

Your Community Food Shelf For 42 Years



# Lakes Area Food Shelf News

December 2022



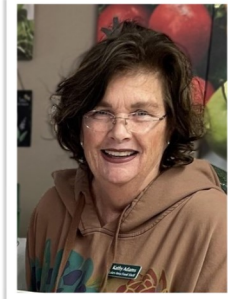
*Celebrating A Season of  
Gratitude & Giving*



*Your Community Spirit Lights Our Way*

# “This Place Almost Feels Like Home”

Message From Lakes Area Food Shelf Director Kathy Adams



**“Kathy, I just want to say thank you for doing what you do here.**

**This place *almost* feels like I’m home when I come in here. Only, I have never had a home that feels this warm and loving.”**

**The friend who shared this statement with us fosters abused girls.** When we first met, she asked if I knew how long it had been since the girls sitting in her car had received a hug. Or, how long it had been since she had received a hug. I didn’t know the answer, but could tell from the tears in her eyes, it had been a very long time.

**I embraced her, then motioned for the girls to get out of the car. Timidly, our hug of two became a hug of three, then four, then five.** Tears were in steady supply as we stood in the parking lot having the longest, warmest group hug any of us had received in a long time.

**We are a community, here, open to and belonging to all.**

**As we have come to know our beautiful friends and neighbors, trust has developed between us.** With that trust comes the sharing of barriers they face far beyond needing food to feed their families. Transportation. Abuse. No running water. No electricity. No heat.

**Where do they turn for help?**

**With their feedback, and that of others, we learned there is a void in direct-service providers in our area.** Most services are based twenty miles away — which for those with cars that run on prayer rather than gas — might as well be two-hundred miles. They simply can’t afford the gas or risk their cars breaking down.

**This feedback informed the food shelf’s future direction in our first strategic planning process conducted this summer and fall. We’re evolving to address this issue. In the New Year, we’ll announce our plans, and how you can help.**

**We’ll certainly need our community to remain involved.** In 2021, Lakes Area Food Shelf served 4,657 friends and neighbors. By November 1 of this year, we have served 8,444. Our food purchase costs increased by 65% over those in 2021, and like all food shelves, there were times we wondered how we would manage these increases.

**As we shared these concerns with you and others, so many of you stepped forward to help.** Donations of multiple sizes arrived, with every one making a difference. City Councils and Townships provided donations. Businesses held funding and food drives within their companies. Civic groups, American Legions, Lions’ Clubs sent support. Children held food drives to help other children “have enough to eat,” making heartfelt signs encouraging support for our friends.

**We are, indeed, a community food shelf. Open to all. Owned by all. Welcoming all.**

**Hugging all who need hugs and community as much as food.**

**YOU are part of the food shelf’s community, and we could not be more grateful for each of you.** Thank you for your concern for our neighbors — and for supporting Lakes Area Food Shelf.

**Blessings to you and your families this Holiday Season**

**Want to Help? Please Donate to Lakes Area Food Shelf, PO Box 423, Pequot Lakes, MN, 56472**



# A Successful Christmas Home Tour



**Thank You!**

You purchased 650+ tickets and made the  
31st Nisswa Christmas Home Tour  
an unprecedented success.

Thanks to generous financial support from our  
sponsors and amazing decorating by Nisswa  
Merchants, the Home Tour experience was  
both a toast to the holidays and a lifeline to the  
many served by Lakes Area Food Shelf



## Your Donation Matters



10% of our friends and neighbors aren't getting enough to eat. Many of them are children.

In 2023, USDA predicts a 10% increase in hunger worldwide due to crop failures and war.



In 2022 prices for meats, poultry, fish and eggs rose 12.5%



Lakes Area Food Shelf [STRETCHES](#) your donation.

We have discount partnerships with farmers, grocers, bakers, and food banks. Together, we make your dollars go a long way! And, we operate entirely on contributions.

Please send your donations to:

Lakes Area Food Shelf  
P.O. Box 423  
Pequot Lakes, MN 56472

*Want to Help? Please Donate to Lakes Area Food Shelf, PO Box 423, Pequot Lakes, MN, 56472*

# A Caring Collection of Communities

*A Message From Board Chair Tim Moore*

## And now for some **SPLENDID** news



I write from the Lakes Area Food Shelf, where we've seen increased numbers of our neighbors needing food. However, we've also seen an amazing outpouring of community support, and for this, thank you all.

First off, a heartfelt thanks to the community members who joined us in focus groups as the first step in developing our strategic plan. You gave our board of directors valuable insight on where to focus our energies during the next three to five years.

And to all the local civic and faith groups including the Nisswa Lions, the Nisswa City Council, the Knights of Columbus and so many others who have sponsored food drives, clothing drives and donated cash. **Thank you.**

And to our very generous corporate and foundation sponsors including Clow Stamping, Grand View Lodge, Cuyuna Range Medical Center, Essentia Health and the Initiative Foundation. Your support resulted in our most successful Nisswa Christmas Tour of Homes. **Gracias!**

And I'd be remiss in not expressing our sincere gratitude to all of our friends and volunteers who have contributed time, talent and treasure in our mission. We strive to be a trusted community resource. We help those in need to be hunger free. We assist them in addressing other barriers to living more healthy lives.

