

Bemidji Community Food Shelf

Newsletter
November 2015



The 24th Annual Marketplace Foods Stuff-a-Truck Food and Fund Drive

As this newsletter goes to press, the Bemidji Community Food Shelf (BCFS) is busy preparing room in its warehouse to accommodate donations coming in from the upcoming 2015 Marketplace Foods Stuff-a-Truck Food and Fund Drive. This year, Marketplace Foods and BCFS have challenged area businesses to participate and compete with the schools, which last year alone contributed 9,580 pounds of food and \$1,805 during the event.

"This year we are asking the community to help us reach our goals of 25,000 pounds

of food and \$8,000," said Bill Beyer, President of the BCFS Board of Directors. Bill adds that the funds raised help the Shelf purchase food through the winter months. "The majority of our food is purchased through a federal program from the Crookston Food Bank and other food wholesalers, so funds raised now will help keep us in the black over the winter."

Area classrooms started filling food boxes on November 2nd, and the truck will be taking donations at Marketplace Foods on Friday, November 20th and Saturday, November 21st.

Our Address Has Changed!

But no, we have not moved! Rather, the City of Bemidji discovered a problem with the way the addresses were numbered on Industrial Park Drive SE, and were concerned that 911 emergency responses might be slower because of the confusion. To fix this, they renamed our section of the street "Exchange Avenue, SE". Our new address is: 1260 Exchange Avenue, SE, Bemidji, MN 56601.



Hunger Heroes: Superintendent Hess of Bemidji Area Schools and Mary Mitchell, BCFS Director, kicked off the 24th Annual Marketplace Foods Stuff-a-Truck Food and Fund Drive at the studios of Paul Bunyan Broadcasting. The dynamic duo was featured on Chat-About and highlighted the contribution area schools make to the annual community campaign.

THANK YOU!

We are so grateful to so many, but we would like to give a shout-out to a few folks in particular who make our lives here so much better:

Over the years, the **Bemidji Locker and Fish Co.** has provided BCFS with valuable freezer space for meats that we do not have space for. This has allowed us to take advantage of special offers as they arise that we would otherwise have to turn down and has saved us thousands of dollars.

Sentence to Service (STS), has hauled our trailer to our Food Bank in Crookston on a weekly basis to pick up our food orders, and unloaded and stored the food upon returning. They also take our recycling to the transfer station and do numerous other jobs for us, including stocking shelves, digging potatoes, and cleaning floors. We don't want to think about what we would do without their help.

Please thank these folks for their service and commitment to BCFS.

Keeping Our Balance

Keeping our balance begins with a trust in God, who promises to be with us always. It begins with a call to serve. We have been blessed and we are called to share. Together we look forward to the challenges and the opportunities before us.

In October 2015 we completed our third year in our new space. The leap of faith, the hard work of the staff, the hundreds of volunteers, the courage of the Board of Directors, all of this has been affirmed by the support of churches, businesses, clubs and organizations not only with their gifts in kind and time, but above all with their faithful donations. Over the past four years we have received over a million dollars and have distributed over two and a half million pounds of food. For all of this we give you thanks.

The move to our current building has enabled us to do things that were impossible in the past. For example, we can now receive pallets of food and our clean room enables us to order bulk

Holiday Concert to Benefit the Food Shelf

“Glen Tidings”, a holiday concert featuring music for voice, strings and Irish drum, will be held Saturday, December 12 at 7:30 p.m. at the Historic Chief Theater in downtown Bemidji. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Bemidji Community Food Shelf (BCFS).

Eira, taken from the Welsh word for “snow”, brings you tidings of Holiday music from a wintry glen. Warm your soul by their fire and follow these fine musicians and steadfast friends to the

foods that we can repackage. We have a walk in cooler and two walk in freezers which enable us to keep up with the needs in our area.

Along with our new building we received an acre and a half of undeveloped land that has become The FARM at BCFS. In the first year we raised over 5,000 pounds of produce and this year we reached our goal of 10,000 pounds of fresh produce.

“ It begins with a call to serve. We have been blessed and we are called to share.”

Keeping our balance also has something to do with our income and expenses. Our income has increased not only because of our donors’ generosity, but also the successful grant writing and generous in kind gifts for The Farm. But the problem is, in the midst of the exciting new collaborations, the farm, and expanding opportunities, the cost

to deliver our services has gone up, resulting in a need to dip into our reserves.

We are looking at every way possible to control costs. We are changing the structure of our board, seeking people with financial and legal skills to help us cut expenses and increase our revenue. We know that we do not walk alone in this community - we walk together.

We need an excellent November and December to start the New Year off on the right foot. Therefore, it is very important to remember your food shelf with a holiday donation or end of the year special gift.

