Neenah-Menasha's endowment means you are creating a legacy of support for a cause you believe in, for many generations.

To learn more about making a gift that keeps on giving, please contact Dawn Gohlke, Executive Director at 920-729-5600. You may also contact the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region directly at 920-830-1290 (Shelley Leadley) or Associated Wealth Management (Robin Rettke) directly at 920-727-5382.



## Match Bowling Activity

### COMMUNITY BASED AND GUY STUFF

The Best Friends Match bowling activity is scheduled for Saturday, January 14th from 1pm-3pm at Sabre Lanes in Menasha (1330 Midway Road). The cost is \$4.00 per person, which includes two games of bowling and shoe rental. Come and enjoy a fun game of bowling. Call the Best Friends office at 729-5600 by January 12th to reserve your lane. (Please indicate if you need bumpers for your alley)

**FUN FUN FUN!**



## Laser Tag

### Community-Based & Guy Stuff

#### Monday, February 13th 6-7:30

Laser tag is fun for all ages. This is an activity you don't want to miss. It will be held at Badger Sports Park, 3600 E. Evergreen Dr., Appleton. I bet my team can beat your team! The cost will be \$5/match. Please RSVP by Thursday, February 9th. We will need to RSVP so they can reserve the space for us, thank you.

# News from our December Holiday Party!

## 2011 Volunteer Of The Year

### Darwin Hanson



We are proud to present Darwin Hanson with this year's "Volunteer of the Year" award! Darwin comes to us with several years of project management and computer programming expertise. He has been a tremendous asset in working with our existing database to accurately keep track of our matches and retrieve demographic information used in numerous grant applications. In the every changing world of technology, his knowledge, sense of humor and patience has made the most challenging of tasks manageable. Thank you, Darwin, for all you bring to this organization and the children we serve!

## 2011 Match Of The Year

### Jessica Kegler and Diana Young



Jessica and Diana were matched nine years ago on November 6, 2002. They have endured many changes and challenges in those nine years, but they always knew they had each other. Theirs is a moving story about commitment, courage, strength, and the power of friendship. We are honored to be a part of their story and award them our "2011 Match of the Year".

## 2011 Rookie Of The Year

### Dawn Sonnenberg



Dawn Sonnenberg has gone above and beyond as a newly appointed board member. Within weeks of joining our Board of Directors, Dawn volunteered to take on the position of Committee Chair. Her expertise in Human Resources has been vital to our operations and she is a true asset to our organization. It is a great honor to present Dawn with our "Rookie of the Year" award.

## 2011 Community Service Award

### Neenah-Menasha Emergency Society



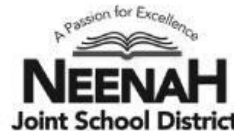
The Neenah-Menasha Emergency Society organizes the Community Back-to-School Fair. Each year we refer numerous families to this event who are financially struggling, and have children in need of school supplies. They also provide funding for families that are experiencing a crisis that could not be helped by other agencies, due to program guidelines and requirements. They are a great asset in helping us to "fill the gaps" in services that we provide to our families. Thank you for all you do in our community!

### St. Mary Central High School



We joined forces with St. Mary Central High School for our Lunch Mentoring Program in the fall of 2003. We started with 37 matches – today we have 63! The high school students mentor elementary kids on Wednesdays during the lunch period. Parents of both mentors and young friends have expressed their appreciation for this program. A special thank you to Karen Fahley and Jane Sturn! We are also very appreciative of utilizing St. Mary's for our annual Gourmet Bike Tour. It is a great facility from which to coordinate our event and the staff is very accommodating. Thank you St. Mary Central High School for your continued support of our programming and fundraising efforts!

### Neenah School Counselors



We are fortunate to be part of a community where everyone pulls together to make it a better place to live and work. We have been working with the Neenah School Counselors since 1974 when Best Friends began finding mentors for children in our community. Through the years we have created new mentoring programs in an effort to reach more children. The Neenah counselors have provided numerous referrals to these programs, and at times assisted us with both After-School and Lunch Mentoring. They care so much about their students and are willing to help whenever needed. Thank you Neenah counselors for going above and beyond for your students, and for your continued support of our programming!

## ***Congratulations to the Following Matches for Receiving Their Anniversary Medals:***

### **2nd Year Match Anniversary (Silver Medal)**

Darrell Dachelet & Joshua  
Tom Mowbray & Vladimir  
Jenna Buss & Ravin  
Mark/Anna Hines family & Nicole  
Gloria Weyenberg & Lailah  
Dana Schaff & Brianna  
Gabrial Jansen & Syannah  
Julie Petit & Destiny  
Tari Ess & Tara  
Anne Zuchowski & Eleanor  
Linda Forcey & Dana  
Peter/Sue Thelen family & Johannah  
Kay Kavanaugh & Tiarra  
Cheri Miller & Emily

### **5th Year Match Anniversary (Silver Medal)**

Kathy Tiesling & Emily  
Lori Polley & Robyn  
Chris/Peggy Brouch family & Aiden  
Karen/Jeff Warren & Paiton  
Maia Van Groll & Olivia  
Bud Wurdinger & Bryan  
Sue Fleming & Casie  
Patti Houlihan & Bethany

### **10th Year Match Anniversary (Gold Medal)**

Michelle Pauli & Heather



## ***Is Your Child Missing Out on Extra Curricular Activities Because Your Finances are Tight?***

Your child doesn't have to miss out because times are hard. Did you know that Best Friends has resources designed specifically for parents to request financial assistance for activities for their children? This component is called The Helping Hand. Typical requests include money toward summer camps, sports fees, YMCA memberships, school pictures and much more. Best Friends will grant requests to parents of children involved in the Best Friends program. We do encourage parents to pay a small portion of the request, such as \$5-\$15. So keep the Best Friends "Helping Hand" component in mind the next time your child wants to join a program or activity and the only thing holding you back is financing.

Note: You can also utilize the "Helping Hand" to attend Best Friends Family Activities, but you must make the request PRIOR to the day of the event. Thank you

## ***Attention, Single Parents!***

### **"SINGLE PARENT, TAKE A BREAK"**

Need a break? Wish you could have some "down" time? Don't forget that Best Friends has a "Single Parent, Take a Break" resource designed for just that purpose. Any single parent involved in the Best Friends program can make a request for financial support in order to do something just for themselves: a gift certificate to a restaurant, movie passes, a massage, a class, etc. Funds will be distributed on a first come, first serve basis and to the extent that funds are available. There will be a maximum amount that an individual can request throughout the year. What have you been putting off doing?

## ***E-mail Addresses***

Parents, we'd love to have your e-mail address in order to get in touch with you quickly and conveniently. Sometimes we have last minute donations that are time sensitive and the quickest way to reach everyone is through e-mail. If you'd like to ensure you are included in these e-mails or that we have your correct e-mail address, please call or e-mail the office.



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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

BEST FRIENDS OF NEENAH-MENASHA MISSION STATEMENT

*To help young people thrive through the power of mentoring friendships and supportive family networks.*

***Experience The Magic Of A Child  
and create memories that last lifetime!  
Become a mentor to a child today!***

Someone once said, "It takes a community to raise a child." We at Best Friends have seen this statement in action. Our children are boys and girls ages 5 to 18 who are looking for a friend within our community to spend some time with. Whether it is a walk in the park, sharing a warm cup of hot chocolate or playing a game of cards; it's someone to talk to, laugh with and learn from.

To learn more, call us at 729-5600. Just Be You... We'll Handle the Rest!!



Office Hours: M-F 8:00 a.m. 4:00 p.m.  
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