The truly humbling outpouring of support is indeed profound evidence that the Lakes Area is an amazing and caring collection of communities of which we can all be so proud.

**Thanks to all.**

## Our December Cover

You. Yes, **YOU** are on the December newsletter cover!

We're humbled by your spirit of giving, not just now, but all year long.

Thank You!

Here's an earlier version with more photos.



## Our Newsletter

Is put together entirely by volunteers.

Let us know if you have any story ideas or, any questions about your community food shelf!

E-mail: [lafs1@tds.net](mailto:lafs1@tds.net)

# Do I Eat, Or...



**Need Food? We're Here For You! Call 218-568-8474**

**Donate at <https://lakesareafoodshelf.org/donate>**



# Farm to Food Shelf

*Partnership with Lakes Area Food Shelf  
Delivers Nutrient Rich Produce*

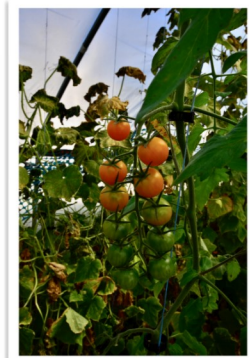


**Robyn and Lance Bragstad are a couple so much in synch, they finish each other's sentences.**

The two own and operate Brakstad Farms in Pequot Lakes, both a second career and a lifestyle. They've transformed the dairy farm, once owned by Lance's grandparents, into a major regional provider of nutrient rich fresh produce. Though, things didn't start out that way.

**"It was a hobby in the beginning," Robyn explained during a tour of their facility. "But, it's turned into something much more. It's more of a mission to share what we have learned with others to create a sustainable lifestyle."**

Their "mission" is built on sustainable farming methods including a technique called hydroponic, used to grow lettuce. Inside one of Brakstad's three Quonset-hut-shaped "high tunnels," lettuce grows in water, constantly monitored to insure the natural balance of nutrients is maintained. Nothing is wasted. In other high tunnels, tomatoes, and cucumbers grow in soil with irrigation. This isn't factory farming.



**"Our soil is kept alive, not devastated by chemicals," Lance says, holding up a plant's roots. "Healthy soil, like a healthy body, can ward off attacks from insects and disease."**



**Brakstad Farms - the "k" is the Norwegian spelling of the Bragstad name - delivers a priority commodity for Lakes Area Food Shelf.** Through the "Farm To Food Shelf Program," funded by a \$50,500 grant from Sourcewell, Brakstad provides high quality vegetables for low income families. It is a much needed service fitting the objectives of Sourcewell, a Minnesota government cooperative helping communities solve problems. Lack of produce for those who use food shelves is one of those issues.

**A report from Feeding America – which studies solutions to hunger around the country – says, "Fresh produce provides a tremendous opportunity to both feed people facing hunger and also offer nutrient-rich foods that can improve health outcomes. What's more, people struggling with hunger are often at higher risk for nutrition-related illnesses."**

"The Sourcewell grant allows us to provide the highest nutrition possible to friends and neighbors, to keep children healthy and help avoid disease including diabetes" said LAFS Director Kathy Adams. "It makes a difference in meeting the high costs of food."

**Robyn and Lance worked with LAFS long before the grant came along by donating produce on a regular basis.** Their relationship includes experimenting with other ways to end hunger. This past fall when Brakstad needed help harvesting, some LAFS clients volunteered to help, and were able to keep produce they picked at no cost. This community-based approach is part of Lance's bigger vision for American agriculture: more small acreage farms that, in theory, can feed the world.

"Look at the bigger picture of shipping everything in from California," he reasons looking out over his 320 acres. "If you had more of these farms, and we had more local, it would be back to the old fashioned way."

Visions aside, Robyn takes pride that Brakstad can help one small part of Minnesota.

**"It's nice for any of the food shelves in the area to be able to find a local grower willing to share with them," she explains.**

**We at LAFS couldn't agree more. Thanks Robyn and Lance!**

**CONTRIBUTION CARD - Enclose With Your Donation**

**NOTE OUR NEW ADDRESS**

**Lakes Area Food Shelf  
P.O. Box 423  
Pequot Lakes, MN 56472**



Donate Online With This QR CODE

Hold your camera up to it.  
A yellow bar should appear.  
Tap the bar and go to the  
donation page.

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Please find enclosed my contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Mailing Address

Lakes Area Food Shelf  
P.O. Box 423  
Pequot Lakes, MN 56472

Physical Address

Lakes Area Food Shelf  
29316 Patriot Avenue  
Pequot Lakes, MN 56472  
Phone: 218-568-8474  
E-mail: [lafs1@tds.net](mailto:lafs1@tds.net)

RETURN ADDRESS

Lakes Area Food Shelf  
P.O. Box 423  
Pequot Lakes, MN 56472