

### ***Testimonial – Marty Millerleile***

When a child goes to school that first day, it is so important that they have all the tools necessary to be successful. I feel like the ***Fill A Backpack Fill a Need*** program is essential to giving our children the right start. I have been helping in some capacity for about eight years and been very involved for the past five. I cannot possibly describe the excitement that you can see on those children's faces when they get their brand new backpacks, filled with all those supplies. I often wonder what would happen if we weren't able to do this project. How many of those children would show up that first day of school with nothing? Would that set a different tone for their school year? Would they be successful? I am just very glad that to date, we have not had to answer those questions. This is the most rewarding project that I volunteer for and I hope that I am able to keep volunteering for many years to come. I am so thankful for the generosity of the community that supports this program and hope everyone knows that they are truly making a difference in the lives of many children in Marathon County.

Marty Millerleile

***WVC*** Member and ***FABFAN*** Task Coordinator  
UMR – Network Operations Manager

### **Testimonial – Patty LesStrange**

I have had the pleasure of not only working on a worthwhile project such as the Fill A Backpack Program, but also in seeing some of the needy students from my school benefit. There are students in my school who come from families struggling to put food on their tables. On that one day in August, I get to see these children come to the National Guard Armory and pick out a backpack full of school supplies provided by donations from people in our community. The joy in their faces is such a pleasure to see! I was talking with one of these students – a current fourth grader – and she said to me that she just wouldn't have had a backpack and school supplies this year, if it weren't for the Fill A Backpack Program. I am grateful to the Workplace Volunteer Council for allowing me to work with them on such a needed program!

Patty LesStrange  
Riverside Elementary

## **Testimonial – Carol Howard**

12 years ago, the Director of the Volunteer Center had a dream - to help children in Marathon County that were part of the state free lunch program with a backpack and supplies for school. The project is an annual event and it has grown with focused leadership and hard work into an amazing, well-organized and efficient program. I have been a part of the project in its entirety. I personally attest that the dedication and work is mind boggling. The look on the children's faces on distribution day is worth it all. Anyone who has not participated should just stop by the armory and see this amazing site. On distribution day, over 2,700 backpacks (that have been miraculously filled with supplies) lay in colorful rows on long tables. Nobody could truly fathom the hundreds of hours that volunteers have given to make this project continue. It is an honor to work on the project and with all the volunteers. I am proud to be part of an organization that cares so passionately about our young children.

Carol Howard  
Past President WVC  
ABR Employment Services – Branch Mgr.

## **FABFAN Testimonial – Rhonda Karau**

Shortly after I began working at Ruder Ware in the year 2000, I was asked to attend the Workplace Volunteer Council meetings. Ruder Ware was already a member of the Council but needed an alternate to represent them at the monthly meetings. When the first FABFAN event came up both of our Ruder member representatives volunteered to assist during the week of the distribution and what an eye opener that was. The entire process of FABFAN, now in its 12th year, has become so evolved from what it was then. I have been a part of and have seen that evolution. It's just something you cannot imagine without actually seeing it. All the talk, all the hype, just doesn't do it justice; you have to see the process to actually understand what goes on to put together the distribution of backpacks for thousands of children - a final distribution that happens in a matter of just a few hours. That was the turning point for me, it was time for me to get involved at those meetings, time to participate, time to really Volunteer. From that point on I became an active member of the WVC. I listened, I learned, and I grew with the process. I eventually became Secretary for the WVC and a Volunteer Task Coordinator for FABFAN week and actively participate in meetings. I have gained many new and lasting friendships with the members of WVC. I continue to run into WVC members, my new friends, all over the Community, you see it seems that Volunteers of the WVC are active all over the Wausau area, they are good corporate citizens for their places of employment, and they become good ambassadors for their employers. I am so proud to be a member of the WVC and so pleased at what it has given back to me.

Rhonda Karau – WVC Secretary  
Ruder Ware – Librarian