

## Maryssa Paulsen

### *Volunteer Coordinator of the Year*

Maryssa Paulsen was motivated to serve at New Leaf Foods, Inc. through Marshfield Clinic Health Systems AmeriCorps Volunteer Wisconsin due to her personal understanding of the importance that access to healthy food has in Wisconsin communities. Having experienced inconsistent access to healthy food and the need for food assistance while growing up in rural Wisconsin, Maryssa joined AmeriCorps to help increase access to healthy food for everyone in the Greater Green Bay area and strengthen local food systems throughout Northeastern Wisconsin.



Maryssa is a volunteer coordinator powerhouse for New Leaf Foods, recruiting highly effective volunteers after streamlining their volunteer recruitment procedures and putting inclusive excellence at the heart of their volunteer practices. Additionally, she helped increase their organizational capacity by helping to develop their strategic planning for internal and external communication and refining their collaborative partnership processes and outreach functions. As part of these efforts, she outlined specific volunteer positions for communications and added a blog to their website, including seeking out contributors. Her efforts have helped New Leaf Food continue growing towards becoming a Local Food Communication Hub for Green Bay regional consumers that serves as a place to turn to for trusted information about healthy local food.

As the volunteer coordinator for Garden Blitz, one of New Leaf's most volunteer-intensive efforts that requires in-person volunteers, she helped revise and implement a plan allowing this program to continue during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program had already installed almost 800 raised bed garden boxes to assist low-income, diverse population neighborhoods throughout the Green Bay area since 2014 and it was highly dependent on its volunteers to continue operating. The procedures she developed created preparations and precautions that would allow volunteers to serve safely. Additionally, wanting to permanently increase the capacity of the program, Maryssa formalized volunteer position descriptions and training manuals, strengthened partnerships with various community organizations that encourage their members to volunteers as teams, and refined their recruitment procedures with the Green Bay Volunteer Center.

Maryssa also served as the Outreach Coordinator for NEW Food Forum, an initiative to develop sustainable local food systems to expand access to healthy foods. Maryssa was tasked with identifying local food stakeholders throughout the food production, shipping, and consumption spectrum and encouraging them to become involved in the development of healthy local food systems. She brought her experience from her degree in Environmental Policy & Planning to research and evaluate national and international models of local food system planning and policy and to help New Leaf Foods apply them to the development of the NEW Food Forum.

Maryssa increased New Leaf Food Inc's organizational capacity by streamlining volunteer recruitment procedures, improving communication, and improving collaborative partnership processes and outreach functions. Her service has enabled them to better promote healthy food access and develop healthy local food systems. Her contributions will be felt for years to come in the health of the residents of the Greater Green Bay area