

# Lakes Area Food Shelf Summer 2021 Newsletter



## LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Dear Friends of Lakes Area Food Shelf,



On behalf of those we serve, the Board of Directors, volunteers, and staff, I am pleased to provide you - friends and supporters of Lakes Area Food Shelf - with our Summer newsletter. Your support of the families we serve continues to have an incredible impact, especially through the challenges of the pandemic.

This newsletter is written for you, to give you a very real look at how your food and monetary contributions directly impact the lives of our clients; of the joy and commitment of the volunteers who serve at LAFS; and of the impact Lakes Area Food Shelf has on the broader community.

Currently, we are conducting a survey of those who use our services, to make sure that we continually meet our goal of being the very best food shelf we can be. Recently, one of the men we serve, spoke about his experience at Lakes Area Food Shelf: *"I come to the Food Shelf for food, because by the end of the month, there is nothing left. But I want to tell you that when I come here, I feel like I am coming to see friends. Everyone who works here is kind and caring, and they never make me feel like I am being judged."*

During this past year, many of you sent checks of \$25, \$50, and \$100. Others of you stopped by to drop off your stimulus checks, stating, *"I don't need this, but I know you will put it to good use."* Several churches, including Our Savior's Lutheran Church and Grace United Methodist Church, started a friendly competition during our March campaign, to see who could raise the most financial support and pounds of food to be donated. An incredible \$14,738 and 1,204 pounds of food were raised between the two congregations!!!

Most recently, a grandfather arrived with his SUV filled to the max with food donations, stating, *"Our granddaughters talked to us about how they could help others during the pandemic, and I took them to the grocery store. They selected all of these food items."* They donated 311 pounds of food, which has been a tremendous help to those we serve. No matter how much you donated, no matter how many times you donated, our needful friends and neighbors benefitted.

Thank you for your generosity, your compassion, and your dedication in helping Lakes Area Food Shelf serve our friends and neighbors in the area.

Sincerely,  
*Peter Mann*

Peter Mann, LAFS Board Chair

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### MAJOR MARCH CAMPAIGN

Each year, during the month of March, a special campaign is launched for all food shelves, with the goal to raise as many food and financial contributions as possible. This year, the campaign ran from Monday, March 1 through Sunday, April 11. With your generous support, Lakes Area Food Shelf received \$61,494 in monetary donations and 9,346 pounds in food donations. The following is an example of how those donations make a difference in the lives of those we serve, as reported by Kathy Adams, Director of the Food Shelf, who has been surveying our clients:

*"It was a cold and snowy day in March, and our first client arrived at 8:30 a.m. She was parked quite a distance from the front of the building, so I walked out to see if she was okay. She rolled down her window, and I saw she was holding a rosary in her hand. I asked her if she was coming to the food shelf, and she said, 'Yes, and I know I am early. You guys open at 9. I was just sitting here until you open, saying my prayers. I was actually just thanking God for the food shelf.'*

*I thanked her for praying for us, and she started to get teary and said, 'I try not to come. I know there are people who are starving right now. My husband and I aren't starving, but things are really tough.' Her tears began falling.*

*I listened as she shared some of the tough circumstances she and her husband are going through and consoled her as best I could. I assured her that we at LAFS want her to come for food AND friendship, and to never worry about coming when she and her husband need food. I shared that I, too, have had periods in my life when I needed to reach out to my community for help, and that we at LAFS want to be part of her community. She thanked me profusely and said she was going to thank God, again, for LAFS. I asked her to promise that if she ever needs food, or knows of anyone who does, that she will come to LAFS or refer others in need to us. She said, 'Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much. I will.'"*

**A profound thank-you to all who contributed to our March fund drive, as well as to all who contribute throughout the year!!**



### LAKES AREA FOOD SHELF CORE VALUES

- **All** are welcome at Lakes Area Food Shelf.
- We will help any person, from anywhere, with food insecurity.
- We see all who use our services as friends, neighbors, and members of our community.
- All persons are valued members of our community, and we will serve all with compassion, dignity and respect.
- We will do all we can to help friends and neighbors address barriers that prevent them from receiving food assistance through the Lakes Area Food Shelf.

