

Care to SHARE: Couple coordinates volunteer-run food program in Butler

Written by

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Date night for Jane and Tony Slater includes a quiet night in, where they focus on making calls to customers of SHARE.

“We sit back here and do SHARE stuff,” said Tony, 53, of [Appleton](#).

For the past three years, the couple has served as local coordinators for the volunteer-run [food](#) buying program based in Butler. SHARE, or Self-Help And Resource Exchange, offers products at a reduced cost to customers of all income ranges.

Participants can save 30 to 50 percent compared to grocery store prices.

They began as SHARE participants shortly after Tony lost his job at a local mill in 1991. Jane was working part-time and they had two children.

“We needed help,” said Jane, 55. Tony agreed.

“When we got involved with SHARE, we

needed to stretch our dollar,” he said.

SHARE was new to the Fox Cities when they joined in.

“When we started, there were two sites in Appleton,” Jane said.

The organization recently celebrated its 25th anniversary. It serves nearly 200 communities throughout Wisconsin, northern Illinois, northeastern Minnesota and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

The idea of saving on quality groceries was appealing to the Slaters.

“There’s no qualifications,” Jane said. “All you have to want to do is [savemoney](#).”

SHARE does encourage participants to give community service as a way to help make a difference in their community, Tonys aid.

“It’s not mandatory,” he said, noting that community service is “anything you do for someone else that you don’t get paid for.”

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Helping a neighbor, serving in a church, helping in a school or giving to a local organization are some of the simple ways people can give back.

Jane said it is fun to help others.

“It’s something we’ve always enjoyed doing,” she said. “How can you not do it?” The Slaters first helped with the monthly food distribution days, unloading the truck and assisting customers.

A few months after the Slaters became participants, Jane was asked to be an assistant coordinator for the site. When the coordinator stepped down, there was a risk the site would close.

Jane stepped up because she saw there was a demand for the program. Tony agreed.

“We had calls from people who didn’t want the site to close,” he said. Chrissy Armstrong said the Slaters are committed to SHARE.

“I think over the years in seeing how it helps other people, they realized they’re a good niche for it,” said Armstrong, a SHARE participant and volunteer. “I think it give them a sense to be a part of the community and giving.”

Jane agreed, noting that SHARE is not my “vocation. It’s my avocation.”

“It’s just part of our lives,” she said. “I can’t imagine not doing it.”

SHARE is the best-kept secret in town, said

Tony.

“We want to get the word out,” he said. Jane agreed.

“It’s a mission for us,” she said of being involved with SHARE. “This is something we need to do for our community, for ourselves. It’s just a really good program and we’ve met so many wonderful people through it.”

For more information about SHARE, call 920-731-7050 or visit <http://sharewi.org>.

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