VOICES OF HUNGER
in Siouxland
"LEADING SIOUXLAND IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER"
Typically, hunger is seen as an issue from afar. For many of us in the Midwest, nutritional insecurity is only a topic of discussion following a natural disaster—especially when people are in need of relief. Hunger, on the other hand, is a topic of discussion in advertising campaigns centralized around children in third-world countries. Not many think of Siouxland as a battleground for hunger as we are surrounded by fields that are cultivated to produce food. The issue of hunger and food insecurity in Siouxland seems too distant of an issue. The Food Bank of Siouxland has gone into the community to gather stories to magnify “voices of hunger,” and truly represent what hunger looks like in the eleven counties we serve throughout Iowa and Nebraska.

The names in this booklet have been replaced in order to protect the identities of the people we serve. The ages and details of each story have been unaltered.
WHAT WE DO

Agency Partners and Programs

The Food Bank was founded to serve community charities in Siouxland with feeding programs to nourish the needy, the ill and children. As a warehouse, we are able to leverage our resources to supply food and essentials to our member agencies, which directly serve the needy in our communities. The Food Bank is now the main food supplier for nonprofit agencies in Siouxland, including food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, residential facilities, daycare and senior centers. With the help from our sponsors and donors we are able to provide a year-round source of food. The Food Bank of Siouxland works with approximately 100 member agencies in eleven counties in the Siouxland area. These agencies are spread across the following counties: Woodbury, Monona, Crawford, Plymouth, Cherokee, Sioux, Ida, and Lyon in Iowa, and Dakota, Thurston, and Burt in Nebraska. We also offer additional programs to help feed those in need. Our Backpack Program: Food For Kids, provides weekly sacks of food for kids throughout the school year. The Mobile Pantry Program: Food to You, is a food pantry on wheels! Our Mobile Pantry allows us to distribute thousands of pounds of food to host locations. Lastly, Mobile School Pantry: Food For Families, provides readily accessible food assistance to students and their families. With the help of our agencies and partners we continue to nourish Siouxland’s needy.

LEADING SIOUXLAND IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER
Working at the Food Bank is truly a double edged sword. It’s heartbreaking to see how many people are hungry and yet wonderful to know what a difference our work makes for those in need.

-LINDA SCHEID, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
FOOD BANK OF SIOUXLAND, INC.
As a single mother of three and a cancer survivor, Sherry was working two jobs in order to make ends meet prior to her diagnosis. The income from her two jobs allowed her to pay her bills and buy groceries. During Sherry's treatment, Sherry was not able to work as often as she needed. Her oldest daughter did what she could but it wasn't enough. The SNAP benefits (previously known as Food Stamps) she received during her four years of treatment weren't enough to
cover even one week of groceries. Nutrition is extremely important when fighting a battle with cancer. During her treatment, Sherry had a difficult time staying healthy and keeping nutritious food in her household because of the expense—she had bills to pay. Because Sherry could not work as often as she needed, she resorted to less nutritious foods to keep costs low. Unfortunately, these foods did not help her get any better. Four years of cancer treatment is hard on anyone, but without the right foods the treatment can be unbearable. She sought help by going to one of the pantries with her family. This was a great relief for Sherry because her family was finally receiving the food Sherry needed to successfully complete her treatment. At first, she intended on just going to receive food, but then she wanted to volunteer at the pantry as well. The community was very supportive as Sherry went through three more surgeries to keep the cancer away. Now she is healthy enough to work a part-time job and volunteer at the food pantries in Sioux County—ensuring everyone receives the nutrition they need.

A MOM FIGHTING HUNGER AND A DISEASE
Marion and her husband decided to move closer to family. They worked in the community for a while but after both retired, Marion and her husband experienced a price spike in medication. Over the past two to three years they have been struggling to make ends meet. Marion could not pay all her medical expenses and living costs and still have enough food for her and her husband. The food pantry gave her the relief she needed when it came time for her to decide what bills she could afford to pay. Food is not the only reason Marion goes to the food pantry. For Marion, the pantry has become a place to socialize and meet new people as well. It has not only become a place to receive food but a place to connect with the community.

"Medication is so high that sometimes we had to decide to get medicine or food and then we heard about this (pantry), that is why we came in here."
As a veteran of the agriculture industry, Pat knows what it takes to bring food into grocery stores. Having a knowledge of how food is made, packed, and sold allowed Pat to calculate profit margins for grocery stores. These margins helped the stores survive. Although Pat has a background revolving around food, he must utilize food pantries because Pat's Social Security checks don't cover his bills each month. He and his wife have been retired for the past 20 years. They both have restricted diets and the food they need is expensive. The food pantry provides them with the basic items, leaving more money to buy fresh produce. Pat and his wife also ensure everyone in the community has the food and essentials they need. Pat’s wife makes food for their neighbors because she fully understands the struggle. Even as they continue to struggle themselves, they continue to provide support in their community.

