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*Location: 310 4th Street, Bemidji (across from City Hall)
Mailing address: PO Box 3118, Bemidji, MN 56619
Phone: 444-6580
Open: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10:00-3:30 and
the third Monday of each month until 7 PM*



March FoodShare



At a recent City Council Meeting Mayor Richard Lehmann proclaimed the month of March, 2009 as Minnesota FoodShare Month in Bemidji. He urged everyone in this community and in communities throughout the State to donate food items and/or funding to the local food shelf during March to ensure that all of our neighbors will have food enough to share fully in the life of our community.

The March Campaign is a unique event that unites MN corporations, faith communities, schools, and civic groups

for one month to focus on the issues of hunger and raise donations for the state's food shelves.

The March Campaign is vital. In 2008, there were more than 2 million food shelf visits in Minnesota and 50 million pounds of food distributed to families in need. The 2008 Campaign raised 26 million pounds of food, more than half of the annual distribution.

The goal this year has increased to address the rising demand at food shelves statewide. The recession and the related job losses are creating a perfect storm at Minnesota food shelves, the need is growing exponentially and many who used to donate are now in need of help. All food and cash donations will remain here in Bemidji, but will be supplemented by incentive grants according to amounts reported. The more you donate, the more



For more information about the March Campaign go to www.gmcc.org/foodshare

2008 Hunger Facts



“Minnesota’s children are growing poorer faster than the nation’s children overall.”

- 992,750 Minnesotans live in households struggling to put food on the table.
- Hunger touches people of every age: 56 percent of food shelf visitors are families with children and 20 percent are seniors.
- More than 50 percent of adult food shelf visitors are employed. 2/3 of food shelf visitors make less than \$1,000 a month, not enough income to cover their basic needs.
- Hunger hurts every day: of those who use food shelves, 47 percent of adults and 14 percent of children skip meals to stretch their family budget.
- Nearly ¾ of food shelf visitors live in unaffordable housing, half spend more than 50 percent of their income on housing.
- Since 2000, the number of Minnesota children living in extreme poverty has doubled – Minnesota’s children are growing poorer faster than the nation’s children overall.
- Sources: The State of Hunger In MN (2005) Hunger Solutions Minnesota/Wilder Research; Survey of Food Shelves: Hunger Partners

How Can You Help?

March FoodShare gives you a perfect opportunity to get “more for your money” when you donate to your local food shelf. A direct cash donation helps the most because the BCFS can purchase food at the North Country Food Bank at a greatly reduced price. However, we appreciate other types of donations also. Other options are listed here for you. Any of these or similar activities will all help.



- Hold a food drive at your place of work, church, in your neighborhood or through an organization to which you belong.
 - Invite your friends to a pot-luck at your home and have them bring a dish to share as well as food items or cash donations for the food shelf.
 - Save your pocket change every day in March in a soup can and encourage your children to do the same. Donate the contents to the food shelf at the end of the month.
 - Make a donation-in-kind of a service you could provide as a business such as carpet cleaning, office supplies, carpentry projects, postage, printing, or other such necessities we normally pay for during the year.
 - Instead of a family night at the movies spend an evening at home with your children playing a board game. Donate the price of the movie, popcorn and pop to the food shelf.
 - Use your imagination to collect food or cash and share your idea with us when you bring in your donation so we can share that with others.
-

Looking back in 2008

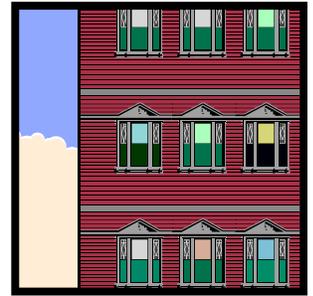
2008 Statistics

Total Families Served	5,562
Ages 0-17	10,103
Ages 18-65	9,156
Age over 65	384
Total Individuals	19,643

(This is an increase over 2007 of about 1,300 individuals. These statistics are a cumulative total. Numbers indicate families that made more than one visit. However nearly half of our clients use only one or two visits per year when they encounter some type of an emergency.)

Food Distributed 331,434 pounds

(This is an increase over 2007 of about 30,000 pounds)



35% of clients report having to choose between buying food and paying rent.

Visit our website for more information

Thanks to a wonderful volunteer we have a website that provides a great deal of information about the food shelf. There is an events page to keep you up to date on activities, the newsletter is attached, and there are links to several sites with data on hunger issues. Right now we have an interesting video about the Food Shelf Farm for you to view! Just do a Goggle search for the Bemidji Community Food Shelf and then bookmark the site so that you and return periodically to see changes!