### DONATION OF VEGETABLE AND FLOWER PLANTS BY BRAKSTAD NATURAL FARMS



**Brakstad Natural Farms** (Photo Left) of Pequot Lakes donated dozens of tomato, cabbage, pepper, herb and flower plants for our friends and neighbors who use the Food Shelf. In addition, they donated pots in which the plants could be planted. This was a HUGE success, with our clients expressing great thanks:

**\*\*"This is so wonderful. I have always wanted to plant tomatoes, but never had anywhere to plant them. I had no idea I could just plant them in a pot."**

**\*\*"I love cabbage!! Thank you for the chance to plant some!"**

**\*\*"Fresh herbs always make food taste better than dried ones you get from the store. This is just great. Thank you so much."**



**Leon Zender** has been a Lakes Area Food Shelf volunteer for 20 years. Recently, he was asked how he got started volunteering, and he said, *“Well, there was a notice in our church bulletin that help was needed. I like to help people, so I signed up. I know, sometimes, people from all walks of life can be down on their luck, through no fault of their own. They lose a job, have a health crisis, or take on the responsibility of caring for others, even if they can’t really afford it. Food Shelves do a good job of helping them fill a need, in at least one area of their lives. Volunteering here has been very rewarding for me, because we make a difference.”*



Recently, volunteers **Dale and Deb Carlson; Mary Klang, Diane Wiener; Leon Zender;** and **Kathy and Roger Stone** (photo left) helped staff with outside clean-up, including the removal of many downed tree limbs; tree branches; trash; and other outside debris. We made the decision to leave as much of the area as natural as possible, yet clean the immediate areas next to the building. Thank you, awesome volunteers!!

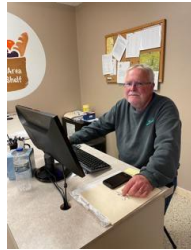


We receive much of our food from the Second Harvest Food Bank out of Grand Rapids, MN. Usually, they deliver our food with a medium-sized delivery truck, but that will change to a full-sized semi-truck in July. Volunteers, **Vilas Ter Meer, Leon Zender, Jim Fisher,** and **Mark Shervy** (photo left) spent a full day rebuilding our loading dock to accommodate this change. The new dock worked beautifully during the “test” delivery a few weeks ago. Thank you to our great construction crew!!



LAFS Volunteer, and member of Crow Wing County Master Gardeners, **Diane Wiener**, blessed the friends and neighbors who use our services with self-contained, potted tomato and lettuce plants. In addition, growing instructions and nutrition information were included with each pot. All that is needed for care is watering, and the love and attention of our clients! Thank you Diane and Crow Wing County Master Gardeners!!

# FOOD SHELF STAFF NEWS



We thank **Tim Moore**, a long-time volunteer with LAFS, for stepping in as Interim Director during the months of January through March 2021. Tim has brought a wealth of knowledge in ordering and distributing food; technology; volunteer services; and broadening the reach of LAFS. He has done an outstanding job, and we are grateful he will continue as a volunteer!! **Thank you, Tim, for your great work!!**



We are pleased to welcome **Kathy Adams** as our new Director. Kathy has served in Director-level positions with The Hazelden Foundation; Voyageur Outward Bound School; The Initiative Foundation; and The Crisis Line. In addition, she and her husband have worked in Haiti for over twenty years, providing some of the poorest villages in the North/Northeast Provinces with leadership training and sustainable community development planning. Kathy has volunteered with several area food shelves and is very interested in continuing Lakes Area Food Shelf's legacy of being the very best it can be.

## Thank you for your service, Angie!

After 17 years of working with Lakes Area Food Shelf, **Angie Rardin** has resigned her position as Secretary/Treasurer. Angie has brought many positive changes to Lakes Area Food Shelf, including a computerized accounts payable/receivable system. She has been instrumental in leading the Christmas Tour of Homes each Fall. We will miss Angie and surely wish her well in her new ventures!



## VISIONING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and those we serve have been participating in feedback surveys designed to help us evaluate how we can better meet and help people with food insecurity; what barriers exist that prevent people from using our services; what is working well at LAFS; what we could do better; and how we might provide healthier foods; etc. All of this feedback will be helpful to inform our Board as it enters a visioning and strategic planning process later this year.

