

Food for Thought

The Newsletter of The Food Bank of Siouxland, Inc.

FALL 2024



FOOD BANK



OF SIOUXLAND INC.

Leading Siouxland in the fight against hunger.



Food Bank of Siouxland, Inc.

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Check us out on
Facebook, Instagram,
and LinkedIn!



Dear Friends,

The Food Bank of Siouxland staff and board have had a tremendous year to be proud of. The operations team has implemented a barcoding system, which makes inventory maintenance easier. In turn, we are able to receive & distribute products faster.

The relationships team has successfully written grants for other needed equipment upgrades in the warehouse, including a personal lift and lift stacker. You can read more about these updates on page 3.

These improvements allow us to continue to focus on our network of over 100 agencies that are on the frontlines of food relief in our community. In 2023, we saw an average of 3,803 households/families a month, representing 13,475 individuals. So far in 2024, we see 4,198 households and 15,809 individuals visit pantries a month. This is backed up by the release of the Map the Meal Gap numbers from Feeding America. In the most recent study, 1 in 9 adults and 1 in 5 children are food insecure in Siouxland.

Food can come through product donations from the community or purchased with community donations. We are seeing increases in community product donations, with an over 106,000-pound increase from 2023.

Staff and I are most excited to see higher donation amounts from Scouting for Food (1,000 lb. increase) and Stamp Out Hunger – Letter Carriers Food Drive (5,000 lb. increase). Purchasing food fills in the gaps product donations do not. Fruit, peanut butter, and ready-to-eat pasta continue to be helpful to Siouxland families.

We are a small staff of 13 here at the Food Bank of Siouxland. We make up a stronger network with all the donors, volunteers, and agencies throughout Siouxland. I know I cannot distribute over 3.4 million pounds of food by myself. With your help, whether it is volunteering, donating funds, donating food, or sharing our SNAP posts via social media, all these little actions add up, giving hope to friends in need.



Gratefully,

Jake Wanderscheid
Executive Director
of the Food Bank
of Siouxland

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Agency Spotlight: *Dakota County Voices for Food*

This fall, we want to bring your attention to a wonderful and hard-working pantry in Nebraska! Dakota County Voices for Food has been a Mobile Pantry with the Food Bank of Siouxland since 2016. In that time, they have distributed over 430,000 lbs. to the Dakota County Community. This incredible amount of food was distributed with a focus on providing fresh produce and good nutrition. Voices for Food operates two grant-funded gardens, manages 104 volunteers, and runs a community produce collection program. In the last five years, the organization has averaged 16,000 lbs. of produce annually, which is shared with food-insecure neighbors in Siouxland. The Dakota County Mobile Pantry, located in Dakota City, Nebraska, distributed food to over 750 households in 2023 alone!

Voices for Food also operates a 10-member food council, which works to address food insecurity in Dakota County. They have become a major help to the pantries in the community, offering fresh produce, their expertise in distribution, and grants for much-needed pantry infrastructure.



Voices for Food is always growing and looking for additional volunteers, both for the Mobile Food Pantry held monthly, as well as help in the gardens.

If you are interested in volunteering for the Council, Pantry, or Produce Delivery, please reach out to Brenda Sale at the Extension Office 402-987-2140 or email at bsale2@unl.edu.

If you are interested in volunteering in the gardens, contact Master Gardener Marion Cain at 712-389-2478 or email at marioncain@mac.com.

Donor Spotlight: *Wells Enterprises*



The Food Bank of Siouxland is an organization built on community support. Much of the help we receive comes through product or monetary donations from local food producers whose missions align with ours. Our friends at Wells Enterprises aim to sweeten life and share joy, and our team can tell you firsthand they certainly do!

Wells' number one focus is making sure that kids and families in our community have their needs met, so they've never turned down an opportunity to ensure everyone in Siouxland is fed. Every semester during the school year, Wells sends a group of volunteers to the Food Bank to help pack sacks for our Backpack Program: *Food for Kids*. This program provides food for five- to eleven-year-old students to take

home over the weekend when school meals aren't available. This last year, Wells went above and beyond by making a gift in honor of their 110th anniversary. This gift supported not only our Backpack Program, but also helped us launch our Holiday Harvest boxes. Thanks to Wells, we were able to kick off the holidays in a much bigger way than we had anticipated. These boxes contain sides typically found on celebratory tables around the fall and winter holidays during a time when financial stressors can become magnified.

From providing Board leadership to event sponsorships and volunteers, Wells has given the Food Bank more than we could have ever asked for. The Wells team is a mainstay at our annual events: the Siouxland Food Festival and Golf Classic. Their support of these events, which goes far beyond providing ice cream treats for all, makes a huge difference in so many facets, including new ideas, planning, and day-of implementation of the event. Each September, as we Celebrate Our Friends, Wells once again steps in and provides the Wells Visitor Center and Ice Cream Parlor, a fabulous space to make our agencies, volunteers, and supporters feel love and appreciation.

The next time you encounter an employee from Wells, please join us in thanking them for all they do to ensure that no one in Siouxland has to go hungry. Fighting hunger is a community effort and the entire Wells community is an important part of this effort. Thank you, Wells Enterprises, for sweetening life and sharing your joy in Siouxland!

MRHD & Chamber Celebration

Can you imagine an accountant without a calculator? What about a contractor without a hammer or a cosmetologist without scissors?

It's hard to imagine, but all these jobs could still be done without the correct tools. These individuals would have to be creative and certainly wouldn't be able to work as effectively as they could given the correct tools. Since the Food Bank of Siouxland began in 1991, our staff has been without some very important tools.

Thanks to our friends at MRHD, the Food Bank of Siouxland was the recipient of two grants that provided our warehouse staff with tools that will make work in the warehouse more efficient. In October of 2023, the Food Bank of Siouxland received an Impact Match Grant to purchase a personal lift and a pallet lift stacker for our warehouse. The personal lift helps our warehouse staff get a better view of items placed high up and helps us to maintain a clean warehouse by helping staff reach items that would otherwise need to be taken down, cleaned, and replaced. The pallet lift stacker allows our warehouse staff to easily maneuver pallets without the use of a forklift. Both machines cut time off from regular maintenance tasks and allow staff additional time to fulfill mission-driven tasks.

Not even two months later, in December, MRHD surprised our team with a Discretionary Grant to complete a barcoding project that has been in the works since 2017! The barcoding system assists with placement of products, warehouse zoning, and better inventory systems, ensuring



easy, accurate ordering for our Agency Partners. This system has been transformative for warehouse operations. In addition to improved accuracy, this once again saves our small team time, allowing us a deeper focus on our mission of "Leading Siouxland in the Fight Against Hunger!"

On May 7, 2024, the Food Bank Board of Directors, staff, the Siouxland Chamber of Commerce, Agency Partners, and valued community members helped us to celebrate the implementation of these three new tools along with 25 years as members of the Siouxland Chamber of Commerce!

As an organization, we are so grateful for the kindness of others! The work done by our team at the Food Bank of Siouxland would not be possible without the assistance of our agency partners, volunteers, and supporters.

Board Member Spotlight: *Mary Helen Gibson*



Meet Board Member Mary Helen Gibson. Mary Helen was raised in Wheaton, Illinois. She attended the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign in the College of Agriculture, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, earning her Bachelor of Science degree. Following college, Mary Helen moved to Northwest Iowa and has remained here ever

since. She completed her Master of Science degree at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa.

Mary Helen is a long-time Human Resources Professional and worked at Floyd Valley Healthcare in Le Mars, Iowa for

25 years. Currently, she is the HR Director at American Pop Corn Company proudly supporting the Jolly Time brand.

From cardboard boxes, plastic buckets, sponsorships, volunteers, board members, popcorn donations, and more, Mary Helen joins a legacy of longtime support from the Jolly Time American Pop Corn company.

Mary Helen and her husband, Bob, live in Sioux City and together have six children and 10 grandchildren. They enjoy playing golf, traveling, and spending time with their two dogs, Dodger and Annabelle.

