



### It's That Time.....Again

Here we go at the start of another year and you would have to be living in a vacuum in order to not be hit in the face with New Year resolutions. It seems to me I have mused over resolutions before..... seems to me about a year ago or is it two now?

Well, I came up with ten ways to improve myself in 2018 in about thirty seconds. Just so I didn't miss anything, I asked a friend and they did even better. They came up with twice as many ways I could do better over the next year in half the time. To try to put this into perspective, I did a search to look at the top ten lists of the top ten New Years' resolutions (so I was looking at the top 100). In looking at the various lists many had more than a few in common: lose weight, join a gym, learn something new, but one thing stuck out to me in all of these lists. Like my original (as well as my expanded) list, most of the resolutions are dominated by a focus on self-improvement. As a matter of fact, none of the ten lists of ten I looked at had more than two items that didn't focus on the person making the resolution.

Not to say I don't need to work on myself, obviously I know I do (just as obviously my friends do too), but this got me thinking. To challenge myself, I sat down to come up with a list of ten resolutions I could make that didn't focus on me (other than I would be the one doing them), but focused on what I could do over the next year that would improve someone else's life or the community. The first few came rather easily, the next few a bit more slowly, and the last few....well let's just say the word commitment came to mind.

I thought to myself how would things look if we did the self-improvement continuously all year long and saved this time of making resolutions and dedicated it to improving the life of others or the community? Now, I could give you my list but instead I throw out a challenge. The challenge is for every resolution you make to improve yourself, you match it with a resolution to improve someone else's life (friend or stranger) with no expectation of feedback or reward. I wonder would this pairing affect the longevity of New Year's resolutions as a whole?

**Lakes & Pines CAC, Inc.**

*Mission Statement*

*To build prosperous communities by  
serving local families and individuals  
in their pursuit of self-reliance.*

*Bob Benes  
Executive Director*

## LAKES AND PINES DONATES TO LOCAL SHELTER

Recently Lakes and Pines' Early Childhood and Family Development Department donated 39 cell phones to the Black Dog Hill Shelter. Donated phones are utilized by the Shelter in many ways. Phones may be distributed to women that reside at the shelter due to domestic violence or sexual assault trauma that they and their family have experienced. Phones may also go to women and men that have utilized the Refuge Network Community Advocacy program, such as receiving help completing Orders of Protection or court advocacy. There are also instances when an abuser will withhold phones from a victim, and donated phones will allow the victim to be able to have their own phone that the abuser is not aware of.

Since opening their shelter in February of 2009, Black Dog Hill Shelter has served 1,435 women and children. These cell phones, in some cases are a lifeline. It provides recipients with the ability to call 911 in emergency situations, and it also gives users the opportunity to purchase time/minutes for phone use without the added cost of paying for a phone. The Refuge Network has called these phone donations a "welcome gift."



Brittany from Lakes and Pines Early Childhood and Family Development presenting the phones to Char Weidenndorf from Family Pathways

## KIND ACTS FROM A LOCAL CITIZEN

In November, well-known business man Todd Johnston of Rush City posted a message on Facebook asking for families in the five local counties that are less fortunate who needed the fixings for a Thanksgiving meal.

Todd is a generous man with a big heart. He purchased the food and necessities for families to prepare and make their Thanksgiving dinner. He bought and delivered the groceries right to their door. Going a step further; he found some furniture pieces were needed, such as a dresser, couch, two beds, etc. which he helped deliver as well. Todd was even able to extend a job opportunity to one of the people. This was an unexpected gesture. He helped two families who were receiving services from Lakes and Pines. The families were extremely grateful and happy for the opportunity.

## A WARMER WINTER THANKS TO DONATIONS



Madison Young of Adevia Salon delivering the donation to Dawn van Hees, Community Services Director

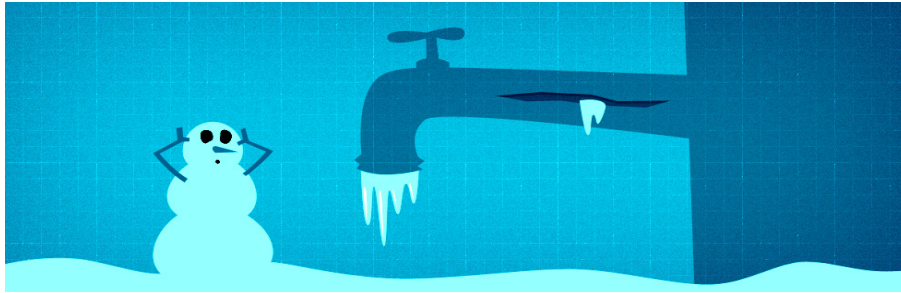
Thanks to the generosity of guests at Adevia Salons, Lakes and Pines received a large donation of winter wear in early January. The donation consisted of a variety of clothing items from hats and mittens to coats and snow pants for children and adults. These donations were divided among each of Lakes and Pines' office locations.

