

# A donation of time

## PROVIDES ADVOCATES WITH IMMEASURABLE SUPPORT



“All persons have the right to safety, dignity, respect, and self-determination.” That’s the vision of Bolton Refuge House (BRH), which provides programs and services for all individuals impacted by domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. If you’re a caring, dependable, and confidential individual, and you agree with BRH’s vision, a volunteer opportunity at Bolton Refuge House Jackson County Outreach may be a match for you.

While most volunteer opportunities at BRH do not involve direct contact with clients, you can volunteer at BRH knowing that you are making an impact on the lives of those seeking BRH’s services. “BRH does not have funds through grants, etc., to offset the expense of maintenance, repairs, or seasonal operations like snow removal, mowing the lawn, painting, or yard work,” shares Executive Director Pat Stein. “When a person or organization assists us in volunteering with these types



The Fun Fair brings volunteers and the community together for a family-focused day in October.



### Bolton Refuge House, Inc

Every dollar and item donated to BRH Jackson County stays in Jackson County. All in-kind services, such as plumbing, are tax deductible.

individual decides to leave an abusive relationship or turn to the legal system, it’s not as simple as it sounds. Victims often face many barriers, including safety, access to financial resources and transportation, and if children and/or pets are involved. Individuals may need a safe place to go, and someone who will listen or help navigate the legal system. “We try to help them where they are,” shares Jackson County sexual assault victim advocate Denise Lahodik.

BRH advocates are there to provide supportive listening, legal advocacy, children’s advocacy, court accompaniment,

of activities, it allows our advocates to assist and serve more victims without also having to worry about performing these other tasks.”

Violence and abuse can happen to anyone of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender. When an indi-

personal advocacy, safety planning, medical-advocacy accompaniment, support groups, and information/referrals at no cost to the individuals. “We help them with anything that they need,” says Jackson County domestic violence victim advocate Ashley Kanuscak. “We’re the catch-all for resources in the community.”

One resource offered by our local BRH is housing advocacy, which includes a transitional housing unit. Transitional housing provides victims with a safe and affordable place to live, while also having access to victim advocates during their journey to self-sufficiency after leaving an abusive situation. As with any type of housing, maintenance, repairs, and cleaning must be performed on the transitional housing unit.

Ashley and Denise are responsible for the maintenance and yardwork of the Jackson County locations, which include the office and transitional housing unit in Merrillan, and a house in Black River Falls used for support groups. “I am responsible for the maintenance of the transitional housing unit,”



Fun Fair offers a variety of games, activities, and prizes for attendees. (photos courtesy of BHR)



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shares Ashley. “If I can’t fix it, I have to find someone who can. While this volunteer work may not have direct contact with clients, your efforts are staying in this community and helping us serve individuals.”

Maintenance volunteer opportunities can be very flexible for someone looking for a weekend or after-work activity. “A volunteer could mow the lawn, take care of the flower garden at our Black River Falls location, pressure-wash the buildings, paint, or help with snow removal,” says Denise.



**Stay tuned:**  
October is recognized as domestic violence awareness month. Check your local news sources for updates regarding the date of this year’s Fun Fair.

Clients utilizing the transitional housing unit may not be able to afford a U-Haul or have a family connection to help them move to a different location after their stay. “Volunteers, especially those with a truck, may help individuals move,” says Ashley. “We can also use volunteers to help clean the transitional housing apartment after someone has moved out,” adds Denise.

Donations of household items, personal care items, cleaning supplies, laundry supplies, toilet paper, and diapers are always appreciated and always needed to support both transitional housing residents and individuals served by BRH. “Volunteers may help sort or collect these items,” shares Denise. “Cleaning supplies are always in demand for the transitional housing residents to clean during their stay and to clean the apartments when they move out,” adds Ashley.

It is important to note that the Jackson County BRH office does not have a lot of storage space for donations of large household items or clothing. The community is advised to call ahead first regarding these types of donations. “If we can currently use that item, we can take it in,” says Ashley.

Another resource offered by BRH is support groups. Support groups provide individuals with a safe space to connect

with others, learn, and express their feelings. These groups help participants improve their coping skills, enhance their self-esteem, and find the emotional strength to address life issues. “A volunteer could provide childcare while a parent attends a support group,” shares Denise. “The conversations and topics discussed during support group are not always suitable for children to hear,” adds Ashley.

