MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

“I want to thank you for being there when I didn’t know that people were here to help. I could explain, not be judged or laughed at, and be given help. VEAP makes me feel like everyone needs help sometimes.” – VEAP Client

I have experienced the truth of this statement in my own life and I am sure you have too. Everyone needs help sometimes, and we at VEAP—our staff, volunteers, board of directors, donors, and funders—have the privilege of not only providing that help to people who need it, but also engaging with our clients to better understand their needs and the impact we can have on our neighbors and communities when we join together. I love the good work we get to do together here at VEAP!

In 2018, 3,001 volunteers gave over 64,000 hours of their time, energy and talent to support our programs and over 20,000 people (almost 6,700 households) accessed healthy food in our Food Pantry and our new Mobile Pantry. We also distributed $140,000 in financial assistance that kept more than 250 children, teens, and hard working adults secure in their homes through a short term financial crisis.

I believe that we succeed in what we do at VEAP when we do it together. The more people who join VEAP, the more we expand our reach, and have greater impact on the lives of our neighbors.

I’ve heard many people say, “VEAP is the best kept secret in the communities we serve.” I believe VEAP needs to be the worst kept secret. The more people know about VEAP and what we do, the more people will receive the support they need. Let’s make sure people know, as our client said in the quote above, that we are here to help—without judgment—because we want to build a thriving community where all people are free to pursue their dreams.

Sincerely,

Joe McDonald

For more information:
Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People
9600 Aldrich Avenue South, Bloomington, MN 55420
952.888.9616

Creating Pathways to Stronger, More Hopeful Communities
**BASIC NEEDS**

*New in 2018!* VEAP’s new Mobile Pantry launched in March of 2018 and the response has been extremely well received. Offered weekly or bi-weekly at convenient locations throughout Bloomington, Richfield, and Edina, the Mobile Pantry provides fresh produce and healthy foods to families, seniors, students, and individuals right in their own neighborhoods. The Mobile Pantry has allowed VEAP to extend its reach in our communities, increase access to healthy foods to those who need it most, and build relationships with community partners.

114,278 individuals served through Food Pantry
7,081 individuals served through Mobile Pantry
2,314 new food pantry households (753 Mobile Pantry, 1,561 Food Pantry)
4,178 food packs distributed via Student Hunger Collaborative
3,629 rides home and senior shuttle rides
408 households served through grocery deliveries
3,643,236 total pounds of food distributed (half of what we distribute is fresh produce)

*“Thank you for the food, thank you for the people, thank you for the community, thank you for caring.”* —CLIENT

**SOCIAL SERVICES**

*New in 2018!* Individualized case plans are crucial to achieving long-term stability. In 2018, VEAP hired an additional Housing Specialist, improving our capacity to provide increased individualized case plans while offering comprehensive, quality case management services to our clients.

- 2,039 assessments completed by social services
- 257 individuals at risk of homelessness received rent or deposit assistance
- $1,396 average amount of assistance increased from $1,268 in 2017 to $1,396 in 2018
- 147 gas/bus cards provided for employment transportation or to resolve a safety concern
- $3,533 in car repair assistance to 8 working individuals
- 32 Metro Transit’s Transit Assistance Program (TAP) cards were given to low-income riders

*“After working with the social worker, I now have a budget idea in mind that I feel will allow me to pay off old debt while saving towards a down payment for a home for my three children and me.”* —CLIENT

**VOLUNTEERS**

*New in 2018!* Volunteers are critical to VEAP’s ability to provide families and individuals with daily access to fresh, healthy foods and individualized services to prevent homelessness. On average, nearly 450 volunteers join us each week across all of our program areas from Warehouse and Distribution, to Social Services Intake, Mobile Pantry, and VEAP events. VEAP expanded our Donate & Do volunteer program to include additional small and large group opportunities and increased outreach to businesses, corporations, and faith communities in our service area, resulting in a 15% increase in group volunteer participation over prior years.

3,001 volunteers
64,058 hours given by volunteers (equivalent of 31 full-time staff)
$1,581,592 value of service given by volunteers (based on the Independent Sector value of a volunteer hour=$24.69)
315 new volunteers joined VEAP in 2018
125+ people each day volunteer their time across all VEAP programs
89 Donate & Do groups contributed 4,004 service hours

*“Over the years, I have come to know VEAP as a truly remarkable organization. The solid values of this organization are demonstrated at the highest levels, and throughout our culture. It’s not hard to believe that I am truly making a difference.”* —KAY, VOLUNTEER

volunteered 186 hours in 2018

Juanita, a single mom with a 2 year-old son, was struggling to pay rent after her hours were reduced at her job as housekeeper at a local hotel. Juanita’s landlord had started the eviction filing process when she came to VEAP for help. VEAP advocated on behalf of Juanita with the landlord to allow extra time for repayment and provided two months of rent financial assistance to settle the debt. VEAP staff supported Juanita throughout her search for a new job, with consistent hours, and helped her study for her driver’s exam and obtain her permit. After resolving the immediate financial crisis, Juanita had the confidence to secure a new job working 40 hours a week, with a pay increase over her last position. VEAP continued to work with Juanita on her career goals and an individualized case plan for several months to ensure long-term housing stability for her family.

*JUANITA’S STORY*