Janet Schroeder has made an incredible difference in her community as the director of the Pantry of Angels. Her first step was to study the demographics of the community, which gave her a strong basis for pantry advocacy within the community. She overhauled the recruitment of the board of directors to separate operations from governance, and created a marketing campaign to increase community awareness of the pantry’s mission. Janet also networks and collaborates with hunger action groups and other agencies to provide a forum for sharing, learning and working together. In 2011, the Pantry of Angels served an average of 30 households per week and in 2016, the average number of households per week had grown to 67. This is a real testament to the hard work of their dedicated volunteers.

Janet Schroeder is a native New Yorker, living all but six years in Lindley on her family farm. After the 1972 flood ravaged Corning, Janet and her husband, a carpenter, built another home on the family farm. Raising their two sons in this rural setting enabled Janet and her husband to give them a wide array of skills and experiences. She worked for Corning Incorporated for 36 years, predominantly in an IT function. She retired in 2002 as a senior project leader for their International Division, where she had become a globe trotter. In 2007, Janet lost her loving husband to cancer.

When asked to give advice to others about volunteering, Janet says “Choose a field you are interested in and where you feel you can make contributions. Dedicate a set amount of time each week/month to volunteer and stick to it; be a reliable volunteer. Study the data associated with the area you choose so you understand and can speak to the issues and details. Advocate regardless of the audience. Above all, treat everyone with dignity, fairness, and caring, and don’t be judgmental. Be sincere. It is through encounters with service agencies that clients gain hope for better tomorrows. A community is only as strong as its most vulnerable individual.”