BRH Jackson County Outreach plans community events to create awareness. A Fun Fair event is held in October during Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and an April event is in the works for Sexual Assault Awareness Month. “The Fun Fair is more of a family-focused event, rather than focused on domestic violence,” explains Ashley.

In past years, the local police and emergency response departments, Miss Jackson County court, and local sports teams have volunteered at the Fun Fair event. “Volunteers could help promote the event and run the games. “We also seek donations for prizes,” says Ashley.

While the BRH Jackson County Outreach does not currently have regular volunteers, both Ashley and Denise remain optimistic. With more volunteers, we would be able to offer more community outreach events,” says Ashley. “We can be very flexible and are open to ideas for other ways you would like to volunteer,” adds Denise.

Many of the volunteer opportunities available through BRH don’t directly

## How to become a volunteer:

- An online application is available at [www.boltonrefuge.org](http://www.boltonrefuge.org). Specifically state that you would like to volunteer in Jackson County.
- A background check and training on confidentiality and boundaries is required of all volunteers to ensure the safety of clients.
- Advocacy volunteers (direct one-to-one work with a victim) must attend 20–24 hours of training.
- If you have specific questions, please call the Jackson County Outreach office at 715.333.2350.

interact with clients, but they do allow for our local advocates to have more time and resources to serve clients and complete the work they find rewarding. “It’s rewarding to be able to help those who are underserved, listen, and be a friend. Each day offers variety and the opportunity to learn something new,” says Denise.

“I enjoy helping individuals and teaching them how to advocate for themselves,” says Ashley. “I like that I can give people hope, and it’s rewarding to be able to watch those individuals grow.”—*Brandi Shramek, Executive Coordinator*

**Jackson Electric Adds Electric Vehicle to Its Fleet**

**2019 Chevy Bolt**  
100% electric

Driving range: 238 miles  
(fully charged, with variable weather conditions)

Full charge time: 9.3 hours (240V)

Fuel economy: 128 miles/gallon city  
110 miles/gallon highway  
28 kWhs/100 miles

# TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR ENERGY USAGE

“Why is my electric bill so high this month?” We hear it several times throughout the year from members who call in to the office concerned about the amount of their electric bill. We anticipate the cost of energy will continue to rise, so consumers need to look for ways to control their energy usage. As a member, you need to be aware of how much energy you are using each month and how it is being used in your home.

You have control over how you use your electricity. The way you live and the way you use your electrical appliances have a greater impact on your consumption of electricity than the number of appliances you have. Here are some tips to get your electricity consumption back on the right track:



- Turn off the lights when a room is not in use. Select LED bulbs and put them in areas where you use lighting often.
- Purchase Energy Star-rated appliances.
- The television should entertain the family, not an empty room.
- Use the microwave to reheat a dish.
- Be conscious of the amount of hot water used for showers and baths, and fix hot water faucet leaks.

## Heating and Cooling

Home comfort is important. Most of us prefer to be cool during the summer months and warm in the winter. During these months, we tend to use portable space heaters, air conditioners, and fans, and these items contribute to your energy usage. Humidity also plays an important role in home comfort. Oftentimes, we forget about how much energy a dehumidifier may use. Your dehumidifier may be the culprit with your higher-than-normal energy usage, especially if it runs often.

Remember to check the insulation in your house, weather-

strip and caulk if needed, and turn the thermostat down in the winter and up in the summer.

## Your Neighbor's Electric Bill

The amount you pay in electricity reflects the amount of electricity consumed by you and your family in your home. Your neighbor may have a different number of people living in their home, different lifestyle, different size of home, different equipment and methods, etc. These and many other factors make a comparison with your neighbor less meaningful.

## Record Your Usage

To decrease your electrical consumption, you may have to change your habits. The first step is to track your usage. Record the reading from your electric meter every day at the same time each day. You can also track your usage using Jackson Electric's SmartHub online portal. Register your account, and you'll have your energy consumption at your fingertips. Check it on the go with our mobile app for use with Android and Apple smart phones.