As part of the strategic planning process, we will meet with other businesses and service providers in the area, to get their feedback on how we might work together to create a strong and vibrant network for community members of need. As an example, we hear often from our clients that transportation is a major barrier to their making it to the food shelf. We will ask the question of ourselves and other businesses and community members, *"As caring members in the community, how might we address this barrier?"*

We look forward to keeping you informed as the visioning and strategic planning process unfolds. And, we welcome your thoughts and ideas, as key stakeholders in helping us fulfill our mission over the past thirty years. Please email your thoughts and ideas to Lakes Area Food Shelf at [lafs1@tds.net](mailto:lafs1@tds.net); feel free to call us; or stop in and talk with our Director, Kathy Adams.



## 2021 CHRISTMAS HOME TOUR

Please join us for the 2021 Christmas Home Tour, scheduled for October 21, 22, and 23. This is a great event, providing you with the opportunity to tour homes beautifully decorated by local businesses. After touring the homes, you will have a chance to shop at the businesses who provided the beautiful decor. All proceeds from ticket sales support Lakes Area Food Shelf. Please visit the website as noted below to learn more about this wonderful event, including how to purchase tickets. We look forward to seeing you at the event!!!



Visit: <https://lafshometour.com/> to purchase tickets.

## PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING TO THE "2021 OPEN YOUR HEART CHALLENGE GRANT" OPPORTUNITY

LAFS recently submitted an application to Hunger Solutions Minnesota to receive a proportionally matched grant to help those who experience food insecurity and homelessness. The special campaign runs from July 1, 2021 through July 31, 2021. Please consider donating to this campaign, so we can receive the matching funds to purchase additional food!

Lakes Area Food Shelf does serve a number of individuals and families who live in their vehicles or who live in conditions where they do not have electricity; running water; refrigeration; or even a place to cook. It is always our goal to serve every friend and neighbor who needs food, and we work hard to provide ready-to-eat foods to accommodate these neighbors. Funds from this campaign will be used, in part, to help us provide more food choices for these individuals.

**PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION DURING THIS CAMPAIGN, TO HELP US QUALIFY FOR MATCHING FUNDS! JUST COMPLETE THE PLEDGE CARD, BELOW, AND SUBMIT IT WITH YOUR DONATION. THANK YOU!!**

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**LAKES AREA FOOD SHELF  
PO BOX 724 Nisswa, MN 56468**

### **PLEDGE OF SUPPORT FOR THE JULY 1 - JULY 31, 2021 "OPEN YOUR HEART CHALLENGE GRANT" CAMPAIGN**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please find enclosed my contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the "Open Your Heart Challenge Grant". I understand that my contribution will be designated to purchase food for the hungry and homeless.

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### THANK YOU TO LAKES AREA FOOD SHELF PARTNERS

Lakes Area Food Shelf is pleased to recognize the generosity of local community partners who have donated food from their stores, or have provided us with food at greatly reduced prices - all so that the friends and neighbors we serve have good, healthy food to eat. In addition, we want to thank our local Food Bank, Second Harvest, for being such a great support. Thank you community partners!!

**Costco, Baxter**

**Country Hearth, Baxter**

**Cub Foods, Baxter/Brainerd**

**Northwestern Fruit, St. Paul**

**Pequot Lakes SuperValu, Pequot Lakes**

**Schaefer's Foods, Nisswa**

**Second Harvest, Grand Rapids, MN**

**Target, Baxter**

**Walmart, Baxter/Brainerd**

Recently, one of our clients stated: *"The bread I get each month really helps. It's nice that we get hamburger and hamburger buns, as well as hot dogs and hot dog buns. I don't know where you get them, but please thank whoever provides them. I hope they know how much it helps my family."*

### WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

We want to end this newsletter as it began...by thanking each of you who has contributed to, prayed for, and volunteered with Lakes Area Food Shelf. You are "how" we are able to do what we do – through your compassion, your concern for others, and your generosity. We cannot thank you enough for all you do. "Why" we do what we do, is best told by one of the people we serve, as noted below:

*"I foster young girls who have been physically and sexually abused. We all – myself included – come from very tough backgrounds. So the kids I care for aren't used to kindness. They aren't used to people treating them with respect. Their view of the world is very dark. But the Food Shelf doesn't just give us food. You give us a chance to meet really loving and caring people – people who give hugs. Do you know how long it's been since these kids have been hugged? I like to bring the kids with me when I come here, because I want to show them there are good people in our community who really care about them. These kids need to know this, above anything else...that someone cares."*

Thank you, dear friends and supporters of Lakes Area Food Shelf, for caring!