



## FALL BLESSINGS

The Creator of heaven and earth has called us to work for God's Kingdom and to share in the riches of God's Grace, not because we deserve it, but because we don't. That's not fair. That's God's Grace.

This summer we honored over 152 individuals from our churches who volunteered five years or more and many serving more than 10 years and even some over 20 years. The groups from each church were presented with a certificate and a small celebration. We are truly grateful for their dedication over the years; they give us a new understanding of what it means to be faithful. Along with these volunteers, we continue to add hundreds of new volunteers, not only from our churches but also from the community at large. We recently welcomed First Baptist Church to the BCFS Board. Other volunteers come from new organizations and clubs. Welcome, one and all.

The FARM continues to provide learning opportunities and continues to grow, not only in size but also in what we are able to do. We had new volunteers who love to help on the FARM as well as two teams from AmeriCorps that have helped us throughout the planting and harvesting seasons.

We look forward to the Marketplace's 25<sup>th</sup> year of Stuff a Truck in November, and to the on-going Lueken's Community Meat Program. We continue to give thanks for all of our community partners. Just today as I was writing this report, we received over 3,000 lbs. of pumpkins from Ter-Lee Gardens, and over 1,627 pounds of food and \$310 dollars from RP Broadcasting's Treat Street Event.

As I write this we are under our projected expenses and still operating in the black, but we once again needed to reach into our reserves to do so. November and December are very important months for us to catch up financially. Thanks for all of your prayers, volunteering and financial support.

May we continue to be a blessing to those who walk through our doors, a crossroads of hope and may the love of God be incarnated as we work TOGETHER. To God be the Glory.

**Bill Beyer, President, BCFS**

# BEMIDJI COMMUNITY FOOD SHELF NEWSLETTER November 2016



## The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Marketplace Stuff-a-Truck Food and Fund Drive

This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the annual Stuff-a-Truck food and fund drive, and the organizers are committed to make this event the best ever.

Each year students at area schools and members of the community come together to support the Bemidji Community Food Shelf.

Students fill boxes with non-perishable items at their schools. The wider community is encouraged to come to Marketplace Foods on Friday and Saturday, November 18 & 19 to place shelf-stable groceries and personal care items in the Stuff-a-Truck semi-trailer. Pre-packed bags are available for purchase in the store, or people can bring or purchase their own items.

The collected food and personal care items end up on the shelves at the food shelf and are distributed to about 3,000 area families.

The summer months are busy at the food shelf and donations are typically lower. "With the holidays around the corner, it's heartening to see the shelves start to fill up again," said Mary Mitchell, food shelf director.

Thank you to the sponsors and organizers of the annual event: Marketplace Foods, The Bemidji Pioneer, and Paul Bunyan Broadcasting.

## Fall FARM Report

These days as I charge out the back door of the warehouse to do another FARM task, I often find myself singing with Nat King Cole, "The party's over, time to call it a day..." It makes me sad and glad at the same time to have all the crops harvested and the end of the growing season here. Next, it will be time to evaluate to see what were the "pluses" of the season and what were the "even better ifs" (as our AmeriCorps teams say).

The crop stars were the onions. We did a good job of growing onions from sets and from transplants (from seeds – not so much). The clients loved our onions and they flew off the shelf. I often had to direct volunteers midday to go back out and pull more onions because that shelf in the store was almost empty. The DAC FARMers enjoyed pulling up big onions, cleaning them and getting accolades when they brought the beautiful globes in to be weighed.

We had tomatoes coming out of our ears (a frightening Halloween-like thought), most of ours ripening at the same time that the food shelf received generous donations from community members and growers. The value of the high tunnel became clear after donations ceased with the mid-September freeze but those protected tomatoes and peppers continued to ripen. Summer squash was plenteous and also often duplicated by donations.

The potato crop was good but didn't live up to our hopes due to the weeds remaining in the field. Amazingly, we have already given out all of the potatoes we grew – over 4,000 pounds.

On November 1st we bid a fond farewell to the ten AmeriCorps members who have been working on the FARM and in the food shelf with us since mid-September. Thanks, Maple 3, for all the good work helping us provide FARM-fresh food to those who come to us.

Peace, Candy Barthel, Interim FARM Manager

### *The Food Shelf has a few immediate needs:*

- **Plastic Bags:** Please bring your clean, used plastic grocery bags to the food shelf. We will put them out for our customers to use.

- **Intake Interviewer Volunteer:** We are looking for folks who like to interact with people and have some basic computer skills. You will greet people and log their visit using a simple, easy-to-use computer program. You will set your own schedule.

- **Sample Preparation Volunteer:** you will prepare simple recipes in our kitchen using foods we have available here at the food shelf and share them with our customers. This rewarding activity starts at 8:30 a.m. and goes until noon on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

## Meet the New FARM Manager

**Hannah Klemm** is taking the reins of the FARM Manager position from previous Manager Chris Tower, who went on to greener gardens at BSU. Hannah comes to us from Happy Dancing Turtle where she was Campus and Project Support Assistant. Having worked on many small farms, she has orchestrated the small-scale agriculture process from planning to planting to picking. Most recently Hannah developed and launched the "Whole Health Pine River" initiative to deliver Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares and food skills training to low income families. Hannah will start working with BCFS in earnest in January.