During some of the coldest months of the year these types of donations are vital to support the health and well-being of our community. The kindness shown by donors will have a significant impact for many this winter.

If you or someone you know is in need of a warm coat, please stop by one of Lakes and Pines' office locations.



Thawing frozen water pipes quickly is important, however, it is just as important to thaw the frozen pipes correctly. Here are several tips to help you get the water flowing to avoid a burst pipe and potentially damaging flood at your property.



### Tip 1: Locate the Frozen Pipe

In order to thaw a frozen pipe, you must first determine which pipe or pipes are frozen. To do so, turn on the faucets in your property.

If no water comes out, or only a slight trickle escapes, then a pipe leading to the faucet is likely frozen. If one pipe is frozen, there is a chance others are also frozen.

If the pipes are exposed, such as pipes under sinks, in basements or along the exterior of the house, you may be able to see the frozen portion of the pipe. Frozen pipes often have frost on them or may have a slight bulge. If the blockage is located in the part of the pipe that you have access to, you will have more options for easily thawing the pipe than if the frozen portion is enclosed behind a wall.

### Tip 2: Open the Faucet

Before you begin attempting to thaw a frozen pipe, you will want to open the faucet that the pipe feeds water into. Open both the hot and cold handles. This will relieve pressure in the system and allow the water to escape once you begin to thaw the pipe.

### Tip 3: Where to Begin the Thawing Process

You should always begin the thawing process near the faucet then work your way down to the blockage.

This will help the melting ice and steam to escape. If you start the thawing process closer to the blockage, the melting ice could get stuck behind the blockage, creating more pressure in the pipe and increasing the chances the pipe will burst.

### Tip 4: Thawing Exposed Pipes

If the frozen pipe is located in an area you can easily access, you have several options for attempting to thaw the pipe. You should continue to apply the heat until the water escaping from the faucet returns to full strength. Here are four options for thawing an exposed pipe.

**Hair Dryer-** One of the easiest ways to thaw a pipe is by using a hair dryer. Simply turn the dryer on and point the heat at the pipe, beginning with the portion closest to the faucet. As with any electrical product, take the proper precautions and avoid coming into contact with water when operating the device.

**Heat Lamp or Portable Space Heater-** Another method to thaw the pipe is to use a heat lamp or portable space heater. Position the device so that the heat is able to reach the frozen pipe. This indirect heat can help to quickly thaw a pipe. Again, make sure to comply with the safety measures and precautions on the device you are using and keep the device away from water.

**Hot Towels-** Another way to thaw a frozen pipe is to wrap towels that have been dipped in hot water around the pipe. This can help to slowly thaw the blockage.

**Electrical Heating Tape-** A final option is to apply electrical heating tape directly to the pipe. This tape distributes heat throughout the pipe. You can purchase electrical heating tape that you plug in and unplug as needed or you can purchase heating tape that shuts off on its own.



### Tip 5: Thawing Enclosed Pipes

If the frozen pipe is located in an area that you cannot easily access, you have three options for thawing the pipe.

**Turn the Heat Up in the Property-** You can attempt to thaw the frozen pipe by increasing the temperature in the property. Turning the thermostat up may be all that is needed to allow the ice blockage to melt.

**Infrared Lamp-** If you know where in the wall the frozen pipe is located, you can attempt to thaw the blockage by placing an infrared lamp in front of the portion of the wall where the pipe is located. The heat from the lamp may be able to penetrate the wall and allow the pipe to defrost.

**Cut Out a Section of the Wall-** If you are comfortable doing so, you can cut out the section of the drywall in front of the frozen pipe so that you can easily access the pipe. You can then use one of the methods for thawing out an enclosed pipe listed above.

### Tip 6: Things to Avoid

Never attempt to thaw a pipe using an open flame, such as a propane torch. This can not only damage the pipe, it can also start a fire in your property.

**Burst Pipe-** If you do not begin the thawing process correctly, you could cause the pipe to burst. Always start thawing closest to the faucet.