"It is an honor and a privilege serving as a Board member with the Food Bank of Siouxland. FBS is such an important part of our community. It feels great helping to support their cause."

2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kelli Meister, *President*
 Dave Washburn, *Vice President*
 Chris Osborn, *Treasurer*
 Jessika Evans, *Secretary*

Tracey Akins
 Doug Fisher
 Alejandra Flores
 Mary Helen Gibson
 Mike Gormally
 William Hale
 Jessica Harms
 Alicia Krohn
 Brad Krommenhoek
 Colby Lessmann
 Ross Rocklin
 Diane Schoenrock
 Les Wilt
 Dan Witten

FOOD BANK STAFF 2024

Jacob Wanderscheid
Executive Director

Valerie Petersen
Associate Executive Director

Jamie Bockelmann
Operations Director

Calvin Grage
Food Sourcing Associate

Tiffany Kissinger
Program and Administrative Manager

Sidney Marks
External Development & Communications Associate

Liam Parry
Agency Relations Manager

Devyn Reilly
Internal Development & Communications Associate

Royce Atkinson
Driver / Warehouse Assistant

Keisha Byrne
Warehouse Assistant

Tom Kuchera
Warehouse Assistant

Chris Oliver
Warehouse Assistant

Jake Schoening
Warehouse Assistant

Hunger Action Month & Upcoming Events

September is recognized as Hunger Action Month (H.A.M) where food banks across the nation educate, advocate, and celebrate all things food banking. Our calendar of events is shown below on how you can help support us during the month of September!

		HUNGER ACTION MONTH						
SEPTEMBER 2024	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
	1 National Food Bank Day	2	3 Listen to Feeding America's Hunger Awareness Podcast	4	5	6	7 Volunteers packed 48,430 Backpack Sacks this year.	
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
		GOLF CLASSIC @12:00		\$1 provides 5 meals.		15 National Kids Take Over the Kitchen Day	14	
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
					3 Wear ORANGE in support of Hunger Action Month			
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
		We take your extra garden goodies!		4 Celebrate Friends @1:00				
	29	30						
		1 in 9 Siouxland individuals experience food insecurity.						

- 1** Kicking off Hunger Action Month is **September 1st – National Food Bank Day!** Celebrate all the good the Food Bank of Siouxland has to offer by giving them a shout-out on social media. Want to take it a step further? Host your own food drive throughout the month of September and bring the donations to the Food Bank to be sorted! We'll be able to tell you how many meals you and your team were able to provide.
- 2** Join the **21st Annual Golf Classic on September 9th** at Whispering Creek Golf Club where all proceeds from the event go toward our mission in leading Siouxland in the fight against hunger. Ask any of our past teams and they'll tell you it's a blast! Teams are filling up fast, so be sure to get signed up today. Can't make the event but still want to make a difference? You can drop off food during the day at Whispering Creek Golf Club's parking lot to receive a sweet treat from Wells Blue Bunny!
- 3** We at the Food Bank of Siouxland will take Thursday, **September 19** to advocate for our neighbors by wearing orange, as well as educating the public on food insecurity in Siouxland and resources that are available for neighbors in need. Throughout September, you can also get involved by intentionally wearing orange and tagging us on social media with the hashtag **#SiouxlandHungerHero**.
- 4** **Celebrate Our Friends** is our annual event where we recognize a Metro and Rural Pantry of the Year, a Volunteer of the Year, and announce the Linda Scheid Legacy Award. Join us at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, **September 25th**, at Wells Ice Cream Parlor in Le Mars to thank all of those who ensure the Food Bank of Siouxland is feeding neighbors! We couldn't do it without their time, talent, and treasure.

With the holidays just around the corner, we will be collecting donations for our Holiday Harvest boxes! We start early to ensure we have enough time to collect, sort, and box up products for neighbors to stretch their budgets for that time of the year. Stop by with your donations of stuffing, green beans, corn, instant mashed potatoes, and other holiday side dish goodies to be set aside and included in these boxes and make a family's holiday meal one to remember!

For anyone looking to get involved in any way, please call us at 712-255-9741 or email info@siouxlandfoodbank.org to find out what opportunities we have available.