Another Way to Help!

March is a good month to start your spring cleaning and help the food shelf at the same time!

Value Smart, a Bemidji Consignment store will accept items that you no longer want and the proceeds from their sale will go to the BCFS.

The store accepts all kinds of used items including dishes, furniture, toys, hardware, tools, and clothing. Please be sure it is clean and in good condition. You are allowed to drop off two bags or boxes from Wed – Sat from 9-4. Mark the boxes clearly with **#3250** and let them know it is for the food shelf.

Value Smart is located south of Bemidji on Highway 71, at 144 Peaceful Meadow Lane SE near Calvary Lutheran. Call them with any questions at 755-9200.

You can ask for a donation receipt for tax purposes. The food shelf will collect funds from Value Smart at the end of March to use for an increase in our incentive grant.

We want to thank Julie and Ray Ricci for providing this service for BCFS.



Food Shelf Farm by Gary Vanyo



We are land owners who have a portion of a field we would use to grow fruits and vegetables for the needy. I have experience in management and horticulture. Cindy is an employee at the First National Bank in Bemidji.

We have been married for 25 years and have lived in Bemidji since 1984. I was the Store Manager at McDonald's Restaurant in Bemidji from 1984-1997. I worked for McDonald's since 1977 and have had training in people skills, food safety, equipment maintenance, money management, advertising, and earned an associates degree in business management at McDonald's University in 1987.

My background in gardening came from my years of experience on my family's farm. We have been working our 40 acre piece of land developing it into trails, gardens, and forest. The land owners around us have clear cut all the trees and we are the one last resort for birds and animals in the area.

Our goal is to use the existing field to grow food, for the needy. We need to work the soil, feed it nutrients, plant, protect, water, weed, and harvest the food. We also need to prepare the site for the next season. In the future we should be self sustaining and have storage for equipment, tools, and materials. Use our own seeds, and compost. There should be a team leader, and staff to work with the land owner to achieve day to day goals.

Volunteers

Anyone can volunteer to work on the farm as long as you are over the age of 18 and in good physical condition. Children or teenagers should be part of an organized club or group with adult supervision. The farm is a place to learn about growing food and embracing nature. The tasks of the day are usually determined by the gardens daily needs. In the spring we plant and prepare the gardens. In the summer we water, and weed. In the fall we harvest and prepare the site for the next season. These jobs may include shoveling, raking, mowing, digging, watering, weeding, trail making, brush cutting, fencing, composting, seed gathering, and many other jobs related to the farms up keep.

There is no long term commitment even if you just work at the farm once, it is greatly appreciated. You may work as often or little as you like. The land owner and Team leader will help the volunteers to their work area and train you. The job site is out in the open and there are no buildings or automobiles. You must bring food and water for your stay and wear proper clothing to prevent insect bites. Long sleeves, hats, gloves, shoes, boots and long pants are a great way to work in comfort. It is not a good idea to wear cologne, perfume, or hairspray.

The farm is in a HIGH FIRE danger zone and there is NO SMOKING or OPEN FIRES. One spark quickly starts a grass fire.

We do not promote loud sounds, radios, yelling or horseplay. The animals and birds on the farm require quiet in order to not become afraid of humans.

If you would like to help, please call with your name and phone number.

Farm hours are 8-5pm Monday – Friday and 8-12pm Saturday.

April 15- October 1. (1-218-444-4339) or email cngvanyo@msn.com

The farm will provide many groups who require volunteer hours a way to fulfill these services!

Meet our Vice-President: Nancy Streightiff

Little did I realize as a Lutheran girl growing up in the heart of Amish Country in Pennsylvania that some day I would have lived in more than two dozen places -- some in parts of the country that were not even a State at that time -- several times near Indian Reservations -- and that I would be a grandmother of two beautiful grown girls, as well as part of their extended North Dakota family.

My husband Bill was a school administrator in small communities across the country until his sudden death in 1988, after which I moved to Minnesota.

I attended Shippensburg State Teachers College, in Pennsylvania, in the late 1940s, where I met Bill. After that I completed my education at Lancaster (Pennsylvania) Business College in 1949-50. We were married in 1950. Our daughter was born in 1953 and our son in 1955. In 1959, we headed west to South Dakota with little more than what we could carry in our old green Dodge Station Wagon.