**Fire-** When using any heat source to thaw the frozen pipe, you can run the risk of starting a fire. Make sure to follow all safety instructions and never leave the product unattended.

### Tip 7: If the Pipe Bursts

If a frozen water pipe does burst, the first thing you should do is shut off the main water line into your property. This will prevent additional water from flowing and damaging your property. You should know where the shut-off valves are for each of your properties and for each unit. There are usually smaller shut-off valves located near sinks and toilets, but the main shut-off valve is often located near the water meter.

**Call a Professional-** If you are unable to thaw the pipe, unable to locate the frozen pipe, do not feel comfortable thawing a pipe yourself or if a pipe bursts, you should call a plumber or other professional. They will be able to remedy the problem for you.

### Tip 8: Preventing Frozen Pipes

There are steps you can take to help prevent your pipes from freezing in the future. This includes:

- keeping the heat on
- allowing faucets to drip slightly
- keeping all interior doors open
- sealing up holes and cracks
- adding extra insulation
- removing exterior hoses and shutting off interior valves feeding those hoses





## VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE LEADS TO NEW CAREER

For Andrea, volunteering with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program at Lakes and Pines has set her on an exciting and lucrative career path. In 2017, Andrea volunteered with the Tax Assistance program. Andrea prepared returns regularly in Pine City and was also willing to cover appointments in Mora when regularly scheduled volunteers were unable to attend.

As a direct result of Andrea's volunteer position with the Lakes and Pines VITA program, Andrea has obtained a job with a tax preparer in Pine City. In fact, her current employer is considering passing his business on to Andrea when he retires.

Andrea is back to volunteer for the 2018 tax season and has recruited her husband to volunteer as well. This will be her last VITA season; she will be busy as a paid preparer next year. While we will miss her enthusiasm and commitment, we are grateful to have been a part of her future success.



## FREE TAX PREPARATION AND E-FILE



You can help hard-working taxpayers claim the credits they deserve.

Tax time is one of the most important times in the financial lives of low-to-moderate income households. Tax refunds, boosted by vitally important tax credits, can account for 30% or more of a family's annual

income. For many of the individuals Lakes and Pines serves, their tax refund is the largest amount of money they will receive at one time throughout the year. Money received from tax returns is often money spent in the community. Lakes and Pines offers two tax assistance programs with availability in fourteen locations in 2018.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax help to people who generally make \$54,000 or less, persons with disabilities and limited English speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals.

Do It Yourself or Facilitated Self-Assistance (FSA) concept is designed to provide increased taxpayer access to free tax preparation services. By providing a certified volunteer to answer questions and help guide them, FSA gives taxpayers the confidence they need to prepare their own return today and enables them to file future returns on their own. FSA income limit is \$64,000. If participants know how to use a computer they can prepare their own taxes!

Tax clinics and FSA classes will run January 30, 2018 - April 17, 2018 in Aitkin, Cambridge, Cloquet, Milaca, Moose Lake, Mora, North Branch, Onamia and Pine City. Volunteer positions are still available as well.

Call 320-679-1800 option #4 to make an appointment.

## SOCKTOBER



Lakes and Pines employees collected new socks for our Socktober Drive. Did you know that socks are one of the least considered donations for families in need? Lakes and Pines launched our Socktober Drive at the annual Employee Appreciation Day at the Braham Event Center. To say that Lakes and Pines Employees donated socks is an understatement! We collected 317 pairs of new socks through the month of October. These socks were donated to New Pathways shelter and a couple of local organizations and were well received.

## MORA'S HEAD START CENTER

The first year of the Mora Head Start Center has started with a huge success! There are 20 children enrolled and two staff members at the center. A foster Grandparent volunteers in the classroom three days a week. Head Start has implemented a new curriculum this year, *Teaching Strategies - The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*. So far this year the children have learned about three different focus areas including: beginning of the year, trees, and clothing. While working through these six-week lessons, the teachers are able to teach the children about things they are familiar with, while introducing new topics. This curriculum has also allowed the children to have some new experiences such as baking gingerbread cookies, making crock-pot apple sauce, and participating in wacky dress up.



### Other fun events!

The most exciting thing that happened at the beginning of the year for the classroom was completion of the playground. The children went almost a month without being able to utilize the play yard area, but on the final day the crew laying the sod let the children help so they could finally play! Halloween was a fun celebration for the kids as well. At the end of the day, children went on a Costume Parade through the main office of Lakes and Pines. The children and staff enjoyed the parade! The children also performed a small winter program for their families in December. They sang and danced to three songs and then built graham cracker gingerbread houses to take home with them. Twenty-three adults and five older children participated in this fun event along with the seventeen enrolled children in attendance that day.