"Look at everything, groceries have gone up 30% recently, we are close to $3 gas, everything like that is just killing us."

A COUPLE WHO CONTINUES THE TRADITION OF BEING A NEIGHBOR, EVEN AS THEY AGE

CHEROKEE COUNTY Pat, 82
Many believe that people who have farmed their whole life will never be hungry and that food is always available. The fact of the matter is some farmers may hurt the most. Donna and her husband moved to town after passing the family farm over to their son. The couple then utilized Social Security to cover the cost of three meals per day.

In a turn of events, Donna’s husband suddenly passed away leaving her to fend for herself. The Social Security Donna was receiving alone was no longer enough to cover three meals per day. She then applied for reduced rent apartments and that is how she found out about the food pantry where she currently lives.

With help from the pantry, Donna is able to get fruits and vegetables along with vouchers for the Farmer’s Market. She likes food from the Farmer’s Market the best because it reminds her of life on the farm. Living at a reduced rent apartment and receiving some items from food pantries allows Donna to purchase the medication she needs for her Graves disease and ongoing arthritis.
"I worked my whole life on a farm but since I was a farm wife I never put anything into social security."
Packing up a small bag and fleeing a domestic abuse situation is no easy task. Leah had to leave her job and a steady income to keep her children and herself safe. She chose to come back to South Sioux City to be close to her family but since then her family has moved away for better opportunities.

She works to keep her children safe and fed. Making ends meet in Dakota County is difficult but Leah tries her best. She drives truck for a company but must take every Friday off so she can volunteer and receive food from the food pantry. Leah would not be able to pick up food and volunteer at the pantry without taking off work. This does not bother her because she brings her children along. She said, “I am teaching them the value of volunteering, some of them helped me, so I am paying it forward.”

Leah works hard but because she makes $17 over the income cap to receive SNAP benefits, she had to find another way to feed her children. She added, “it is hard to plan when you lose that assistance,” because she did not know where else to find enough food to feed her kids.

I have to take a day of work off because usually all of these food pantries are during the day.
Larry has been living around Iowa for over 30 years. He was an industrial mechanic that traveled to various company sites when machines broke down. At the age of 82, he is still industrious by working on his own tricycle motorcycle. He was able to collect parts from the junkyard and uses his tools on the projects that keep him busy. If Larry needs any help he has many connections with other mechanics. There are multiple reasons why Larry goes to the food pantries. He has a strong connection to the food insecure community, but the main reason is so that he can still take care of one of his children. Because his child is mentally disabled, Larry must provide for them both and his Social Security is not enough to feed his child and himself. Larry only goes to the pantry in Monona County every so often and usually likes to find other ways to keep his family fed. When he volunteers at the pantry, Larry not only gives back to an organization that helps him and many others in the area, but he is also able to feed his family at the end of the day. Larry volunteers much of his time in other places as well to keep busy along with working on his favorite mechanical projects. This is one of the many reasons the rest of his children never know what he is about to do next.

A FATHER WHO CONTINUES TO CARE FOR HIS DISABLED CHILD
"They make you choose between loving someone and having benefits and I chose to love my husband."
Andrea had a difficult time finding work due to her seizures and needed medication to prevent them. When she began receiving disability pay, which covered her medication, along with SNAP benefits, she and her teenage son didn’t have enough food to make it to the end of the month. SNAP only provided her family approximately two weeks of food. As many know, it is not easy to keep food in the house with a teenage son and even more so when there is not enough money to begin with. Then her son’s father died and they began receiving death benefits, which in turn reduced their SNAP benefits. At first it was helpful to have additional assistance, but the benefits came with a drawback. As time passed, Andrea wanted to get married, but to her dismay, much of her assistance would no longer be available if she chose to marry. Marriage should have been a happy time for Andrea, but instead this marriage process was tinged with uncertainty. Andrea had to choose between keeping her disability coverage that would allow her to receive the medication she needed to live a healthy productive life, or to get married to the love of her life. Andrea chose marriage and together the couple makes one dollar over the SNAP income cap that would allow Andrea to receive the benefits she needs. With reduced benefits and increasing medical bills each week, food pantries in Woodbury county have helped her receive healthy food by offering fresh produce and meat. Because of the food pantries in Woodbury County, Andrea is able to pay for her medication out of pocket. Without the pantries she would spend the money needed to provide food for her son. Andrea continues to work as much as her seizures allow her, and utilizes the pantries when her family is in need. 

A MOTHER AND A WIFE WHO CHOSE LOVE OVER SECURITY
FOOD BANK OF SIOUXLAND INC.

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