The challenges are great but our God is greater still. God has called us, pray that we may have the courage to move into the future, “Keeping our Balance” and trusting that God will show us the way.

--Bill Beyer, President BCFS

Celtic Isles, around the world and home again.

The concert will feature music from the traditional to the unexpected. The audience will experience the inspired vocal music of the five singers and instrumentals both classical and Celtic, supported by the driving force of one of the best Irish drum and guitar sections around.

Tickets for the event are \$20, with \$5 from each sale going directly to BCFS. Tickets are available at Overbeek's,

Kelsey's, Brigid's Pub, and Tutto Bene, or by calling (218) 209-7884. Sponsors include Kraus-Anderson of Bemidji and Tutto Bene Restaurant.



The Farm at BCFS

Almost two years ago the BCFS Garden Advisory Committee held their first meeting. The goals of this committee were to provide fresh, tasty, nutritious, locally grown food for food shelf clients; hire a farm manager; establish a business plan, and work out a budget. We are pleased to say that these goals have been achieved.

The 2015 harvest at The FARM has yielded almost 10,000 pounds of fresh produce. With about 400-500 pounds of carrots still in the ground and cabbage still growing, we will certainly pass our goal of 10,000 pounds. We are truly “reaping what we sow.” All of the harvested produce was provided to families who benefit from the Food Shelf. Thanks to countless hours of grant writing, The FARM has been able to procure the necessary tools to provide fresh produce.

The backbone of any organization is its volunteers. We are grateful to all of the organizations throughout the Bemidji community and Bemidji State University who have spent time helping out at The FARM. The BCFS would also like to thank the AmeriCorps service program. From the planting of crops in the spring to the harvesting into late summer, three AmeriCorps crews (8-9 students between 18-24 yrs. of age) put in many hours weeding, digging, mulching, hoeing, harvesting, and fence making. The work these crews provided is priceless.

This was our first year of the Community Raised Bed Project and it was very successful. With grant monies we were able to place 20 raised beds including dirt and plants with families at income-eligible apartment complexes and teach them how to grow some of their own fresh produce. With the assistance of a U of M Nutritionist, we now have these same families participating in “Cooking Matters” classes so they can learn to prepare the

foods they grow. We’re currently looking at grants to be able to expand this project next year since it was so well received.

The FARM also made its first venture into value added products. In order to be financially sustainable, The FARM is identifying products that can be produced from the vegetables and eventually fruit that we grow. This fall we are pleased to announce that our first value added product is ready for market: sauerkraut. Using an old world recipe, we have canned over 150 jars of sauerkraut known as Bill’s Crunchy Kraut, named in honor of Bemidji Food Shelf Chair Bill Beyer, a tireless



BSU volunteers harvest carrots at The FARM

advocate for the hungry. If you would like to purchase a jar or two, please contact the food shelf.

We are planning for an even larger harvest in 2016. Throughout the winter months The FARM will look forward to completing a high hoop tunnel, building a greenhouse and starting our own plants from seeds.

If you would like to contribute to The FARM’s success by volunteering your time, talents and donations, please contact the Bemidji Community Food Shelf.

---FARM Manager Chris Tower

Advisory Board

BCFS is seeking five members of the community to serve on an Advisory Committee. The role of the Committee is to work with the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors on policy and other issues. Two members of the Committee should be clients of the Food Shelf. A background in or knowledge of food services, business, finance, or non-profit law would be helpful. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please contact Mary at 444-6580.

The Retired Senior Volunteer Program—RSVP

RSVP is part of the Senior Corps, a national service program that provides older Americans the opportunity to apply their life experience to meet community needs.

Men and women age 55 and older can enroll in the RSVP program. The Bemidji Community Food Shelf is one of 24 partner agencies with RSVP in Beltrami County. Currently there are 252 RSVP enrollees just at the food shelf.

Volunteers can be reimbursed for mileage and are covered under RSVP’s volunteer insurance.

If you haven’t already, I hope you’ll join the Senior Corps of RSVP volunteers. There’s no charge to enroll, but an application needs to be completed and submitted.

For more information, stop by my office at the food shelf. I have office hours Monday thru Thursday.

Jane Furuseth, RSVP Area Coordinator
218-766-9494



Bemidji Community Food Shelf (BCFS)

Newsletter/NOVEMBER 2015

1260 Exchange Avenue, SE

Bemidji, MN 56601 (218) 444-6580

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 Third Monday

We're on the Web!

www.bemidjifoodshelf.org

and find us on Facebook!

Bemidji Community Food Shelf Contribution Form November 2015

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, 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: _____