### Looking ahead....

Plans are underway for individual home visits for each family. Two teachers will have the opportunity to meet with each child and their parents individually in their home. This will allow some individualized teaching time, along with time for parents to become more comfortable in their role as their child's teacher. Many more fun and engaging themes are planned to teach the children about small machines, insects, and sand.

## NO MORE FROSTY FINGERS



Lakes and Pines' Early Head Start/Head Start Program received a generous donation of hats and mittens from Neighborhood National Bank of Mora which were collected through their hat and mitten drive. The donated items consisted of 80 pairs of mittens and 43 hats and are being distributed to families enrolled in the Lakes and Pines Early Head Start/Head Start Program.

Pictured are Jodi and Sam from Neighborhood National Bank with Kraig Gratke of Lakes and Pines' Head Start Program.



## LETTUCE CELEBRATE!

*Lakes and Pines recently received the following letter:*

I wanted to thank you for donating garden seeds and to share with you how the seeds have been used for a community garden project located at the Family Pathways Food Shelf in Pine City the last two years.

We started a small community garden with three existing raised beds, a partnership between University of Minnesota Extension and some of the students from Pine City Alternative Learning Center. The students helped prepare the beds and plant seeds in the spring. The Extension and the food shelf took over the rest of the duties during the summer months. Last year, along with the ALC students, a local 4-H group had a small raised bed and donated the food to the food shelf. This upcoming year (2018), we plan on really expanding the garden with several new partners including Master Gardeners, local 4-H groups, Empower Recovery Center, Family Pathways and more. We would like to build compost bins and install rain barrels too. We will make sure to take pictures and will need lots of seeds again.

Sincerely,  
Jimmie Johnson  
SNAP-Ed Educator Pine County  
Health & Nutrition Programs, SNAP Education  
University of Minnesota Extension



## HOUSING IS FIRST KEY



Recently a staff member had their first experience working with a Housing Supports (formerly known as Group Residential Housing (GRH)) participant. This is a housing subsidy program that aims to assist homeless individuals with disabilities to become and maintain stability through ongoing financial, mental health, and other complementary support services. This case involved working with a 56 year old gentleman who had been homeless for over two years. His homelessness began when the family home he was living in was sold by his siblings

after his mother passed away. He was living in motels, couch hopping and sleeping in his van. It is in this state of homelessness when contact was first made with Lakes and Pines for emergency shelter and social security benefits application assistance. Over the past few weeks of working with this gentleman it became apparent that his mental health is a challenging factor in delivering services to him, as he is not able to think about his safety, well-being, and goals to maintain stable housing.

Participants enrolled in the Housing Supports program are likely to have a higher number of barriers such as mental health, substance abuse, transportation, lack of income, and basic life skills. Lakes and Pines utilizes a "Housing First Approach" that offers permanent, affordable housing as quickly as possible for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, then provides the supportive services and connections to the community-based programs people need to keep their housing and avoid returning to homelessness. Utilizing the housing first approach proved to be beneficial as this participant's housing was located quickly resulting in the client being able to focus on his mental health, social security application, and transportation barriers. The process has not always been smooth as the participant struggles on a daily basis with his obstacles, but today he is housed through the continuing collective efforts of Carlton County and Lakes and Pines, as well as funding through the Department of Human Services (DHS).

**So what is Respite?**

**Definition of respite** re·spite \ 're-spət

**1: a period of temporary delay**

**2: an interval of rest or relief**

Respite is a short term, temporary relief which supports caregivers who are caring for loved ones. Respite allows caregivers to step away from their duties to refresh and recharge, which benefits both the caregiver and care receiver. Offering respite is giving a gift of time!

Lakes and Pines' Senior Services Program is offering this gift of time to caregivers as we assume administrative responsibilities for the New Day respite program in North Branch and the Day Break respite program in Pine City. The New Day program meets from 10 am – 2 pm on the second and fourth Mondays of each month (excluding holidays), and the Day Break program meets from 10 am – 2 pm on the first and third Thursdays of each month (excluding holidays).

A typical day in both programs includes conversation and a light snack as participants arrive, and then brain-stimulating activities and a craft. A delicious hot lunch is served, followed by gentle exercise and plenty of socialization.