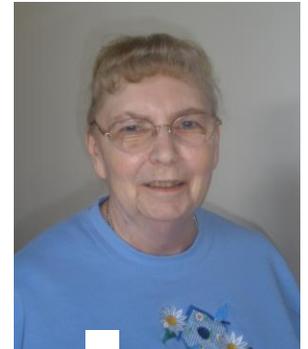
Depending on our need and opportunities over the years, I worked as a secretary and bookkeeper -- for an insurance company, a shoe heel manufacturer, two public schools, the Alaska Department of Revenue, an accountant, a lawyer, a farmers' cooperative, and an extension agent. One summer I was even a police dispatcher.

As a mother, I enjoyed being involved in my children's experiences, from helping my 10-year-old daughter to make a sit-upon (out of an old rug and a plastic bag) for her Girl Scout hike on Thunder Mountain near Juneau, Alaska, to taking Ground School along with my 15-year-old son who needed a ride to the airport at Scottsbluff, Nebraska, so he could learn to fly. My son's children are young women now. Ashley is a student at UND. Nicole will graduate from high school in May and attend college in Colorado. Even though we have lived far apart, I was fortunate in their younger years to spend many weeks with them in their home near Denver and when they came home to Mizpah during the summers.

Maybe God has a way of working our lives around what God calls us to, even though it takes a lifetime of experiences to get there. As a young woman, influenced by my Lutheran pastor grandfather, I wanted to become a Lutheran Deaconess. Being involved in ministry was always important to my family. My daughter responded to her own call from God, becoming an ordained United Methodist minister, in Kansas.

In recent years, I have been privileged to respond to God's call to mission support work with a Russian outreach sponsored by the North Woods Mission to Petrozavodsk, of which I have been a member since 1993 and served as secretary and treasurer for 15 years.

As a result of experiencing hunger while growing up during the Depression, I appreciated being asked to serve on the Food Shelf Board as a representative from my church and now also as Vice President. My move from Koochiching County to Bemidji in 2001 opened so many new options for community involvement and service! In addition to working with the Food Shelf, I enjoy volunteering at our local hospital and representing Bethel Lutheran Church on Bemidji's Habitat Task Force, as well as attending weekly Bible study, working with our church's women's group and also occasionally serving as a chauffeur for people with needs for local transportation.



Nancy Streightiff

Donation Receipt Changes in 2009



310 Fourth Street
PO Box 3118
Bemidji, MN 56619

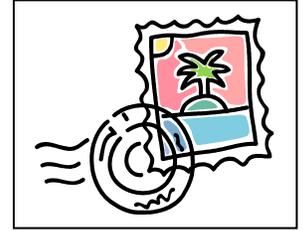
PHONE:
(218-444-6580)

E-MAIL:
bcfs@paulbunyan.net

*"Live simply, so
that others may
simply live"
-Mother Theresa*

There will be some changes in how we record and report to individuals and groups on their donations. Due to the high cost of postage we will only send out one receipt per year. We will keep a running account of your donations throughout 2009 and send you a total for tax purposes at the

end of the year. In the past we tried to acknowledge your generous gifts with a thank you more often during a fiscal year, but we have realized you would certainly understand that the money spent on postage would be better spent on food for our clients.



The Executive Board for the BCFS includes:

- President: Bill Beyer
- Vice-Pres: Nancy Streightiff
- Treasurer: Lori Brama
- Secretary: Deb Heineman
- Coordinator: Carolyn Hegland
- Manager: Myrtle Smetak
- Interviewers: Debra Hawthorne
June Roxtrom

Need a speaker?

If your organization or club needs a speaker and would like to hear more about the BCFS we would be glad to attend a meeting and share information with your group.

About Our Organization..

Many new faces are appearing at area food shelves. Children and senior citizens are among the growing number of needy being affected by high food and fuel prices, unemployment, rising medical and prescription expenses and a multitude of other factors. Minnesota Hunger Partners said one in 17 Minnesotans rely on a food shelf at least once during the course of a year. Together we can make a difference in our community. No one should suffer from hunger when we have the means to help. Please consider becoming a "Friend of the Food Shelf".

Yes, I would like to become a "Friend of the Food Shelf" and receive regular mailings or e-mails to keep me informed.

Name _____

Address _____

E-mail address _____

Please mail this form to the following mailing address or drop it off at the food shelf.

BEMIDJI FOOD SHELF
PO Box 3118
Bemidji, MN 55619