

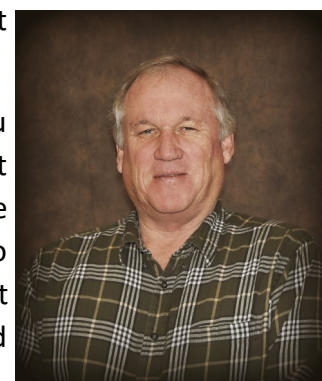


Many Roles

There is an axiom in the theater arts that there are no small roles. This also applies to roles on any Board of Directors. There are many roles. Some roles are filled by multiple people and some people fill multiple roles but none are small and none are unimportant. Some may be viewed as starring roles and others may evolve into a supporting role.

We have all been to a play or movie where someone, because of who they are, or the script that has been given them “steal the show”. Be it from the lead role or supporting cast.

Board member, Mike Robinson, tended to steal the show. Once you got to know him, you came to understand that it was because of who he was or sometimes because of the script he felt he had in hand. He didn’t do so to be the “star” or because he needed to be the center of attention. There was always an intent in what he did. Be it to make a point, to play devil’s advocate, to move things along or simply to lighten the moment. It wasn’t random or unintended (although at times there were unintended consequences) and definitely never meant to be hurtful or harmful.



As happens over time (Mike was our longest tenured Board member) and with familiarity (Mike rarely said no when called upon to go the extra mile and serve on a subcommittee or a task force) you get to know the person behind the Board member. Mike Robinson was one of a kind. You were as likely to see him standing up and speaking forcefully on a minority opinion as you were to see him out on his bike riding around town or painting the yellow no parking curbs in his home town.

As much of an individual as Mike was, he never forgot his role as a Board member. He never felt his opinion was more important than anyone else’s, but was never shy about sharing his and was accepting of the majority decision (even if he really, really disagreed with it).

Mike’s position on the Board will be filled, but he will never be replaced. Others may take on his role(s) or parts of it, but his “style” just can’t be replicated.

Rest in peace, my friend.

Lakes & Pines CAC, Inc.

Mission Statement

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

Partnering to End Poverty

Bob Benes
Executive Director

COLLABORATION IN A COMMUNITY

As an employee working at Lakes and Pines, it is easy to see the impact the programs offered have on participants. It is important to collaborate with other community resources and individuals to better serve participants. It is a privilege to work together with social workers that strongly advocate for their clients' needs. It is so rewarding to work with landlords that are understanding and open to renting to participants who may not have a perfect credit or criminal history. There are local community thrift stores and churches that have not only provided household items for participants, but also some that have programs of their own that can assist with other needs. Being able to refer individuals and families to the food shelves in their communities that operate solely because of community members willing to volunteer their time is a true blessing. The ability to work together with an organization that assists people experiencing domestic violence is essential. It has been very humbling to partner with organizations that work primarily with veterans seeking assistance. With individuals and various organizations in our community working together and having programs available for everyone's needs, our communities definitely become stronger.

"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."

HOMELESS DAY ON THE HILL

Homeless Day on the Hill was held virtually on March 9-10, 2022. This annual event included individuals and families who are currently or formerly homeless sharing their stories on how they became homeless, (loss of income, loss of affordable housing, illness, etc...). The success stories of regaining employment and housing with the help of organizations geared to address these problems were very heartwarming.

Individuals who attended got the chance to advocate for the homeless by speaking with their State Senators and Representatives. Lakes and Pines' staff advocated for participants by specifically sharing an increased need for grant funds for emergency services. Short term hotel stays and shelters in the rural area are greatly needed as there are very limited shelter resources in the Lakes and Pines service areas. Additionally, staff requested an increase of affordable/income based housing so those who have limited incomes aren't priced out of the housing market. Thank you to everyone who participated in this event.

HEATING AND COOLING UPGRADE



Lakes and Pines recently upgraded the heating and cooling systems in the office on Maple Avenue. Six older gas furnaces were replaced with new ones that have high-efficiency fan motors and a high-efficiency mini-split A/C unit was installed in the data room. The total rebate was \$430, with an estimated annual savings of \$200. Visit [SaveEnergyInMora.com](https://www.saveenergyinmora.com) to learn how Mora Municipal Utilities can help your home and business be more energy efficient.

Pictured Left to Right: Denise Stewart, Agency Administrative Asst.; Nancy Kelly, Energy Services Rep.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE UPDATE

The Energy Assistance Program closes on May 31, 2022. Anyone who has not yet applied should do so as soon as possible. If you qualify, there are primary heat grants available up to \$2000. If there is a need for additional funding, we may have up to \$3000 in Crisis benefits if your electricity is shut off, have a disconnection, are past due or if you are a senior (60+). If you are struggling with a water bill, there may also be Crisis funds that can help. Call 800.832.6082 option 2 or go to the website at www.lakesandpines.org to get additional information on the programs offered. If you or someone you know are struggling, call us; you do not have to go through tough times alone.

MORA HEAD START ACTIVITIES

The Mora Head Start Classroom has enjoyed a busy few months. Here is a peek at just a few of the activities that happened recently:

In February, during exercise study, two students from the Mora High School National Honor Society joined the classroom for a short presentation about the sports they play. They talked to the children about how they get their bodies ready to play by exercising and eating right, the equipment they need to play their sports safely and even watched some videos of them playing. These two honor society students really engaged with the children and allowed them to ask lots of questions about their different sports and lives.

