

Lakes Area Food Shelf Fall 2021 Newsletter



Dear Friends of Lakes Area Food Shelf,
As fall descends upon us, we could not be more grateful for your financial support; your generous donations of food items and other goods; and your commitment to helping the friends and neighbors who rely on LAFS for food and friendship.

Lakes Area Food Shelf is a **community food shelf**. It belongs to everyone throughout the Brainerd Lakes Area. You, as donors. You, as churches and civic groups. You, as business owners. You, as friends and neighbors who come here to select healthy food for your families. We, as staff and volunteers, who are privileged to work here. We all belong to Lakes Area Food Shelf!

As we approach Thanksgiving Season, gratitude is on all our minds. It is a time to reflect on our blessings. It is a time to express our gratitude to those who enrich our lives as friends, family, and neighbors. And it is a time to reach out to others who may need food, friendship, and the support of community members as they navigate life's challenges. These challenges are real and at times severe. They create fear. They overwhelm and at times cause shame. And they often leave people feeling hopeless and alone. We are dedicated to doing all we can to help, and as members of our community, we know you are too.

A young couple living in their car, with an open jar of peanut butter and two spoons with which they scoop their breakfast, lunch, or dinner. A senior couple living solely on Social Security, fearful and anxious about how they will pay for medical and dental bills, because there is no money with which to pay them. A young man with two children, living in a tent, because it is the only "home" he can afford amid a housing crisis. An elderly man with mental health issues, alone and living in his run-down truck. These are the friends and neighbors you help with your donations. These are the friends and neighbors who say, *"This is such an amazing place. You have such great healthy foods. And you all are so nice."* And, *"I feel like this is God's place. You are such a blessing. Without this place, I couldn't survive. Bills are stacking up because my hours have been cut at work, and there is no money for food and bills. Some days I just feel so overwhelmed."*

Your financial support and donations of food and other items have a very real impact on the lives of our friends and our neighbors. As we enter the Thanksgiving season, we wholeheartedly express our sincere gratitude for your support and your concern for our friends and neighbors in the Brainerd Lakes Area.

Wishing you a blessed Thanksgiving,

Kathy Adams

Kathy Adams, Director

"Kathy, could you please make sure that everyone who helps make this possible for me and the other people who come here knows how grateful I am? I wish I could meet them to thank them in person. I want to help, too, so here are some blankets I crocheted for the homeless people who come here. I think they might keep them warm." P.N.



KATHRYN STOTKA JOINS THE LAKES AREA FOOD SHELF TEAM



We are excited to introduce Kathryn Stotka as our Bookkeeper. Kathryn has a stellar professional history of leadership, management, strategic planning, and bookkeeping. In addition, she provides full bookkeeping and payroll services for many businesses in the Brainerd Lakes Area through her own business, "Ledger-Up North". Kathryn's knowledge and experience working with QuickBooks will result in a fully integrated financial record-keeping system.

In addition to her work at the Food Shelf, Kathryn serves on the Board of Directors for Gold Star Family Weekend and is Treasurer for Crow Wing County Beyond Yellow Ribbon.

WELCOME KATHRYN!!

ST. JOSEPH FOUNDATION AND THE NISSWA LIONS CLUB PROVIDE GRANTS TO MAKE LAFS DOORS ADA COMPLIANT



Essentia Health
St. Joseph's Foundation

The St. Joseph's Foundation recently awarded a \$12,500 grant to Lakes Area Food Shelf to make our doors ADA (American Disabilities Act) compliant and accessible. New ramps into and exiting the building have been redone, and new doors and automatic door

openers will be installed before winter.

In addition to The St. Joseph's Foundation grant, the Nisswa Lions donated \$5,000 to the project. Travis Miller serves as the architect for the project, and Hy-Tech Construction was awarded the construction bid.

This is an essential project for the food shelf, as it will greatly enhance safe entry and exit for our friends and neighbors; our volunteers; and the general public.

THANKSGIVING GROCERY BOXES TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS



Again, this year, Lakes Area Food Shelf will be putting together boxes of Thanksgiving foods for our friends and neighbors. Grace United Methodist Church will be partnering on the assembly and distribution of the boxes. Foods will include turkeys or turkey breasts; dressing; potatoes; sweet potatoes; Jell-O; whipped topping; green beans; celery; pumpkin; cranberries, and other items.

Already, we have almost fifty families signed up, and we anticipate one hundred or more. One of the mothers who recently signed up for the box of Thanksgiving treats stated, *"Oh, my gosh. Thank you so much. I didn't think it would even be possible to have a Thanksgiving meal this year. Thank you, thank you!"*

If you would like to help contribute to the purchase of foods, please see the enclosed pledge card. Thank you so much for your support!

