

BEMIDJI COMMUNITY FOOD SHELF

MARCH 2016 NEWSLETTER

March Campaign: Help Feed Your Neighbors through the Summer Months

Summer is no vacation for some area families. When school is out in the spring, many are suddenly faced with feeding children three meals a day instead of one. Budgets are strained and families look for ways to make ends meet and keep food on the table. Here at BCFS we see a spike in visits from June through August, but unfortunately, *this is when donations are at their lowest of the year.* Because we purchase the majority of our food, we count on donations from the community during the **Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign** to give us the financial boost that takes us through the summer.

This statewide campaign is coordinated by the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches (GMCC) and is specifically for Minnesota food shelves. The GMCC solicits donations from corporations to fund a partial match for the participating food shelves, which amounts to about 10%. Last year, our match was over \$10,000 – enough to cover a month's worth of food purchases.

Please pass the word and S-T-R-E-T-C-H your food dollars by donating during the March Campaign!



STRETCH YOUR DONATION

Your \$10 → Your food shelf's \$10

Food shelves can stretch cash further than donations of food because of their access to discount products and programs. Help us feed more Minnesota families by donating cash to your local food shelf today.

Minnesota FoodShare



BCFS President Bill Beyer and Outgoing Bookkeeper Edith Hoyum

BCFS: Celebrating 30 Years

The Bemidji Community Food Shelf celebrated 30 years as a non-profit helping the people of Beltrami County at its 2016 annual meeting held February 11.

About 60 people attended the meeting at Bethel Lutheran Church. President of the Board Bill Beyer thanked the community for its support of the Food Shelf, especially at the end of 2015, which was an especially challenging time for the organization. "Thanks to the generosity of the community, we were able to meet all of our expenses, leaving us in a much better position to move into 2016".

Edith Hoyum, the Board Treasurer and BCFS Bookkeeper, was recognized for her six years of service with BCFS. During this time, she mastered QuickBooks and brought BCFS into the 21st century. Edith will be retiring from the voluntary bookkeeping position during 2016.

President Beyer also thanked the over 400 Food Shelf volunteers for their time and formally recognized the warehouse and gleaning volunteers who come in weekly to log and process donations from area stores.

Grateful Hearts

I want to extend a heartfelt “thank you” to the hundreds of individuals, churches, businesses and tribes that stepped up in December so that we were able to pay all of our bills. This enabled us to move forward into the possibilities for 2016, providing not only food, but hope, to those who come to the food shelf.

We are grateful because our volunteer numbers have grown from around 100 back in 2011 to over 500 people from our schools and from the community at large. I consider it a challenge to find something that needs to be done for each and every person that comes to the food shelf, so that together we may truly feel what it means to be a community working together. Come and see for yourself, and join us if you are able.

Finally, I am grateful to God because there is more to be done. We have expanding opportunities not only on the FARM, but as a food shelf with a new advisory board, and a retreat this spring to flesh out our shared vision so we may be better stewards of the resources God has given us.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

--BCFS Board President

Bill Beyer

Our Family UPC Codes

Please clip and save your Our Family UPC codes and bring them to the Food Shelf. We send them in to the Nash Finch Company and earn a rebate of five cents each.

Volunteer Opportunity Open House

There will be an open house at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 29 at the Food Shelf for people interested in learning about the various volunteer opportunities available. If you are interested in attending, please contact Mary at 444-6580 to sign up.

Young people are welcome to attend, with children 12 and under accompanied by an adult.

Honoring Merrill

We often brag about the remarkable volunteers we have here at the food shelf. Merrill Thiel is truly remarkable. Every Monday for about 25 years, Merrill took his pickup and went into the community to glean food from area stores and never missed a day. Merrill “retired” recently and was honored at the Food Shelf with a Certificate of Appreciation and gift cards presented by warehouse volunteer Loren Hoyum. Thank you, Merrill!



From Left to Right: Merrill Thiel with Loren Hoyum

The FARM at the Food Shelf

The committee for the FARM at the Food Shelf has been meeting to determine which vegetables should be planted this year. To help them decide, Food Shelf clients have been giving their input through a survey. The survey allows Shelf users to prioritize which produce they prefer. Seed potatoes are already ordered, thanks to the Bemidji Area Farmers Market. Plans are also underway to continue the Raised Bed Project in the community, with the Master Gardeners recently contributing \$1000 to that project. If you are interested in participating in the FARM project, please send an email to:

bcfsgarden@paulbunyan.net

Better Nutrition at the Food Shelf

For some time now, we have been wondering, "Is the food we distribute nutritionally balanced?" Also, "Is the amount of food we distribute per household realistic for 10 meals/three to five days of food?" To help answer us these questions, we turned to Sanford Health and intern Megan

Ludwick. Megan is currently an intern at Sanford, working on her Dietician degree through the Iowa State University Distance Program. The answers she gives us will guide our future efforts in the store.

AmeriCorps??

With spring looming large, we are again hopeful we will be hosting at least one, if not two or three, teams of enthusiastic, young people through the NCCC AmeriCorps Program this summer. We are waiting to hear about an application submitted through the Headwaters Science Center (HSC). Our partnership with HSC has worked well in the past two years, with the teams working part days at both locations.

We have also submitted a preliminary application for a later team we would share with the Developmental Achievement Center (DAC). This was a good arrangement for the teams last year, who were able to walk between the two sites and get a variety of experiences. We could not have achieved our beautiful crops and the amazing harvest of 10,000 pounds of produce without the work of the teams we had last year. These young people come from locations all over the U.S. and have a variety of backgrounds and experience. We are very grateful to Calvary Lutheran Church, which has again agreed to host the teams.



RSVP: *Creating meaningful opportunities for seniors, age 55 and older, through volunteer service.*

For information about volunteer opportunities in Beltrami County, contact Jane Furuseth at 218-766-9494. The RSVP office is located at the Food Shelf. Some mileage reimbursement is available through RSVP. Enrollment in RSVP is free of charge!

Nutrition Assistance Program for Seniors (NAPS)

BCFS has been a distribution site for commodity boxes for income-eligible seniors since 2014, and the program continues to grow. Currently, about 90 elders pick up their boxes once a month on the third Monday of the month. The boxes typically contain hot or cold cereal, canned vegetables, shelf stable milk, juice, and pasta and come with processed cheese. If you feel that you might be eligible for this supplemental program, please come to the Food Shelf and fill out an application or call Mary at 218-444-6580 for more information.



Bemidji Community Food Shelf (BCFS)

Newsletter/March 2016

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 March 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, 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: _____