March brought the topic of reduce, reuse and recycle. The students learned about how to take care of the earth by picking up garbage and not littering, what types of materials can be reused and how these items might be reused in the classroom, along with where the non-recyclable items go. How exciting for the children to get a visit from Quality Disposal Systems garbage company from Mora, MN. The children were able to take a close-up look at the big truck and see how it



picks up the garbage bins and crushes all the garbage. Many questions were asked; an interesting conversation followed about how someone picks up the garbage at their houses too.

Keeping with the recycling theme, another discussion about gardening and how to compost some of the food not eaten can help plants grow. The ability to incorporate ideas from one study like reduce, reuse and recycle into the studies about gardening allows the children to see how these lives are intertwined.

How uplifting to finally be able to take advantage of the nice temperatures and sunshine to get outside, walking and exploring on the paths next to the classroom, still continuing with the recycling theme. These walks were enhanced by searching for litter, animals and all sorts of animal tracks. It is always entertaining to listen to the children's versions of these adventures.

Happy Spring everyone. Get out and enjoy the fresh air.

A WANT FOR CHANGE

Lakes and Pines recently had the pleasure of assisting a younger gentleman that happened to walk-in. He came in very early in the morning; it was obvious that he was fatigued. He explained that he had been living in a bad situation for way too long, using substances and getting into trouble and that he was mentally done and wanted better. He wanted to change, but also felt that it was almost impossible, as he had no help and did not know where to start or what to do.



Lakes and Pines was able to use the Emergency Services Program (motel assistance) grant funds to provide him a ride to a hotel and placed him there for a week. He did not have any food, so Lakes and Pines helped him with using the food shelf and also provided him with the resources to get help for his mental health. He called the night he got to the hotel and expressed his gratitude and said that he was scared to go back to where he was staying and just wanted things to get better, to be safe, healthy and have a fresh start.

Lakes and Pines provided him with resources to help with food and transportation; staying in close contact with him, motivating him to stay positive.

He called three days after being placed in the hotel. Having had time to rest and get cleaned up, he felt safe and expressed that he was in a better state of mind. He also indicated that he had used some of the resources provided, had secured work and a place to stay. He shared that he felt a lot better about everything and was hopeful things would turn around for him. The change in his voice was easily detected - a calm and peaceful tone had taken over an anxious and helpless one; one that will not be forgotten anytime soon.

POP-UP FOOD PANTRY HOST

Pop-up food pantries are traveling food shelves that set up in specific, pre-determined locations. These pop-ups distribute thousand of pounds of food to households facing hunger each month. Recipients of food from these traveling pantries do not need to be food shelf clients nor do they need to be Kanabec County residents. Anyone in need of food can participate.

Lakes and Pines is honored to team up with Second Harvest North Central Food Bank, who organizes and distributes the food, along with the help of Mora Food Pantry, the Ogilvie Food Shelf and numerous volunteers from around the area. Lakes and Pines was able to provide the host site for these food drops in February, March and April so far this year.



To learn where future pop-up pantries will be held, or for further information, please visit their website: [www.secondharvestncfb.com/get-help/find food](http://www.secondharvestncfb.com/get-help/find-food).

It is our mission here at Lakes and Pines to *“Build prosperous communities by serving local families and individuals in their pursuit of self-reliance.”*

HOUSING REHABILITATION

Housing Rehabilitation Leads to Other Positive Changes

Robert*, (*name changed) a recent client of the Small Cities Development Program, had his home rehabilitated. His mother helped with the entire process as he wasn't sure on all the details of the program. The Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Program, through the Department of Economic Development, assists homeowners to rehabilitate their homes with funds that are forgiven over the course of ten years. Robert had his flooring, windows, electrical and kitchen completely remodeled.

Prior to the remodeling, Robert had a hard time keeping his home clean because it was so old and the carpets were so worn. After the contractors completed all the work, Robert was so pleased; he knew deep in his heart he had been given a true gift. With the money saved on his electric bill every month he was financially able to hire a cleaning company to come one time a month to assist him in keeping his beautifully remodeled home clean. He is also looking into saving some funds to do a few cosmetic things that the Small Cities Development Program was unable to cover.

There are so many benefits to the housing rehabilitation programs. The positive changes as seen with Robert are a priceless gift that Lakes and Pines receives for helping homeowners. If you would like more information or to see if you qualify, please call Lakes and Pines at 1-800-832-6082 ext. 123.

RESPIRE CARE AVAILABLE

Respite care is an out-of-home program offering a change of environment for care receivers and temporary, short term relief for caregivers. This much needed break for caregivers can be used to run errands, have lunch with a friend or simply take time to relax and recharge, all while feeling confident and guilt-free, knowing their care receiver is well cared for in a safe and engaging environment.

The respite program welcomes care receivers who require companion care but are able to feed, toilet and transfer themselves. A typical session at the below listed sites may include:

- * Brain-stimulating activities and crafts
- * Conversation and companionship
- * Healthy snack and coffee
- * Light chair exercises



Mora Caregiver Companions: 1st and 3rd Tuesday from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm at Lakes and Pines Community Action Council at 1700 Maple Avenue East

North Branch New Day: 2nd and 4th Tuesday at Chisago County Community Center from 9:00 am –12:00 pm and again from 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm at 38790 6th Avenue

Pine City Day Break: 1st and 3rd Thursday at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church at 825 Golf Avenue SW from 1:00 pm—4:00 pm

Pre-registration is required for all sites. For more information or to register, please contact Kelly G. at (320) 679-1800 ext. 1902 or (800) 832-6082 ext. 1902 or email Kellyg@lakesandpines.org.

These services are funded, in part, under contract with the Central MN Council on Aging as part of the Older Americans Act 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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