

A Quarter Century of Hunger-Relief

Twenty-five years ago, an exciting new chapter in the fight against hunger in North Dakota and western Minnesota began to unfold.

After visiting a food bank on a trip to Colorado in 1981, Tony Ingle, Vice President at Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota, began researching the potential for a similar program in the Fargo area. With the help of a community task force, the Greater Fargo-Moorhead Area Food Bank opened its doors on March 22, 1983.

The program was renamed the Great Plains Food Bank after just 15 months to reflect a growing service area and rising food donations. By 1986, over a million pounds of food was being recovered and distributed for those experiencing hunger.

As the need for services continued to grow, innovative programs to recover surplus meals and perishable foods, fresh produce, high-protein products and even surplus new children's clothing were added.

Today, the Great Plains Food Bank distributes over 5.5 million pounds of food to 236 charitable feeding programs in 80 communities each year, helping feed more than 52,000 hungry people in North Dakota and Clay County, Minnesota.

As we reflect on a quarter century of feeding hope, we invite you to review some of the highlights, achievements and challenges along the way.



Together We Are Feeding Hope Thank You

The concept was simple ~ using surplus product from the food industry to feed hungry people. The result has been dramatic ~ more than 60 million meals provided to our neighbors in need these last 25 years.

It has been a remarkable journey that could not have happened without the generosity, compassion and commitment of our many partners. Hundreds of food donors who share surplus product, scores of volunteers who help sort and repackage food, thousands of financial supporters who provide the means for us to collect and distribute the donated food, and hundreds of charitable feeding programs who ensure this food gets into the hands of those who need it most. Together, we are changing lives. Thank You!

As we look to the future, our vision of a hunger-free North Dakota remains steadfast. Developing innovative programs to reach unserved communities, helping local feeding programs expand capacity and reach, tapping new sources of food, and strengthening partnerships between private and public hunger-relief sectors are all new initiatives the Great Plains Food Bank is committed to.

You have been an important part of our first 25 years of service and we look forward to working with you to make the future of our organization and those we serve even brighter as we continue our journey of feeding hope and nourishing lives.



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A time line history of the Great Plains Food Bank 1983-2008

1983 Greater Fargo-Moorhead Area Food Bank, a program of Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota, begins operations out of 2,000 sq. ft. rented space in Union Storage and Transfer Building at 1104 NP Ave. in Fargo. Steve Backsen serves as its first director. With one van and 2 employees, 189,000 pounds of food was distributed to an estimated 21 feeding programs in Fargo-Moorhead the first year.

Food Bank was instrumental in the passage of North Dakota Good Samaritan Law - legislation which provided food producers, growers and distributors with protection from liability.

1984 Name is changed to Great Plains Food Bank to reflect an expanding service area within North Dakota and west central Minnesota.

1986 Annual distribution reaches one million pound mark.



1990 Steve Sellent is hired as the director of GPFB. Food Bank now supplies 130 member agencies, serving an average of 13,400 neighbors in need monthly.



1991 GPFB expands service to charitable programs statewide.

1992 The Daily Bread perishable food and prepared meal recovery program begins. Ten millionth pound of food distributed.



1993 Daily Bread receives a national award for nonprofit innovation and excellence. Check Out Hunger campaign launched in all Fargo-Moorhead grocery stores in support of Daily Bread.

1997 Great Plains Food Bank aids communities in the Red River Valley impacted by record flooding. More than 170 truckloads of food are donated by food companies across the country through America's Second Harvest. 1st Annual Chefs' Gala & Auction event in support of Daily Bread is held.



1998 Annual distribution reaches 4 millions lbs. - almost 4 times that of 1990. Food Bank now serves 195 agencies with 7 employees and 2 trucks.

2000 Warehouse flooding claims 200 pallets of food valued at \$225,000. Incredible community support ensures the Great Plains Food Bank's continued operation. The Great Plains Food Bank moves to new 36,000 sq. ft. distribution facility at 1720 3rd Ave. N in Fargo. This move allows for increased efficiency, expanded capacity and a higher standard of service.

1999 \$2 million Heart to Hand capital campaign is launched to fund a larger warehouse.



Great Plains Food Bank expands its volunteer program, averaging more than 2,000 volunteers annually.



2001 Kids in Distressed Situations (K.I.D.S.) program begins with the support of North Dakota Senator Byron Dorgan to provide surplus new children's clothing. Regional Fresh Produce Initiative launched.

2005 Great Plains Food Bank continues its response to victims of natural disasters by shipping food to America's Second Harvest food banks aiding victims of hurricane Katrina.

2004 Best Buy Food Purchase program added. Great Plains Food Bank secures 3rd truck, allowing for increased food donation pickups in and around the region.

2007 75th million pound of food distributed. Great Plains Food Bank initiates study of North Dakota's charitable food distribution network.

A fleet of refrigerated trucks distributes 5.5 million pounds of food to 236 agencies in 80 communities statewide. Since opening its doors, the Great Plains Food Bank has recovered and distributed 79.7 million pounds of food - touching the lives of 1 in 12 North Dakotans.



2008 Great Plains Food Bank celebrates 25 years of feeding hope and unveils plans to move even closer to our vision of creating a hunger-free North Dakota.

