

Bemidji Community Food Shelf Newsletter

From the President Bill Beyer

July 2013

For the past five years as a volunteer and President of the Board, I have been overwhelmed by the presence of God here at the Food Shelf: in the food and money that has been given, in the work of our board, staff and volunteers, and especially in those who come through our doors. I have been energized and challenged by what God is doing: eighteen churches working together, over 300 volunteers, small and large businesses, clubs, organizations and individuals all standing up to declare, "WE CARE!" about those who are hungry, and that together we can make a difference.

Now that God has blessed us with this bigger space, I believe that God is calling us to focus on what God is doing in this place. It seems at times that every week there is a new opportunity to serve, not only in this wonderful building, but also in the garden. Through Linda Kingery, Executive Director of the University of Minnesota Northwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, a University of Minnesota College of Design team created a three-phase garden plan for the next five years. With our neighbor, the Developmental Achievement Center, we are working together to harvest rain water from our roof, compost fruits and vegetables left over from our food shelf, teach clients how to grow a box garden, and develop future space for a berry patch, orchard and vegetable garden. Walking paths, wheel chair accessible garden boxes and a gazebo are all a part of the design. Volunteers and funding will impact how much and how soon our garden will become a reality.

Our new facility is also allowing us to reach out to the next generation with opportunities to serve. Groups from Trek North, Bemidji High School, Bemidji State University, churches, the Boys and Girls Club, Scouts and JROTC have all worked restocking shelves, repackaging bulk foods, cleaning and doing whatever else we need help with. We have had groups volunteering from businesses like Target and Affinity Plus. Entire families have worked from one hour to one day. Sentence to Serve volunteers as well as individuals needing community service hours are here every week. Over 26 groups have come to the food shelf to volunteer, not to mention the hundreds of community members who work on food drives and funding projects. The numbers are staggering. For example, in the first two weeks in May six groups gave 230 hours of service, which would have cost over \$1,600 if we paid them minimum wage. In the garden volunteers will be needed to plant trees, build boxes, and prepare the soil for our raised garden. This is all a part of Phase 1, which will give us an opportunity to try different crops and set us up to provide opportunities for our clients to learn how to garden.

The opportunities are here and growing. Come and see how you can get involved. Your prayers, financial support and gifts that God has given you may be just what we all need, the opportunity to grow together as a community! Thanks for your partnership.

Join BCFS at the Beltrami County Fair

Bemidji Community Food Shelf will have a booth in the Commercial Exhibits Building at this year's Beltrami County Fair, July 31 –August 4. Stop by to find out about our garden project. Pick up a "Proud Supporter of" bumper sticker. Learn how you can sustain our mission through your food and cash donations, and by sharing your time and talents.

Garden Wish List

Garden Tractor with mower, Tiller, Gas powered string trimmer, Hoses, Rakes, Shovels, Hoes, Cultivators, Wheelbarrows or Garden Carts, Watering Cans

Call 218-444-6580 to donate

Nielson Foundation and Local Businesses Plant the First Seeds



Master Plan for BCFS Garden

A \$5,000 grant from the George W. Nielson Foundation, along with generous in-kind contributions from Dick's Plumbing, Lakes Concrete and Hills Plumbing and Heating will get the garden project off and running. A compost turning unit will be constructed (bottom left in illustration). A rain water harvesting unit will collect water off the warehouse roof. When completed, the farm will encompass approximately four acres. The mission includes: growing fresh fruits and vegetables for BCFS families, providing meaningful employment for Developmental Achievement Center clients, teaching BCFS families to grow their own produce, providing new opportunities for community volunteers, and promoting local sustainable agricultural practices. To support this exciting project call 218-444-6580.

2013 Statistics Tell Story of Increasing Demand

As of June 28, 2013, BCFS has served 8.7% more

families and 10.7% more individuals than over the same period in 2012. Since our move to the new facility pounds of food served has increased 43%, due primarily to our change in policy in not serving walk-ins, greater store donations and in more accurate weighing of each family's order.

The board of directors is currently asking clients to prioritize items on the shopping list. Resources can then be used to provide foods clients need most.

BCFS Executive Board and Staff

BCFS is a registered 501c3 nonprofit corporation with the sole mission to meet the emergency food needs of families in Beltrami County, Minnesota.

