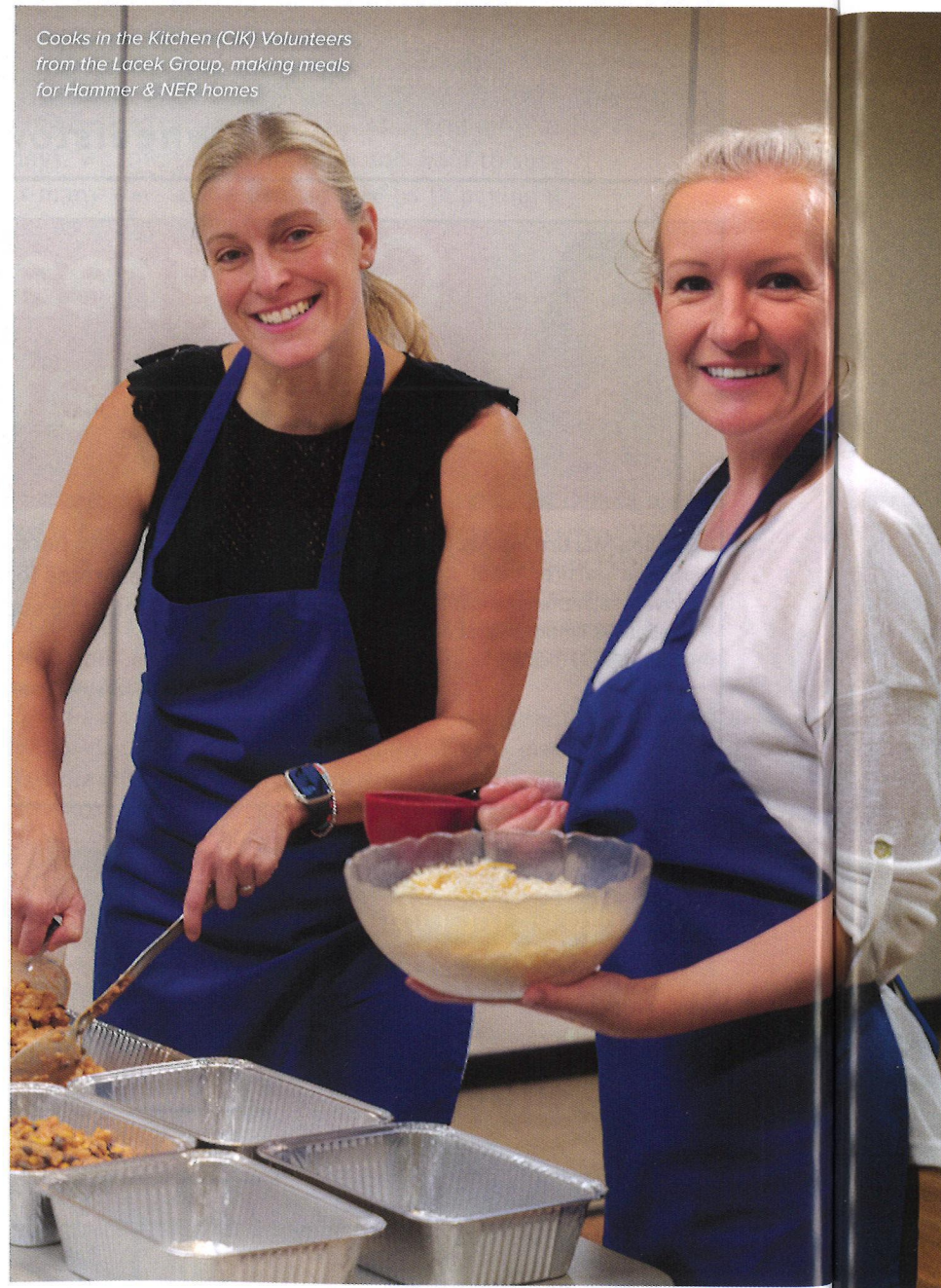


# Businesses that Give Back

WE SPOTLIGHT BUSINESSES GIVING BACK IN THE LAKE MINNETONKA COMMUNITY AND BEYOND

ARTICLE BY SARA HOEMAN AND LAUREN BEAUBAIRE

With the holiday season at our doorstep, most of us have giving and thanks on our minds. It's that time of year when we're given the space to slow down, reflect, and make an extra effort to give back. But luckily for our Lake Minnetonka community, we're home to numerous incredible small local businesses that make it their mission to give back all year round. From hosting fundraisers for great causes and sponsoring local community events that bring neighbors together to charitable donations and providing our vulnerable with a safe home, their dedication knows no bounds. And that's only the beginning. During this month of gratitude and generosity, we wanted to spotlight a few of these remarkable local businesses that are giving back and making an impact in no small way with their unwavering commitment to making our community better, one act of kindness at a time.



*Cooks in the Kitchen (CIK) Volunteers from the Lacek Group, making meals for Hammer & NER homes*



*From the left: Bertrand Ngoua, DSP (Direct Support Professional) at Arkansas with David Pierce*

*“Everything we do, we approach with a sense of gratitude, and we’re reminded every day of what it takes to make this mission work.”*

## Hammer & NER

This year marks the 100th year since Alvina Hammer opened Hammer School in 1923, creating a home and loving environment for people with developmental disabilities. Now, a century later, Hammer & NER (formerly Hammer Residences and Northeast Residence) continues Alvina’s incredible work, supporting people with developmental and intellectual disabilities and providing housing and customized support services to help them live their lives to the fullest.

From that very first home, Hammer & NER now offers 68 apartment programs and residences. “We are so thankful we’re able to do what we do,” shares Barbara Brandt, director of communication at Hammer & NER. “Without Hammer & NER, I can’t imagine what the world would be like and what people would do without support like this.”

Hammer & NER offers parents and families assurance and trust that their loved one is being taken care of, especially for parents or guardians who are getting older and want to know their child will be in good hands when they’re gone.

“We really are family, extended,” says Jennifer Hipple, communications specialist at Hammer & NER. “We have people who have been living together for 20 or 30 years in our program and refer to each other as brothers and sisters. We also have staff who have worked with us for 20, 30, 40 years and become that second family. We hear so many stories from our volunteers and staff and the people we support, being involved in each other’s lives, spending the holidays together, and celebrating life events.”

There are so many ways to get involved and support Hammer & NER. “We have “Cooks in the Kitchen” where volunteers make meals for our houses, and another that is most dear to everyone’s heart is “Make a Friend, Be a Friend” where you’re just a part of a person’s life in whatever way you both choose,” says Barbara. “Or, you can come work for us!”

Hammer & NER is looking forward to the next 100 years. “Everything we do, we approach with a sense of gratitude, and we’re reminded every day of what it takes to make this mission work,” shares Jennifer. “We’re thankful for the people who do the work in the homes, the communities who welcome us, and the families who trust us with their loved ones.” Learn more: <https://hammer.org/>

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