We are grateful to Assistant Manager **Candy Barthel**, who stepped up to fill in as Interim Farm Manager in our time of need. Many thanks to **Chris Tower** for all of his contributions to the FARM project. We wish him the best of luck!

## NEW Warehouse Coordinator

**Conan Cunningham** was hired to fill the warehouse and maintenance position previously held by Brad Melhus, who retired at the end of September. Conan comes from a military family. He was born in Alaska and lived in Florida and Washington State before coming to Minnesota. He served for eight years in the military before medically retiring. Conan's mom, Carol, works as an interviewer at the food shelf. Welcome, Conan, and thank you, Brad for your years of service!



***Thank you for all you do for us now and throughout the year. We wish you and yours a peaceful Holiday Season!***

## Community Raised Bed Garden Project

The Raised Bed Garden Project ended its second year with 30 raised beds sited in the community. Lin James coordinated the program for BCFS, which provided soil, seeds, plants and expertise to the participants at four different sites. Once again, BCFS partnered with Deb Dilley at the University of Minnesota Extension to implement the project, which involves placing raised bed gardens with low income families. Families with young children were especially sought to participate in this educational and healthy project. BCFS will be seeking funds to continue the project in 2017.



### Thank you, NCCC AmeriCorps Maple 3

NCCC AmeriCorps team Maple 3 worked with BCFS from September 13 to November 1. The team harvested potatoes, helped to organize the Harvest Ball, painted walls in the warehouse and accomplished many other tasks during their stay. They also worked next door at the Developmental Achievement Center (DAC) where they assisted clients, painted a gazebo, and did other projects. This was the last tour or "round" for the team. They have

now returned to their campus in Vinton, Iowa and will be graduating from the program on November 15. Thanks for all your help, **Maple 3**, and congratulations on your graduation!



### Scare Away Hunger

About 70 people showed up to Scare Away Hunger at Bemidji Brewing October 26<sup>th</sup>. This event was one of Bemidji Brewing's Community Pint Nights, when area non-profits are allowed to commandeer the pub from 5-7 p.m. and earn one dollar from every tap sale. The Halloween theme and costume party and contest were festive and fun and we hope to repeat it again next year. Winners of the costume contest were Karl Mork for the funniest costume and Rob Mattson for the scariest. Our esteemed contest judges were Charlie and Harper Karalus. Thanks to Bemidji Brewing for hosting us and for donating a portion of the proceeds to the food shelf!

### First Harvest Ball a Rousing Success!

The FARM at the Food Shelf hosted its first Harvest Ball on November 3 at the Bemidji Eagles Club. About 270 people attended the event, which featured a turkey dinner, a silent auction, and live music from the band "After Five." The community response was

overwhelming. More tables and chairs had to be found to accommodate all the folks. People bid generously on auction items and bought jars of Bill's Crunchy Kraut. Helpers appeared out of nowhere. Thank you, thank you.

The money raised from the event will go toward general operations and supplies and wages for the FARM manager and assistant manager. It is hoped that this will be an annual event that will grow in popularity over time.

### BCFS Welcomes First Baptist Church of Bemidji!

A new church has partnered with BCFS: First Baptist Church. The folks from First Baptist are working the afternoon of the fourth Wednesday of the month, previously worked by the Presbyterians, who are continuing to work the morning shift. Mavis Holden is the board representative for First Baptist. "A few months ago, Pastor Stan asked our congregation if anyone would be interested in representing our church family at the Bemidji Community Food Shelf," Mavis said. "I did have an interest and this proved to be an entrance to learn more and get involved. Now several of us are enjoying volunteering every fourth Wednesday afternoon. We are happy to have a part in helping our community."



## Bemidji Community Food Shelf (BCFS)

NEWSLETTER/November 2016

1260 Exchange Avenue, SE

Bemidji, MN 56601 (218) 444-6580

[bcfs@paulbunyan.net](mailto:bcfs@paulbunyan.net)

### Hours of Operation:

MWF 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. and

10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Every 3rd Monday

We're on the Web!

[www.bemidjifoodshelf.org](http://www.bemidjifoodshelf.org)

Like us on Facebook!

### Bemidji Community Food Shelf Contribution Form - NOVEMBER 2016

Mail completed form and your tax-deductible contribution to:  
BCFS, P.O. Box 3118, Bemidji, MN 56619-3118

Here is my tax-deductible gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to support the work of the Bemidji Community Food Shelf.  
(Please make check payable to: BCFS)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I am interested in volunteering.

**Thank you for your support!**

\_\_\_\_\_ I am interested in becoming a monthly (sustaining) supporter.

(See [www.bemidjifoodshelf.org](http://www.bemidjifoodshelf.org), and click on an amount; then click on  
"Donate Now".)

\_\_\_\_\_ I am interested in supporting The FARM at BCFS.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please contact me with information about making a Legacy Gift to the BCFS.

\_\_\_\_\_ I wish to receive future newsletters via email.

Telephone/Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_