Board President: Bill Beyer

Vice-President: Tom Gray

Treasurer: Edith Hoyum

Secretary: Carolyn Hegland

Coordinator: Jack Judkins

Interviewers: June Roxstrom, Kathy Paulson, Patty Gabriel

Bookkeeper: Mishele McKain

Repackaging Room Saves Money, Engages Volunteers

BCFS has the only certified "Clean Room" in a food shelf in Northern Minnesota. Made possible by a generous donation from Calvary Lutheran Church, our clean room is keeping many volunteers busy breaking bulk foods into smaller portions. In addition to dry beans and rice, we have repackaged wild rice, breakfast cereal, popcorn, corn meal and wheat flour, oatmeal, pasta, sugar and cheese powder. Up to six people can work in the room, in teams of three each. Bulk foods are more economical to buy than pre-packaged foods, which makes the clean room a great investment for the future sustainability of BCFS.

Valspar Donates Floor Paint

Valspar Corporation, in cooperation with the Northwest Minnesota Foundation, is donating 18 gallons of floor paint to BCFS. Volunteers will prepare the floor in the store area for repainting and apply the new paint in mid-July. BCFS will be closed on from July 12-15 to allow the paint to dry completely.

Open Your Heart July Challenge

Open Your Heart to the Hungry and Homeless is challenging food shelves across Minnesota with to raise at least \$5,000 during July. Donations will be matched dollar for dollar up to \$5,000. Double your donation in July!

Affinity Plus Steps Up

Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union Bemidji employees chose BCFS as the recipient of \$2,381.50 raised during a May-June auto loan promotion. Affinity employees also donated their time as volunteers on June 26. Six workers repackaged an entire pallet of bulk granola. Way to go Affinity.

Target Crew Plants Pallets

On June 20, a large crew from Target planted tomatoes, peppers, green beans and beets in recycled warehouse pallets. Pallet gardens are designed to grow a lot of food in small spaces. We hope to offer pallet gardens to clients next summer.

BCFS Volunteers Honored

Long time BCFS volunteers, Loren Hoyum and Roy Blackwood were recently honored by Bemidji Area United Way for their dedication to feeding the hungry. Loren manages BCFS warehouse, where he supervises donations from local grocers and facilitates food storage and distribution. Roy picks up donations at Walmart every Wednesday and has been instrumental in remodeling projects in

our new building. A hearty thank you to these two kind and generous volunteers.

BCFS Joins United Way

For the first time in its history Bemidji Community Food Shelf is a United Way agency. We will receive a \$10,000 grant from United Way of Bemidji to purchase much needed food items. We appreciate the show of confidence by the United Way board and hope to benefit from the collective strength of the nonprofit community of the Bemidji area.

BCFS Welcomes RSVP

Many of the volunteers who serve our clients are members of Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, a recruiting and placement service for seniors who want to serve their community. We are pleased to offer office space to RSVP Regional Coordinator, Jane Furuseth. Her office hours are 8:30-3:30, M-Th. Find out more about RSVP at 1-800-224-6451.

Coordinator's Corner

A food shelf garden is an idea whose time has come. As demand for our services increases we must find creative ways to feed the hungry. Experienced gardeners know that tiny packets of seeds produce many fresh, delicious meals. Three to four acres of land, when gardened well, will produce tons of fruits and vegetables.

Gardens are not only about food. When communities come together for such projects they are building self-sufficiency. DAC clients learn skills that can be transferred to other settings. Kids learn skills they can build on as they grow up, and adults with a passion for gardening can share their expertise.

The garden will not become a reality without your help. To get involved call 444-6580 or email bcfs@paulbunyan.net.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, BCFS is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, religion, sex, familial status, sexual orientation, and reprisal.



1260 Industrial Park Dr SE, Bemidji, MN 56601

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Bemidji Community Food Shelf Contribution Form

Mail completed form and your tax-deductible contribution to:

BCFS - PO Box 3118 – Bemidji, MN 56619-3118

Here is my tax-deductible gift of \$ _____ to support the work of Bemidji Community Food Shelf.

Name

Address

Email _____ (I wish to receive future newsletters via email.)

Please make check payable to: BCFS

_____ I am interested in volunteering.

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

_____ I am interested in supporting the
garden project.