By tracking your usage, you will easily recall your family's activities if you notice a substantial increase in usage from one month to the next. You may also find equipment using electricity that you thought was turned off. It could be a thermostat, well pump, baseboard electric heat, or basement and attic lights. Remember that the fluctuation in the number of days between meter readings may create a higher than typical electric bill.

The electric meter is often accused of inaccuracy, but it's seldom the culprit. When the meter reads that more electricity is being used, try to find out why by looking at your family's activities during that period. Did you have guests over? Was the weather colder or warmer than normal?

Energy management begins at home. Take control of your energy usage to help manage your energy budget. (Source: Use Energy Wisely, available at [www.jackelec.com](http://www.jackelec.com))



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## Energy Efficiency Tips Delivered to Your Inbox

Jackson Electric offers a free e-newsletter, Questline, to members who are interested in the following:

- Energy conservation tips and recommendations
- Access to HVAC, home energy use, and carbon footprint calculators – providing information to help you benchmark your home's energy use and identify energy-saving opportunities
- Articles on new ideas for conserving water, green initiatives, and the latest energy technologies

To sign up to receive this free online newsletter, go to [www.jackelec.com](http://www.jackelec.com), News tab, and click on Questline E-Newsletter.

## ENERGY VAMPIRES



### TOP OFFENDERS

1. TVs
2. Home computers
3. Video game consoles
4. Surround sound systems
5. Cell phone & tablet chargers

Safe  
Electricity.org



## PEAK ALERT AND ECONOMIC LOAD MANAGEMENT NOTIFICATIONS AVAILABLE

If you're a member who needs to know when a peak alert or economic load management event is issued, then you need to sign up for alert notifications. Members of Jackson Electric now have the opportunity to receive peak alert and economic load management notifications. You have a choice on how you would like to receive these notifications:

**Email • Voice phone call • Text**

If you would like to receive notifications, please contact our office to request a notification enrollment form or download at [www.jackelec.com](http://www.jackelec.com), under Programs/Dual Fuel Program. This completed and signed form must be on file at our office for you to receive notifications.

## JACKSON ELECTRIC'S PLEDGE TO ITS MEMBERS

### Mission:

To provide competitive energy services in a safe and reliable manner while enhancing the quality of life to the members we serve.

### Vision:

To be recognized by our communities as providing the highest level of community service and value through honest, well-trained, professional, courteous, and motivated employees.

### Values:

To listen, understand, communicate, and act in the best interest of all members. Working together we have the power to make a difference.

### Our Pledge is to:

- Meet and/or exceed member needs and expectations
- Encourage the wise use of our energy resources
- Perform our work in a manner that is environmentally and socially acceptable
- Hold fast to the highest ethical standards of trust and respect
- Reference "The Seven Cooperative Principles" as our guide to do our business
- Operate our business in a financially sound manner
- Hold ourselves accountable to the highest standard for employee and public safety and security

## FROST CHARGES

If you plan to have Jackson Electric install electric service on your property after November 1, an additional charge may be applied if the conventional method of electric service installation is not feasible due to frost.

If you're planning to build a structure during the winter season and will need electric service, please contact Jackson Electric now so that any line builds can be arranged.

## Take Control of Your Billing Account Notifications



**Access My Account**

You choose how you want to receive notifications (text, e-mail, phone call) regarding:

- Bill available
- Payment due
- Payment confirmation
- Delinquent notice
- Credit card expiration
- Unsuccessful payment

### Manage Your Notifications By:

Logging into your SmartHub account  
Click on the Notifications tab  
Manage Your Contacts  
Manage Notifications

### Need Assistance:

Contact Jackson Electric  
at 715.284.5385



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Customer Service 715.284.5385  
800.370.4607  
Outage Reporting 855.222.DARK (3275)  
Diggers Hotline 800.242.8511  
Credit Card Payments 844.759.3984  
[www.jackelec.com](http://www.jackelec.com)

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 546  
Black River Falls, WI 54615  
Office Hours: Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Board of Directors: Gary Woods, President  
Chris Curran, Vice President  
David Peasley, Secretary-Treasurer  
Jerry Huber, Dairyland Power Representative  
Daniel Smrekar, Kristi Hanson, Stanley Gran, Brian Huber, Jerry Wagner

Kevin Babcock, General Manager/CEO

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner