

Great Plains Food Bank

Sharing *the* Harvest

Summer 2010

No Child Deserves To Go Hungry

Your gifts fight hunger
and feed hope for children
when school is out

what's
INSIDE

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JAN - MAY 2010 WAREHOUSE WEIGH-INS

2.9
MILLION
pounds of food distributed

\$4.4
MILLION
of food recovered

51.9
THOUSAND
people served

91.2
THOUSAND
food baskets provided
through partner agencies

1.51
MILLION
hot meals served by
partner agencies

The primary role of the Great Plains Food Bank is to help feed those suffering from hunger by recovering and distributing surplus food. But in recent years, it has become increasingly clear that we must move beyond our traditional role to achieve our vision of hunger-free communities.

Over the last 18 months, we have implemented six programs to recover and distribute surplus food in new and innovative ways. This year we are focusing on two additional new programs that move beyond our traditional business model that are featured in this issue of *Sharing the Harvest*.

Data from our recent hunger study shows that almost 60% of those using charitable feeding programs still skip on or skip meals because they don't have enough food. At the same time, while most of those individuals are eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, free or reduced price school lunch and other federal nutrition programs, a surprising amount – almost half in some cases – are not enrolled. Our SNAP Outreach Program is designed to provide information on all available nutrition programs, as well as SNAP pre-screening

director's DESK by Steve Sellent



and application assistance for those requiring help beyond what the charitable feeding system can provide.

In order to address growing challenges at local community food pantries we have also developed an Agency Capacity Building Program to provide training, technical assistance, best practices, peer-to-peer networking opportunities and funding for equipment and other infrastructure needs.

This expanded programming to better serve hungry children, families and seniors would not have been possible without you and our amazing network of financial supporters, food donors, volunteers and advocates. Thank you so much for helping us raise the bar in our efforts to fight hunger and feed hope.



New Programs Added to Statewide Food Bank Network

We welcome 15 new partner agencies to our growing network of 251 charitable feeding programs in 93 communities. In addition, our Mobile Food Pantry now delivers to the communities of Bisbee, Dunseith, New Rockford, Rocklake and Sheyenne.

Amidon Community Cupboard – Amidon
Care and Share – Mandan
Cooper House – Fargo
Dunseith Food Pantry – Dunseith
Flasher Food Pantry – Flasher
Hope House – Bismarck
Latter Rain Ministries – Fargo
New Life Baptist Mission – Cannonball

Prairie Lodge – Grand Forks
SENDCAA BackPack Program – Fargo
Spirit of Life Church – Mandan
Stepping Stone Resource Center – Fargo
Tri City Haitian Ministry – Fargo
Welcome House – Bismarck
West Fargo BackPack Program – West Fargo

Building Capacity

with a focus on training and best practices

Our partner agencies are challenged to provide more food and services to a growing number of families, seniors and working adults even as they struggle with limited human, financial and physical resources.

In response, charitable feeding programs around the state are changing their “business as usual” mentality. They are adopting more creative and innovative practices and, more than ever, are searching out support, guidance, ideas and resources.

The Great Plains Food Bank is proud to answer the call. We are busy developing an Agency Capacity Building Program which consists of four main components; training, regional meetings, equipment grants and best practices certification.

Operating a feeding program is a time and labor intensive operation. All too often agencies are run by volunteers who have limited or no training. Several training sessions, to be offered online and in person, are being developed to help build skills and leadership capacity. Topics will range from food safety to fund raising, accessibility to succession planning.

The Great Plains Food Bank in partnership with USDA Rural Development, has begun hosting regional meetings for feeding programs across the state. These meetings provide great networking opportunities for volunteers/staff to hear and learn from other programs and receive training on key topics.

Charitable feeding agencies can also apply for equipment grants (up to \$2,000), funded by the North Dakota State Legislature. Funds may be



▲ The Great Plains Food Bank was awarded \$16,032 from USDA Rural Development to convene regional meetings and training on capacity development around the state. Pictured are Don Warren and Jasper Schneider, USDA Rural Development presenting a check to Melissa Sobolik and Steve Sellent, GPFB.

“Our new freezers make it possible for us to make bulk purchases which lowers food costs, and offer a greater variety of food.” - Domestic Violence Crisis Center, Minot

used to purchase refrigerators, freezers, shelving units, computers, or any piece of equipment that will build their physical capacity to handle and store more perishable food and better serve their clients. To date more than \$28,000 has been granted out!

Finally, later this year we will reveal a best practices certification program – the 5 Star Program. This certification will allow agencies to assess their current state of operation and strive to achieve a five star rating.

The Great Plains Food Bank looks forward to providing these new resources to our partner agencies who do great work on the front lines every day.



▲ Karen Strokland, Richland Wilkin Food Pantry coordinator, works on the new laptop granted to her program.



— Hope —

through challenging times

Ronald and Susan Dahl live in Mohall, North Dakota. Ronald recently retired from civil service in the Air Force and Susan works part time at the Good Samaritan Center. At 65, they were looking forward to enjoying their retirement, but in 2008 their life and plans for the future changed. Due to challenges experienced by their daughter, they became parents again, serving as guardians to their four grandchildren:

Samantha (16), Patrick (7), Isabella (5) and Matthew (18). Life as they knew it, no longer existed.

Thrown a lifeline

Verna Schoenberg, coordinator of the Zion Food Pantry in Mohall, a Great Plains Food Bank partner agency, reached out to the Dahl family encouraging them to stop by after learning of their new situation. This support has become a lifeline.

“It helps instill hope, that things are going to work out for the best... in the way God wants them to work,” says Ronald with humbling optimism.

Susan compares the food pantry visits to that of Christmas morning. Sometimes the children accompany her to the food pantry, other times they are anxiously waiting at home. “They get so excited to see what’s included this time,” she says.

"Donors should know that their help makes an enormous difference."

Stretched resources

The Dahl's have made great strides over the past year. The kids are all well adjusted, doing great in school and enjoying their new family and home. Matthew, the oldest, graduated high school in May and Isabella, the youngest, will start kindergarten this fall.

With school out for the summer, Ronald and Susan face a new challenge. Food resources are stretched even thinner now that the children are eating three meals a day at home.

To meet this new challenge, they turn again to the food pantry in their community. With thankfulness in her heart Susan shares, "It's just been wonderful to have the food pantry... for the best interest of the children... to make sure they are healthy and hopeful."

Giving thanks

The Dahl family is in an unexpected place. Your gifts to the Great Plains Food Bank allow us to supply our network of 251 charitable feeding programs, like Zion Food Pantry, with the food needed to support deserving families like the Dahls.

"Donors should know that their help makes an enormous difference," says Susan. "We want to say 'Thank you from the bottom of our hearts'. All of our hearts."

If you would like to join us in the fight to end hunger and feed hope, call (701) 232-6219 or visit: www.lssnd.org/GreatPlainsFoodBank.



SNAP Program connects people to the help they need

Embarrassment, pride and confusing paperwork often keep people from connecting with the food assistance they need.

In partnership and collaboration with the North Dakota Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) office, the Great Plains Food Bank is working to help clients seeking emergency food assistance at food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters receive the additional food support they may need from federal nutrition programs.

According to our recent *Hunger in America 2010* study, many people who are eligible for SNAP (food stamp) benefits aren't receiving them. They may seek out a food basket to address their emergency needs, but don't tap into the resources that can assist them in a more consistent, long-term basis as they strive toward self-sufficiency. With SNAP support, individuals can redirect their limited financial resources toward rent, utility costs, medical care, childcare and transportation.

Our SNAP Outreach Program helps partner agencies open lines of communication with their clients. Food Bank staff is onsite at food pantries, shelters and soup kitchens answering questions about SNAP, prescreening clients for eligibility, and providing application assistance.

In North Dakota only 57% of eligible clients receive SNAP benefits. The national average is 67%. Our goal, through client support and education, is to ensure individuals and families struggling with hunger are aware of, and have access to, all the nutritional resources available to them.

To learn more about SNAP, contact Melissa Sobolik at msobolik@lssnd.org.

"We were too embarrassed to sign up for food stamps. We thought others might need it more than us."



Thanks to our Partners

A. Kindred Lutheran Church Kids Care Club created and sold love themed greeting cards to raise funds for Daily Bread. Their "Love Your Neighbors" project raised \$695, providing food for 6,950 meals for people who are hungry. Way to go!

B. Tim Malcolm and Kirsten L'Orange, founders of The Civic Projects, made a stop at the GPFB on their 14,000 mile cross country journey to volunteer in 50 states over 50 days to promote social awareness and community service.



C. Letter carriers in Cass and Clay counties collected a record 69,848 lbs. of food during their annual Stamp Out Hunger food drive held May 8th. Food collected will be used by the GPFB to supply shelters, soup kitchens and food pantries in the area. Pictured sorting food is letter carrier Rachel Freehauf from the Prairiewood Station in Fargo.

D. The GPFB has teamed up with Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring to launch the Hunger Free North Dakota Garden Project. Our goal is to grow and distribute a half million pounds of fresh produce to feed individuals in need. Volunteers are needed to plant, tend and harvest the gardens; distribute the produce; and help people incorporate the produce into their diets. For more information visit www.agdepartment.com/Programs/LocalFoods.htm.



F

E. The Minot Sunrise Rotary Club and the U.S. Durum Growers Association are partnering to collect and process 80,000 lbs. of pasta (650,000 servings). Farmers and other organizations have already committed bushels of durum to the project. Dakota Growers Pasta and Philadelphia Macaroni (Minot Milling) will produce the pasta this fall and deliver it to the Great Plains Food Bank for statewide distribution in January 2011.

F. Rachel Clark and Kristi Ulrich with the East Cass County chapter of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans presented Steve Sellent, Great Plains Food Bank with a \$1,000 check in honor and recognition of all their regional volunteers throughout North Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

G. The Otto Bremer Foundation recently awarded \$100,000 to the Great Plains Food Bank to expand food recovery efforts, extend food distribution into under-served counties, build capacity at partner feeding programs, and support collaborative efforts between the charitable and federal food assistance programs. Pictured in photo is Great Plains Food Bank truck driver, Damion Nystrom, displaying a 40 pound box of food distributed by our Mobile Food Pantry - one of the programs supported by this grant.



G

Additional Partner Projects:

- The Grammy nominated Christian pop rock band, Newsboys, shared their commitment to end hunger by asking concert goers to bring nonperishable food items to their Fargo concert in support of the Great Plains Food Bank.
- The Bismarck-Mandan Symphony Orchestra, through Orchestras Feeding America mobilized their musicians, staff, volunteers and the local community to collect 500 lbs. of nonperishable food to be distributed by the GPFB in support of emergency feeding programs in their community.

30 Ways in 30 Days

Ending hunger in our communities is a shared responsibility. Every person, church, school, and business can lend their commitment by giving a little of their time, voice and financial resources to feed a lot.

This September is **Hunger Action Month** and we challenge you to take the pledge and share what you and your family intend to do to end hunger in your community.

30 Ways in 30 Days resources will be available on our website in August to help engage your children, your place of work and your community in the nationwide campaign to mobilize everyone in America to take action in the fight against domestic hunger.

To learn more about Hunger Action Month visit: www.lssnd.org/GreatPlainsFoodBank

Let's Move

Child Care Resource and Referral, another program of Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota, is teaming up with the North Dakota Department of Health to launch – *Let's Move*.

The goal of the *Let's Move* initiative launched by first lady, Michelle Obama, is to solve the epidemic of childhood obesity within a generation. The initiative will work toward making healthy food choices more accessible and helping children be more physically active.

CCR&R trainers and consultants will work with child care providers on ways to incorporate more physical activity into the day. A key focus of this work will be reducing children's "screen time", such as watching TV, computer activities and video games.

To learn more about the work of CCR&R and Let's Move visit: www.NDChildcare.org

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Great Plains Food Bank



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A program of
Lutheran Social Services
of North Dakota



a member of
**FEEDING
AMERICA**

The Great Plains Food Bank strives for a hunger-free North Dakota and western Minnesota by recovering and distributing surplus food, engaging in community partnerships and advocating for social change.

Chefs Stir Up Support

Annual Gala & Auction
set for October 6th



The Chefs' Gala & Auction, supporting Daily Bread, has quickly become one of the region's most anticipated evenings of the year with chefs from over 25 participating restaurants tempting the taste buds of gala guests with their award winning dishes. At a cost of just 10 cents per meal, Daily Bread can recover and distribute 10 meals for every dollar raised through this event, making it one of the most cost effective hunger-relief programs in the country.

Calendar JUL 10

July 1-31: Check Out Hunger

Visit all six Hornbacher's grocery stores the month of July and join them in the fight to end hunger. Just ask your cashier to add \$1, \$3 or \$5 to your grocery bill at check out.

July 1: Mobile Food Pantry, Garrison, Center and McClusky

July 13: Great Plains Food Bank Regional Meeting, Dickinson

July 29: Mobile Food Pantry, Watford City, Grassy Butte and Killdeer

AUG 10

August 1: Tickets go on sale for Chefs' Gala & Auction

Tickets are \$65 per person. Reserved tables of four, six or ten are available. Guarantee your spot by calling (701) 232-2624 or visit www.fmchefsgala.org

August 5-7: WE Fest, Detroit Lakes, MN

Great Plains Food Bank volunteers will be collecting donations from country music fans and serving meals to VIP ticket holders at this summer's event. Our goal is to raise \$7,500 to assist our hungry neighbors in need.

SEP 10

September 1-30: Hunger Action Month

To learn how you can take action to end hunger in your community during this month long campaign, visit www.lssnd.org/GreatPlainsFoodBank/HAM.

September 23: Mobile Food Pantry, Dunseith

September 30: Mobile Food Pantry, Rocklake, Bisbee and New Rockford

OCT 10

October 5: Mobile Food Pantry, Garrison, Center and McClusky

October 6: 13th Annual Chefs' Gala & Auction

Ramada Plaza Suites Crystal Ballroom, Fargo. 5:30 to 8:30 PM

October 28: Mobile Food Pantry, Watford City, Grassy Butte and Killdeer