

**November 2022
Sioux Empire Volunteer of the Month
Sherri Donaldson**



(Left to Right: Michelle Erpenbach, Sioux Falls Thrive; Dawn Stephens, Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Dakota; Sherri Donaldson, Honoree; Jennie Marks, Helpline Center)

The Helpline Center congratulates Sherri Donaldson on being named the Sioux Empire November 2022 Volunteer of the Month, an area-wide award program sponsored by Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of SD.

Sherri Donaldson is the lead volunteer for the Riverside Neighborhood food giveaway in Sioux Falls. This started as an add-on to the Sioux Falls Thrive Kid Link Riverside initiative and has since grown into a major weekly event. Children, families, and neighbors around Laura B. Anderson Elementary School rely on this giveaway for groceries and prepared foods to supplement their weekly food budgets.

Under Sherri's leadership, the weekly giveaway has grown to the point where it generally provides more than 500 pounds of food each week. Sherri manages receipt of the various food items through the gleaning ministry, Bread Break, and from individual donors like Smithfield Foods.

Sherri also acts as the volunteer coordinator, recruiting and training her friends and family to ensure the giveaway is managed fairly and efficiently. She also organizes deliveries to those people who are unable to leave their homes or who are working during the time the giveaway is open.

Riverside has always been a tight-knit community where people work hard and take care of their neighbors. Sherri grew up there and raised her family there. Without her unfailing dedication, there would be more hungry individuals in that little corner of Sioux Falls.

Sherri was among the early proponents of Kid Link Riverside. A native Riversider, Sherri understood the needs of her neighbors, and quickly grasped the possibilities of Kid Link. As a veteran with experience in both food service and retail, she naturally gravitated toward the simple food giveaway that developed in the fall of 2020.

By the summer of 2021, Sherri was taking the lead in the food giveaway, recruiting friends and family to help her, and developing new strategies. Under Sherri's leadership, the food giveaway feels less like charity and more like a shopping experience, and more like a happy interaction with friends.

Sioux Falls Thrive President, Michelle Erpenbach, states, "Sherri is down to earth and one of the most dedicated volunteers I've ever had the privilege to work with."

The Helpline Center is pleased to present Sherri with a framed certificate and a letter of appreciation from Mayor Paul TenHaken.

For information on volunteer opportunities please call the Helpline Center at 211 or visit volunteer.helplinecenter.org.