*Peace-of-mind  
and a change  
of environment*

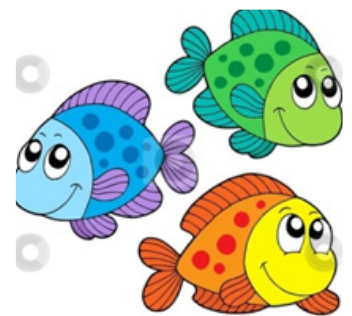


clients enjoying craft time

Minnesota Department of Health has partnered with the REST program (Respite Education and Support Tools) to offer REST Essentials and REST Companion trainings for caregivers. In November, a Lakes and Pines' staff member had the awesome experience of completing the REST "Train-the-Trainer" course, and will be offering the Essentials and the Companion classes to volunteers and caregivers throughout our seven-county service area. **For more information on respite care and/or training, or any other aspect of Lakes and Pines' Senior Services program, please contact Valerie at (800) 832-6082, extension 171.**

IT'S NOT A FISH TALE

When I applied for the Agency Wide Advocate position at Lakes and Pines, I was so excited at the idea of helping others. I didn't have any idea what Lakes and Pines did with the exception of providing energy assistance. During the past six weeks, I have learned I need to change my perception of what Lakes and Pines does. It is not about just helping people; it's the old adage if you give a man a fish you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime. This position is more rewarding because I have the opportunity to educate and provide guidance for those who want to help themselves. The results will be improving their lives and our communities, along with the personal satisfaction I get from serving others.



I was amazed to discover there are more than 20 Community Action Agencies partnering with Minnesota to represent every county in the state. I was able to share this information with a friend, who is a single parent living in southern Minnesota, who suddenly became ill and developed a disability. While in the hospital a serious issue arose with her house and she was unable to return until she had the repairs done. She contacted her local Community Action Council and found they would help with the repairs so she and her family are able to move back home!



In December of 2017, the Early Childhood and Family Development (ECFD) department was able to train a trainer for nonviolent crisis intervention through the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI). The “Nonviolent Crisis Intervention program is a safe, non-harmful behavior management system designed to help professionals provide the best possible care, welfare, safety and security of disruptive, assaultive, and out-of-control individuals.” The need for crisis intervention strategies has been



evolving. Classroom staff have been addressing crisis behaviors for several years and have been doing so with limited resources. The need has increased exponentially over recent years, and this need was highlighted last fall when the positive support rule went into effect for all licensed care facilities.

The nonviolent crisis intervention system has been practiced for over 30 years and has maintained its commitment to preserving the care, welfare, safety and security of all individuals involved in a crisis situation (clients and staff alike). The system emphasizes a need for a continuum of responses to address a continuum of behaviors. The system also emphasizes that since behaviors can only be influenced and not controlled, prevention through relationships is a key element when managing challenging behaviors.

With a certified instructor on staff, the ECFD department is able to provide Lakes and Pines’ staff with specific de-escalation strategies for a continuum of verbal and physical behaviors. The principles practiced through the system are practical enough to be used in any environment and safe enough to use in any given situation. As a response to the positive support rule, CPI is strictly aligned. As a response to our community’s needs, we can be comfortable knowing that Lakes and Pines’ staff are equipped with a philosophy and strategies to maintain the care, welfare, safety and security of all individuals at all times.

## ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL SMALL CITIES GRANT!



The City of Mora was awarded \$651,590.00 in 2015 to rehabilitate 18 owner-occupied, low-to-moderate income homes and 10 commercial buildings. Union Street looks beautiful and Lakes and Pines is proud to say it helped many older citizens in the area with new furnaces, roofs, and siding to help ensure that they are able stay in their homes.

All funds for commercial buildings and owner occupied homes were expended. However, with the popularity of the grant, it has been suggested that the City of Mora reapply for funds in the future.

One Small Cities homeowner expressed her gratitude, “With the work they did, I now am cozy- I feel no air escaping or drafts coming in, my windows open and close up to code and with my new doors I am saving on heating and health (sic). I am incredibly grateful for this program.”



stands for "FOR YOUR INFORMATION." It is a quarterly newsletter provided to the area's officials, partners, Board Members and personnel of Lakes and Pines CAC, Inc.

We hope our Newsletter will present you with timely, interesting, and sometimes lighthearted information. In turn, we hope that you will present us with your thoughts and suggestions.

For further information, please contact:

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