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Phone: 444-6580
Open: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10:00-3:30 and
the third Monday of each month until 7 PM*



Looking back in 2009

We were very concerned this year that we would not be able to sustain services to the increasing number of clients who needed our help due to the state of the economy. We certainly were “those of little faith.” Our supporters came through with flying colors and the donations went up in proportion to the need. Our fall food drives and fundraisers exceeding our hopes and new events took place to help keep the shelves full. Truly this is a wonderful community in which to live and work. Neighbors helping neighbors is the Bemidji way! Here are some of the statistics that may be of interest to you. Hunger is a reality, but together we do make a difference.



2009 Statistics

Total Families Served	5,118
Ages 0-17	9,286
Ages 18-65	8,878
Age over 65	361
Total Individuals	18,525
Total Food Donated	222,571
Total Food Distributed	331,506

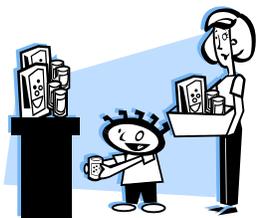


Items we can always use!

We are often asked by donors what it is that we need the most. The following items are ones that we often run short on and can always use. Watch for them to go on sale.

***Tuna, Saltine Crackers, Rice,
Hot and Cold Cereal and Peanut Butter.***

Thanks for a Successful 2009



In 2008 there was indeed a huge concern about the increase in need for services at the food shelf. However, to our relief, the residents of Beltrami County in true holiday enthusiasm responded to our pleas for help. Donations poured in from various organizations, clubs, churches, businesses and individuals. We are fortunate to live and work in a community where neighbors take care of each other in such a generous way. There was seldom a time when we had to fill a box with less than the usual choices of food. Whenever we started to run short of any particular item it seemed as though it would show up on our doorstep or a cash donation would arrive in time to order the needed item. This year there were such creative ideas on raising funds or collecting foods that sparked some interesting food drives. We want to thank those who took time to organize those events at such a busy time of the year! We do appreciate those folks who take the initiative to plan such an event, see it through to completion and deliver the much needed items that they have collected directly to the food shelf. You can't imagine how helpful that is to those of us who are busy just keeping the day to day operations going.

Thank you all for your help!

18 local churches provide over 125 volunteers who keep the BCFS running smoothly.

March FoodShare Month



Before the next newsletter is printed March will be upon us. This is a reminder that during the month of March our Food Shelf works with Minnesota Food Share to collect additional funds. We not only keep all of the donations of money and food right here in Bemidji, but the amount we receive also determines the grants we will receive during the next year from Minnesota Food Share. The more money and food we collect during the month of March, the more we will receive next year in grants. This "incentive allocation" gives us free monies that we can spend at the North Country Food Bank where our dollars go much farther than we can spend in local stores. North Country Food Bank purchases its food from large corporations or has it donated and passes the savings on to food shelves in their region. Some of the products are TEFAP or The Emergency Food Assistance Programs USDA Commodities which we get for .04 cents per pound.

Any support of food or money during the month of March is greatly appreciated. You could plan your own food drives, get together with friends and neighbors to collect cash or food, attend one of our fundraisers mentioned in this newsletter or drop off donations right at the Food Shelf.....310 4th St. (Right across from city hall) We are open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. All donations meant for March Food Share month must come to us between March 1st and March 31st to qualify.

For ideas on how you can help drop us an e-mail at bcfs@paulbunyan.net or write to us at PO Box 3118. This is a great time to invite one of us to speak at your club, church or organization.

Carolyn Hegland

Did you
Know?....

Value Smart, a Bemidji Consignment store will accept items that you no longer want and the proceeds from those sales 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.

Yet Another way to Make Donating Easier for You!

You can now donate on-line and print your receipt immediately! Just go to the BCFS web-site and click on the donate button! Or if you have friends or relatives that live out of town, but have an interest in donating to a worthy cause, they can do so just by turning on their computer! Donations can be made in memory or honor of someone too!

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!

See us at:

<http://www.paulbunyan.net/bemidjicommunityfoodshelf/>



Other Ways to Help!

Help raise money for the food shelf by saving UPC barcodes for cash! When the food shelf receives a check it will be spent directly on additional food to put on the shelves. It's amazing how quickly they add up! Save your "Our Family" UPC barcodes on any of the 2000 items found in our local groceries and the food shelf will earn \$25.00 for each bundle of 500 we send to the company....It's that easy!

We are also selling [Community Day Coupon Booklets](#) for Herberger's. The BCFS keeps the \$5.00 donation and you get a coupon for \$10.00 off a purchase! There is also a 30% off coupon and several 20% off coupons too. You can purchase these at the food shelf or offer to help sell them for us as a way to volunteer. Just call Carolyn at 766-2766.



• **Applebee's Pancake Breakfast**

We will be having another fundraiser at Applebee's this year. On Saturday, February 20th from 8 until 10 AM you may enjoy a pancake breakfast for only a \$5.00 donation to the Bemidji Community Food Shelf. We are allowed to keep the funds we raise which we will use towards our Minnesota Food Share Campaign. We want to thank the staff at the restaurant for all they do to help us with this project. The food and their time are donated for such fundraisers. Thanks also goes to the nursing students who have volunteered to help serve!

Tickets can be purchased in advance at the food shelf or at the door. **If you can not attend consider buying a ticket that we can give to someone who may need a good meal. You could help someone in need and the food shelf at the same time by simply purchasing extra tickets.**



Milk Buckets *(Edited for March Foodshare Campaign)*

My grandfather is an old Swedish farmer who still lives on his farm...still wakes up with the birds. He is one of a shrinking number in our country who know what it is to hook up the horses to go to town or to carry the cooking water up from the creek, to live tied to the earth and what grows in it, or die by the devastation of drought or flood or infestation. He knows what happens to a town when the train doesn't go through, what it's like to plow a field on foot, and crank the front end of a car to get it started. He's known loss from polio, home births, the Great Depression, both World Wars. He has stories to tell.