EQUIPMENT UPGRADES NEEDED

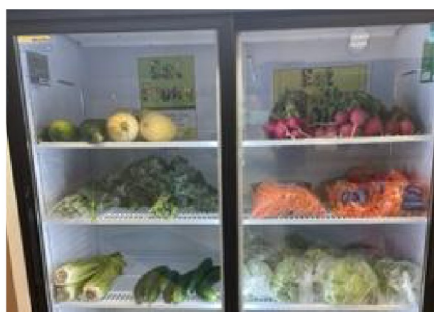
Lakes Area Food Shelf has been in existence for thirty years, and over that time, it has served tens of thousands of our friends and neighbors. Former Board members and Directors, hundreds of volunteers, thousands of donors, and others in our community have made it the outstanding food shelf that it is today.

This past summer, we were fortunate to receive a grant from Hunger Solutions to purchase new shopping carts; a floor scale and ramps to weigh incoming and outgoing food; a stainless-steel table on which to sort ready-to-eat foods; and other smaller pieces of equipment which greatly enhance our operations.

We are blessed to have two walk-in freezers and a walk-in cooler in which to store food. Yet, in the last six months, we have had five separate Freon leaks between the two freezers, the last one resulting in a major food loss. The freezers are old (one purchased in 1999 and the other in 2014), and serious upgrades are needed to them as well as to our heating and cooling system. All totaled, the cost of the project is bid at \$38,000. **We are seeking support from businesses, civic groups, churches, foundations, and individuals in the Brainerd Lakes Area to help fund this major equipment upgrade. If you have specific questions about this project, please feel free to stop by the food shelf or give our Director, Kathy Adams, a call to discuss this important project. Thank you so much!**



FRESH PRODUCE A GIFT FOR OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS!!



This past Spring, we made a commitment to provide healthier foods to the friends and neighbors who come to Lakes Area Food Shelf. We have benefitted from the donation of much garden produce from Crow Wing County Master Gardeners; local gardeners; community and church gardens; and others. Fresh green beans, lettuce, carrots, beets, cucumbers, tomatoes, potatoes, onions, kale, radishes, and more! In addition, we order fresh fruit weekly, including apples, oranges, grapes, and other seasonal fruits from Second Harvest Food Bank and Northwestern Fruits. These foods have been welcomed additions to our friends and neighbors, as noted in their comments:

- *"Usually, I can't buy this stuff. I am lucky if I have enough money for just the necessities for my family. This is just great. My little girl loves carrots."*
- *"Thank you for caring that we have healthy food. I never imagined finding such fresh fruit here."*
- *"You know, when you live like I do, you get used to canned food. It's cheap, and it's what I can afford. I really appreciate you bringing fresh vegetables here. I usually can't afford to buy it."*

We are excited to announce an exciting partnership with Brakstad Farms, Pequot Lakes, MN, to provide locally grown fresh produce to the food shelf!! Robyn and Lance Brakstad have already been planning an increased garden spot for Lakes Area Food Shelf in 2022!



VOLUNTEERS OFFER HARD WORK, SKILL, AND FRIENDSHIP!

No matter how young – or how old – our volunteers happen to be, each comes to Lakes Area Food Shelf with a heart for helping our friends and neighbors. Please meet just a few of our amazing volunteers!! Avery and Easton who helped design and fill treat bags for children that come into the food shelf! Larry, who recently assembled new carts and other equipment received through a Hunger Solutions Grant! Kip Santoz filling the dairy cooler with eggs.



Heartfelt 
THANKS
TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

"You are all so nice here. I always feel so welcome, and like you really care about me. It is hard sometimes to reach out for help like this, you know? Sometimes I feel a little ashamed about needing to come here, but I have no choice. I just don't have a steady income right now. I never feel judged in this place. You just accept me for who I am."

J.S.

FALL 2021 FINANCIAL NEEDS

We are so grateful that you are part of the community in which we work, volunteer, and serve our friends and neighbors. As we said early in this newsletter, Lakes Area Food Shelf belongs to all of us. We hope you will take time to stop in, visit with us, and take a tour of the food shelf you have helped build.

In addition, we hope you will support the financial needs of Lakes Area Food Shelf, including the Thanksgiving grocery boxes; the major equipment upgrades required for our freezers and heating/air systems; or through a general donation to support our ongoing food purchase costs or other needs as determined by the Board of Directors.

*"If you want to touch the past, touch a rock.
If you want to touch the present, touch a flower.
If you want to touch the future, touch a life." Author Unknown*



CONTRIBUTION CARD

Please enclose this card with your contribution!

LAKES AREA FOOD SHELF
PO BOX 724 Nisswa, MN 56468
218-568-8474

Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please find enclosed my contribution of \$_____ designated for (please check those that apply):

- ☐ Thanksgiving grocery boxes
- ☐ Equipment Upgrades (Freezers, air and heating)
- ☐ General food purchase or other critical needs as determined by the Board of Directors
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____

Thank you so much for your support!

Mailing Address:
Lakes Area Food Shelf
PO Box 724
Nisswa MN 56468

Physical Address:
29316 Patriot Ave
Pequot Lakes, MN 56472

Phone: 218-568-8474 Email: lafs1@tds.net