



Recycling Furniture for Families

2023 ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

Dear Neighbor,

As we reflect on another year in service and collaboration with this great community, we're thankful for everything we've been able to accomplish together.

At Recycling Furniture for Families (RF4F), we serve McLean County families and individuals who need furnishings to get back on their feet after disruptive life events like domestic violence, fire, homelessness, and more. The items and support we provide make their new surroundings feel like home, one that's full of the stability and security they've been missing for far too long.

Since 2002, we have served more than 9,500 families, including 23,700+ individuals with the home necessities they need and the sense of well-being they deserve. The generous people who have donated their items, money, and time have allowed us to deliver more than 4,200 large furniture items this year alone to local families, plus countless small kitchen items and linens.

This year, we're celebrating our new truck, which our trusted volunteers drive to pick up donated items from giving households. We then clean, organize, and deliver the items to a new home for local families in need.

Our mission to create safe and secure homes for local families also comes with challenges.

We are still working through our roof issues in our aging downtown warehouse and office. The repairs will cost \$150,000 and need to be finished in next two years, or we'll need to sell this building we love and move from the only home base we've ever known.

And so, we rely on you—our supporters, our partners, our advocates. We ask that you join us in reaching the ever-growing number of low-income families in McLean County so that they can know and enjoy the feeling of a house that feels like home.

Please donate what you're able to by visiting rf4f.org/donate or by mailing a check to 515 N. Center St. in Bloomington.

Sending blessings and gratitude to you and yours,

Executive Director Frank Downes
& the Recycling Furniture for Families Team



Meet Carl Cannon

Carl Cannon grew up in the neighborhood and has watched the changes of the past 60+ years unfold. He remembers, “It used to be corn fields and a farm town with coal mines. I used to carry out the ashes from the coal and firewood stove. Everything wasn’t a bowl of cherries, but I’ve always been at home here.”

And after nearly 2 years with Recycling Furniture for Families as part of our warehouse team, Carl feels at home with us too. He got connected with RF4F when a friend of his was also working with us. He’s diligent about his duties of preparing our donated items for the families we serve. With everything from shampooing to steam cleaning to wet-vacuuming, all our furniture and mattresses receive Carl’s care and attention.

His role is part of Illinois Able’s Senior Community Service Employment Program. The aim is to train adults over 55 on new job skills so they can not only have more independence and financial stability for themselves, but they can also be part of the community at the same time.

And the position does just that—Carl explains, “I’ve learned a lot about furniture and even how to print tags. It was intimidating to learn computers at first, but I really enjoy working here.”

Carl feels good being part of the community and part of a “good group of people” who work and volunteer at our downtown warehouse and office. To him, it feels “like one big family.”



With Carl’s role, he gets to meet both donors and client families. “When people come to the back door to donate, I give them a receipt and they often compliment me for doing this work for the community. I know what we’re doing is positive for people and it’s helping myself, keeping my mind and hands occupied.”



And when families pick out their new furniture, “They come in looking sad and leave looking happy. It made their day. They’re able to dress up their whole living room, kitchen, get linens. I always encourage them to get everything they need and want to be comfortable.”

“ Thoughts from Carl:
I enjoy serving families, showing them around. It means a lot to them knowing they can get furniture and it always warms my heart to see the smile on their face. ”

Celebrating Brenda Smith: This Year's Mark Kelly Volunteer of the Year



We're thrilled to celebrate the latest winner of the Mark Kelly Volunteer of the Year Award: Brenda Smith.

A State Farm retiree, Brenda has been volunteering with us 1-2 days every week for years.

Despite living with advanced stages of MS, she comes into our office with a smile on her face each time, eager to help with our fundraising efforts (such as mailing letters like these!).

Brenda's experience with RF4F is also socially fulfilling, giving her the opportunity to form relationships with fellow volunteers, like Dawn Shelton, who generously drives her here so they can work and chat in the back office together.

On volunteering with RF4F, Brenda shares, "I like that we're doing something for the community. We take items that some people don't want anymore and give it other people for free so they can rebuild their lives. It gives them hope for the future."

Become A Volunteer!

Our important and fulfilling work with local families is almost entirely volunteer-led!

If you feel called to be part of the RF4F family, please consider becoming a volunteer:

- Truck Driver: Monday-Thursday & Saturday, 8-10am. No special license is required to drive our trucks.
- Office Attendant: Weekdays, 9am-noon. Answering phones, organizing mailers, etc.
- Furniture Repair Person: Monday-Thursday 9am-5pm & Saturday, 9am-noon.



To get started or to learn more, contact Frank at (309) 829-6500 or director@rf4f.org.



Recycling Furniture For Families

A Christ-centered ministry helping families in need

515 N. Center St.
Bloomington, IL 61701

Thank you for helping
your neighbors in need.

www.RF4F.org



Know Your Neighbors

Get to know the families and individuals who use our services to get back on their feet:

- 45% overcoming homelessness
- 20% living with a disability
- 17% escaping an abusive situation
- 4% veterans

On average over the past 20+ years:

- Annual Households Served: 534
- Annual Household Income: \$10,006
- Family Size: 2.5
- Female Head of Household: 66%
- Age of Head of Household: 35

Total Items of Furniture Provided: 106,915

These are the essential furnishings that make our clients' new surroundings feel like home.

