**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.

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.

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**From the Directors**

**SPOTLIGHT**

**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

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**Volunteer Spotlight**

**IN SERVICE TO OTHERS**

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 who are always need drivers, attorneys, trades people, donators 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. Each person has something valuable to contribute and, in our own way, each one of us is a giver and a receiver.

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**Volunteer**

*Volunteer Spotlight*

**IN SERVICE TO OTHERS**

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 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.

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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

WHAT INSPIRES US?

• Our energy and time go toward an important mission
• We can make someone’s life easier
• We are answering God’s call as instruments of God’s work.
• The courage of families in hard circumstances
• Our own personal growth and development

WHAT DOES SOWING SEEDS DO BEST?

• Leave the world a better place
• Go beyond our own needs
• Give back to the community
• Share with others the care and love that we have experienced
• Treat those we help with dignity
• Bring people together: contributors, volunteers, and families in need
• Share the gift we bring to Sowing Seeds

Thank 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 my dear friends who have kept me dressed so well… thank you all!
You have done so much for my children and me. But, most of all, you have given me the gift of love, which we will never forget and which we will carry with us for the rest of our lives.

Annette Marie Phaneu

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)

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