



**Your Community Food Shelf For 43 Years**

**Fall 2023**



# Lakes Area Food Shelf News



# TRANSFORMATION!



***INSIDE: The Nisswa Christmas Home Tour!***  
***Get Your Tickets Today!***



# You Are TRANSFORMING US!

*Message From Lakes Area Food Shelf Board Chair Tim Moore*

**Community. We all want one. Someone to check in when we've "fallen and can't get up." Someone to offer a lift when our vehicle breaks down, or listen when we do something stupid and don't know how to fix it.**

With the state of our world, I often hear "community" is a thing of the past. "Nobody cares." "It's all about greed." And my favorite, "Why should I do anything? No one else does."

**As Board Chair of Lakes Area Food Shelf (LAFS), I'm here to tell you, we are blessed with "community." Here's why.**

We spent 2022 taking a hard look at the increasing numbers needing food assistance; discussing root causes of hunger; figuring out what we, as a community who believes in community, can do. We spoke with local businesses, nonprofits, government, faith leaders, educators, health professionals, families that use the food shelf, and our volunteers. The reality: helping the people we refer to as "friends and neighbors," is daunting:

- Minnesotans made 5,505,100 visits to food shelves in 2022, a record and 66% more than 2021.
- Lakes Area Food Shelf had 10,978 visits in 2022 vs. 4,657 visits in 2021. Already in 2023, 6,128, compared to 3,822 visits in 2022.



**Now here's the good part. Our community didn't just grouse. We reached consensus on key facts:**

- **Food shelves are uniquely positioned to receive the poorest families.** Neighbors come because they're hungry, but once trust is gained, will share barriers to moving forward.
- **Food shelves are not staffed to tackle these barriers.** They need social workers, mental health providers, housing specialists, lawyers, job-skill training, and more. But....
- **There is an absolute void of direct service providers in the northern tier of Crow Wing County.** They're located 20-30 miles south, in Brainerd. With transportation a key issue for many, that might as well be 200 miles.

**Now here's the really good part. Together (one might say, as a community), we identified an impactful solution. LAFS will become a Community Resource Hub while retaining our core food shelf program. We're expanding our building to:**

- **Increase shopping and food warehouse areas** to accommodate the dramatic rise in numbers.
- **Provide private office space for direct service providers**, so families can immediately see them when coming to LAFS for food.
- **Provide a library** of resource materials, applications, and more.
- **Provide a technology center**, where neighbors can access on-line applications for housing, health insurance, employment, etc.
- **Provide a conference room** for job-skill trainings, mental health awareness sessions, senior issues, and much, much more.

**We tested this concept with Crow Wing County Social Services for almost a year.** Rachel Zetah, Crow Wing County Housing and Homeless Specialist, has been using an office at nearby Grace United Methodist Church. There she met with our neighbors in a private, non-institutional setting. **In a recent report, Rachel told our Board of Directors, "This has been a successful relationship, and we have to keep the momentum going for families up here."**

**It's been tested in other ways, too.** Take "Steve," who lived in a tent in the woods. He walked into the food shelf hungry, wet, cold, feeling hopeless. Over time, he learned someone cared. Our community supported him, encouraged him, believed in him. Today? It's not perfect. But, he has a job, a room, and is working through his legal issues. Best part? He is helping others "so much worse off than me." Not bad work for a local community.

**My mother, who years ago built her own little community (twelve children), had a saying.** It was a simple phrase to let people know she cared. It comes to mind as we express gratitude to the great communities who have been part of this process. As LAFS becomes a Community Resource Hub....

**"I am blessed to know the likes of you."**

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



# TRANSFORMATION = Holistic Help

## *The Community Resource Hub & Farms 2 Food Shelf*

On June 21, Lakes Area Food Shelf broke ground for a 1,920-square foot expansion to its current building in Pequot Lakes. The new space will house a Community Resource Hub co-located with the current food shelf building. The move extends LAFS' efforts to feed those in need while addressing factors causing a spike in hunger in the Brainerd Lakes Region. It comes in response to community feedback received as LAFS developed its first Strategic Plan. **It is expected to open in 2024.**



The practice of food shelf as “community resource hub” is gaining traction nationwide. Advocacy on behalf of those described as “food insecure” is now defined as delivering healthy, nutrient rich food and attempting to mitigate the underlying challenges that lead people to visit a food shelf. Feeding America – the leading non-profit hunger advocacy organization in the U.S. – supports this holistic approach because “...hunger is a complex issue. When people face hunger, they often struggle to meet other basic needs as well — such as housing, employment, and healthcare.”

Funding for the nearly \$500,000 building expansion came from a \$90,000 grant from The Blandin Foundation, a \$75,000 dollar-for-dollar challenge grant from The Hunt Family, \$20,000 from The Margaret A. Cargill Foundation of the Minneapolis Foundation, \$12,000 from Crow Wing Power Community Trust, and many generous ongoing private donations, with the balance from the Lakes Area Food Shelf Reserve Fund. The project was designed by Builders First Source of Pequot Lakes and CMC Inc. is managing the construction process.

## Farms 2 Food Shelf Grant Renewed For Year 2!

LAFS has expanded its nutrition choices to prominently feature fruits and vegetables from local sources thanks to the “Farms 2 Food Shelf” Program. The nutrient rich food is coming from as many as 10 Lakes Area farms. The program is funded by Sourcewell, a Minnesota government cooperative helping communities solve problems. Farms 2 Food Shelf provides high quality fruits and vegetables for low income families at Lakes Area Food Shelf, Pine River Area Food Shelf & CommUnity Meal Program.