He's told the story often of the cow he bought in the early 1940's. He was a young farmer and a new father during WW II, a difficult time economically, a difficult time for farmers. He sold my grandmother's new refrigerator and bought, instead a cow. This felt, undoubtedly, like a huge step backward. But times were tough; he was farming by day and working as hired labor by night, and still not earning a living. The cow could provide milk for the baby, could give him calves to sell or raise, and could provide the meat his family would need through the winter. It felt like the thing they needed to survive.

But then the cow got sick and died – before it had provided enough milk or calves or meat. It was a greater loss than they could imagine surviving – the cow was the only power they had over their poverty. My grandfather remembers vividly, the long sad walk from the barn to the house to tell my grandmother the bad news. Tomorrow's sustenance - hope itself - had died.

When my grandfather woke early the next morning, and stepped outside to start the day's chores, he found on his doorstep a fresh bucket of milk – a gift from a friend or neighbor, who upon hearing about the cow had quietly brought milk from his own cow in the early morning hours. The next morning on the doorstep – more milk, along with some eggs and a loaf of bread. The next day, more. And it continued – this daily anonymous doorstep providing – until a neighbor's cow had a calf, and the neighbor traded it to my grandfather for labor.

It was never spoken of in their small farming village – how all the neighbors and friends quietly made sure my grandma, grandpa and mom made it through to the other side of loss. The sustenance just appeared and kept coming.

Now, almost 70 years later, we find ourselves once again at war, in bleak economic times. The bad news keeps coming: lost jobs, lost homes, hungry families, disconnected utilities, violence in homes and nations, failing systems. It feels like everybody's cows are dying.

I think of my grandfather's cow story. How very different the ending could have been, if not for those buckets of milk and the caring they represented. How beautiful that, despite the many losses my grandfather has known, he has also known rare, true community. The kind of community that happens when people who may or may not approve of each other, who may or may not agree with each other, who may or may not call each other friends, still know how to take care of one another.

And in that experience, I envy him. It is the community I seek, want to be part of, hope for, and need. It is the community we can create – you and I – as we become the neighbors who, in the quiet of the night, deliver buckets of fresh milk to the doorsteps of our own neighbors in need – and keep them coming, until the new calves are born.



Meet our Manager/Interviewer: Myrtle Smetak

Hello, I am Myrtle Smetak, the managing interviewer for the Bemidji Community Food Shelf. I started to work in 1989 and have enjoyed working with the many volunteers and staff since then. I am the mother of nine very busy children. Four of my five sons live in Bemidji. Michael Jacobs works at the Olson-Schwartz Funeral Home and Walmart. David Jacobs works at Northwoods Panel Board and works with a young man in the ODC program. David has one son in Alabama who has three sons and three daughters! Daniel Jacobs and Kristy have a son, Thomas. Wayne Jacobs also lives here and has a daughter Tyann. Keith Jacobs lives in Texas, is married and has a son and daughter. My daughter, Patricia Gabriel recently retired from the Social Security and has moved here from Brainerd. Diane Jacobs is a registered nurse at NCRH and lives with her friend Mark. Her son Kevin farms and drives truck. Daughter Karen Engesather and her husband Randy live in Grafton where they both work in a bank. Kathy Wiltse lives in Las Vegas with her husband, James, where they both work on the air base. They have two boys and one girl. Eric has three children and Kyle has a daughter. Their daughter Jessica and her husband have a daughter Nevaeh.



Myrtle has been with BCFS for 21 years.

I am a life time member of new Salem Lutheran Church where I am very active. I also enjoy volunteering at Nielson Place where my husband Bob was confined to the Rehab Center before passing away in May of 2003. While he was a patient I began volunteering and have continued since then. On January 27 of this year I was commissioned as a Befriender and will be visiting residents through the chaplaincy program at Neilson Place. I am very much looking forward to this.

My hobbies are, of course, my grandchildren who I dearly love spending time with. I love to knit, I and read when I have the time. As time permits I am taking classes at Bemidji State University.

I am deeply committed to the Bemidji Community Food Shelf. I see myself as helping the less fortunate who need a meal or a kind face that can offer them a friendly helping hand and a smile.

Matthew 25 (35-40) For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me. Then the righteous will answer him, Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you? And the king will answer them, truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.

Myrtle Smetak



We'll recycle your old ink cartridges!!!!

The food shelf has an OfficeMax perks account that can be used to help pay for our printing costs. When we purchase items or if we turn in old ink cartridges we get reward credits that can be used towards our next order. It is amazing how fast these add up and help us a great deal. Every dollar we save on office supplies and printing costs is a dollar we can spend on food! Just put your old cartridges in a small plastic bag and drop them off at the food shelf and we'll recycle them.

We do use a lot of paper in the day to day operation of the food shelf. If you ever have an extra ream that you feel you could donate it would be greatly appreciated. We use mostly white, but for an occasional poster we can use colored sheets.

Feinstein Grant



310 Fourth Street
PO Box 3118
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(218-444-6580)

E-MAIL:
bcfs@paulbunyan.net

In March we not only multiply our donations through Hunger Solutions, but also through a grant from Alan Feinstein's Foundation. An original 1919 Babe Ruth contract, owned by Mr. Feinstein, sold for \$996,000 at Sotheby's auction on June 10, 2005. He uses all proceeds to donate to anti-hunger agencies. The BCFS received a certificate of honor last fall signed by Mr. Feinstein for the work that we do.



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.

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

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 SHELFF
PO Box 3118
Bemidji, MN 55619