## FARMS 2 FOOD SHELF



The quality of produce is so good, local physicians are referring their low-income patients with diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and other life-threatening conditions to the food shelf. Having the food shelf involved is very important because those with socioeconomic challenges are much more likely to have such diseases and have a harder time affording such foods.

Be Sure to Like and Follow us on Facebook and Instagram & visit our web page <https://lakesareafoodshelf.org/>

Space Is Limited  
Buy Tickets Today!

# Nisswa Christmas Home Tour

**OCTOBER  
19, 20, & 21 2023**

\$40 PER PERSON AT  
[WWW.LAFSHOMETOUR.COM](http://WWW.LAFSHOMETOUR.COM)  
OR AT OLDE CROW  
GATHERINGS



YOU'LL BE SHUTTLED TO TWO HOMES  
ELABORATELY DECORATED FOR THE  
HOLIDAYS. THEN RETURN TO NISSWA  
TO ENJOY A DAY OF DINING &  
SHOPPING AT YOUR FAVORITE  
MERCHANTS. ALL PROCEEDS FROM  
THE TOUR GO TO LAFS.

**First National  
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**NEWHERITAGE**  
CRAFTED CABINETS & INTERIORS



Sponsor Opportunities Available!

Call 218-568-8474 email: [info@lakesareafoodshelf.org](mailto:info@lakesareafoodshelf.org)

## Thank You Nisswa Merchants For Making This Possible!



"This is our 17th year  
decorating. Each year has its  
challenges, but always is  
enjoyable, And when it's for  
such a great cause, it's a  
**WIN WIN!**"

Monte and Carolyn Morken  
Buffalo Plaid



"I'll offer this quote from  
Winston Churchill:

'We make a living by what  
we get; we make a life by  
what we give.'

Lisa Pfannenstien,  
Anchored In



"Being in Nisswa my whole  
life, both as a resident and  
now business owner,  
I truly believe this is one of  
the best local fundraisers  
we have.  
People can check out the  
homes and get in the  
holiday spirit, all while  
helping the local  
community."

Kelsey Bean  
The Chocolate Ox



"Years ago the people at  
the food shelf cared for  
me and my family and  
now the Home Tour is my  
way to give back."

Kim Piehl  
Olde Crow Gatherings



"We love the Lakes Area Food Shelf.  
Everyone loves the Home Tour and  
how beautifully the homes are  
decorated."

It is a traditional event for Nisswa  
we all look forward to every year.

Tammy Grater  
Northern Gifts and Sweets



**Make An Impact This Holiday Season & Take The Tour!**



# Falling Off The “Hunger Cliff”

*Domestic and Global Calamities Drive Record Need*

## Why Are So Many People Facing Hunger?

The numbers are a bit staggering. After visits to Lakes Area Food Shelf broke records in 2021 and 2022, we’re on pace to do it again in 2023. Through June, visits to LAFS are 34% higher than 2022. So many of our friends and neighbors need assistance we’re seeing, as many as 150 families per week. We’ve had to increase the monthly food purchasing budget by 25% to \$25,000.

### What Is Happening?

War in Ukraine and throughout Africa, plus stunted harvests due to climate change are squeezing food supplies globally. Here in Minnesota and throughout the United States, inflation has driven up food prices at least 10%. An Urban Institute Survey identified the spike in food prices as more challenging to families than jumps in fuel, utilities, healthcare and rent. And, it hit as many pandemic relief programs expired **Bottom line: people are squeezed and they’re relying on us for help.**

### On The Edge of the “Hunger Cliff”

Poverty experts don’t see relief coming anytime soon, and they fear many people face a “hunger cliff,” pushed off when making a choice to skip meals in order to have enough to make ends meet. Minnesota’s Hunger Solutions, which supports hunger relief across the state, reported a 66% jump in visits to food shelves. Fortunately, when they see the cliff getting closer, our friends and neighbors can turn to Lakes Area Food Shelf and other community supported agencies for help.

### Volunteers, Donors, Grocers, And Farmers Step Up!



We couldn’t do this without YOU! Our volunteers unload semis full of food, stock shelves, assist our friends and neighbors, and do it all with a commitment to COMMUNITY. Our donors find a way to help pay our grocery costs, utility bills, and a repair person when one of our coolers has a bad day. Our grocery partners assist with food rescue and STRETCH your generous donations with discount pricing on some items. Thanks to Pequot Lakes Super Valu, Schaefer’s Foods in Nisswa, Cub Foods, Target, Wal Mart, and Aldi. And, of course, our Farms 2 Food Shelf partners continue to deliver nutrient rich fresh fruit and vegetables.

**Hunger is a stubborn problem. Thank you for your generosity!**

### Thank You Kathy Adams!



Kathy directed LAFS for just over two years and left in August. Facing record need, Kathy made sure no one who came to LAFS went hungry. Her vision, leadership, and smarts broadened LAFS’ mission and engaged our community as partners in making sure no one goes without a meal.

Thank you Kathy. Blessings, and Good Luck!

### Welcome Back Tammy!

Tamara “Tammy” Larsen has been named Director of (LAFS). This is a homecoming for Tammy, who led LAFS in 2020 and 2021, guiding the food shelf through the COVID 19 pandemic. Tammy’s background is in tech and banking, leading strong technical teams developing and supporting large, complex analytical systems She lives in Pequot Lakes with her husband Tom, who volunteers at LAFS.



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



**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:  
info@lakesareafodshelf.org

RETURN ADDRESS

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