



BEMIDJI COMMUNITY FOOD SHELF NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2017 

President's Message

Fredrick Buechner reminds us: "to eat is to acknowledge our dependence---both on food and on each other." Our food shelf is clear evidence of this as we do our best to meet the food needs of those in our community who find themselves in difficult circumstances.

We are dependent on each other to raise the necessary funds, process the deliveries, stock the shelves and serve our guests as they come through our doors. Thanks to our staff, to our Board of Directors and to our nearly eight hundred volunteers who keep this ministry going! Our work is also dependent on the generosity of many businesses in our community who give us food on a weekly basis. We owe them a debt of thanks!

Our service to the community continues to expand. At this writing we have served more than one thousand families than we had at this point last year. We have received a number of generous gifts this year including a check for \$30,000 from the NFL Legacy Fund which enabled us to purchase a used van. We recently completed our Deep Winter Greenhouse which will provide green vegetables throughout the year. I want to thank volunteer Roger Swenson for dedicating his time and talent to build the greenhouse.

Our Director Mary Mitchell and I have recently completed interviewing all of our board members. It was a privilege to spend time with them and to hear of their support and excitement about our work. Mary and I have brought the initial results to our board and will continue to utilize the data we have received.

Our Farm continues to do well. Our recent Harvest Ball was a great experience as we raised significant funds and had a wonderful time together. Thanks to Hannah, Candy, Emily and Jack for all of their work in organizing this fine event! A special word of thanks to our corporate sponsors as well as to those who donated items for our silent auction.

This is the season of Thanksgiving. Join with me in thanking God for the nearly forty years of the Food Shelf's ministry in this community! I am very thankful for our fine staff and outstanding volunteers! "Give thanks with a grateful heart!"

Winter has arrived and with it record numbers of visits to the Food Shelf. In his fine children's series, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, C.S. Lewis describes Narnia as "a place where it is always winter and never Christmas." We may have long winters, but we do have Christmas! Christmas is about the light overcoming darkness. When there was little room for hope, the child was born in Bethlehem. We have the privilege and the responsibility of bringing light to the darkness of many by offering healthy and nutritious food.

The New Year will bring fresh opportunities and challenges to our work. Perhaps you can give a year-end gift to the Food Shelf? I look forward to working with you in the coming year! Thanks for your gifts of time, talent and treasure!

---*Jim Fretheim, President, B.C.F.S. Board of Directors*



We are going into 2018 with a brand new look!

This year we invited the community to share ideas for a new logo for the food shelf and we received many wonderful submissions. The winning artist is Jason Ewert, a Bemidji film maker and designer. The new logo was revealed at the October Harvest Ball where Jason was awarded \$100 for his design. Our van will soon be sporting the new logo and T-shirts with the new logo will also be available.

2017 Harvest Ball

Our second annual Harvest Ball was held October 26 at the Bemidji Eagles Club. This event is a fundraiser for our Farm Project, and despite the cold and blustery weather, it was a great success.

We wish to thank the Bemidji Eagles Club for donating their venue for the Harvest Ball, "After Five" for their wonderful dance music, Paul Bunyan Communications, Sanford Health, First National Bank, North Central Door, Naylor Heating, Wagner Plumbing, Knife River Materials and Affinity Plus for their generous donations, Culvers for donating dessert, all the local businesses and individuals who donated silent auction items, and everyone else who helped on the night of the ball.

We are already planning for the 2018 growing season. If you are interested in serving on the Farm Advisory Committee, working in the DWG or on the farm, or becoming a donor contact us at the 444-6580 or bcfsfarm@gmail.com.

2017 Friend of the Farm

Our 2017 Friend of the Farm is Roger Swenson. Roger is a retired contractor who went over and above, contributing hundreds of volunteer hours to build the deep winter greenhouse. We are so grateful to Roger, and also to all of those who helped.

2017 Farm Wrap-up

If there is one thing to keep in mind when gardening or farming, it is that you can always count on the unexpected. The Farm faced a few challenges this year but we were able to react and adapt and as a result we brought in our largest harvest yet.

In the middle of the season, the AmeriCorps NCCC team of six young people we were counting on to arrive, disbanded, leaving us wondering how we would keep up the farm work. Fortunately we had recruited a Volunteer In Service to America (VISTA), Emily Schaeffer, to help build up our organization's volunteer programming. We had also hired a hard-working Farm Assistant, Jordan Lutz. Between Emily's

help with volunteer recruitment, the wonderful volunteers who gave their time and energy, the mulching accomplished this spring, and Jordan's assistance with everyday field needs, we were able to keep up with our crops.

Although cool weather and disease impacted our harvest, we were still able to bring in over 10,500 pounds of produce for our customers. This was achieved by keeping our potatoes, cabbage, cucumbers, and winter squash fertilized, maintaining weeds and paying diligent attention to problems at their onset.

Other Farm achievements include the nearly 40 client volunteers from the Developmental Achievement Center who received one-on-one assistance as they managed the raised beds behind the warehouse, and the 28 low-income families who grew their own food at their homes through our Community Raised Bed Project. Assistant Farm Manager, Candy Barthel, worked hard to run both projects.

With volunteer Roger Swenson's, indispensable help the Farm constructed a new facility. We now have a Deep Winter Greenhouse which will allow us to grow greens in the winter.

As we evaluate and record this year's successes and challenges, we look forward to next year with a new set of lessons learned and new ideas to help us when we are once again visited by the unexpected.

~ Hannab Klemm, Farm Manager and Mary Mitchell, BCFS Director



HERE'S TO 2018!

MAY IT BE A BOUNTIFUL YEAR FOR ALL OF US!

Family Visits Increase in 2017

Compared to November 29, 2016, as of November 29, 2017 we have had 1,103 more visits to the food shelf and distributed 140,000 more pounds of food. Funds budgeted for food have been exhausted. Thanks to community support, we have been able to continue to operate in the black even with the additional costs. **At this time, extra donations are very much appreciated**, as we have no way to predict if this trend will continue.

Marketplace Foods Stuff-a-Truck 2017: In Progress!

Thanks to everyone who contributed to help local families! Area students rocked the truck with over 8,000 pounds of food and over \$1,400. Collections at Marketplace Foods totaled 3,160 pounds and \$886.

Still more opportunities to donate:

Saturday December 9 at the Sanford Center for the BSU men's hockey game. Anyone who brings a canned good will receive a discount on the price of a ticket and one of the donors will win a Marketplace Foods gift card during the game. And, until December 9, the community is welcome to bring Stuff-a-Truck donations to the food shelf on Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. BCFS is grateful to the community and to Marketplace Foods for its ongoing sponsorship of this great campaign.



Deep Winter Greenhouse

Our Deep Winter Greenhouse is ready to go! About 100 people attended a ribbon-cutting ceremony held on September 30. Another 20 folks attended a November 7 workshop for those interested in starting their own DWG. The construction was made possible by U of M, Bernick's and Beltrami Electric Cooperative. This passive solar building will enable us to grow fresh greens through the winter months. We will be partnering with the U of MN to conduct research in the facility. We are excited to get underway with furnishing and planting the greenhouse.

VISTA



At the end of July, we welcomed Emily Schaeffer to the food shelf. Emily is a Volunteer in Service to America, (VISTA), and came to us through a partial sponsorship from the

Minnesota Association of Volunteer Administrators, (MAVA). Emily hales from York, Pennsylvania and previously served at BCFS with an AmeriCorps NCCC team in 2015.

Emily is working to develop systems which we can use to help recruit, train, integrate and retain volunteers, especially in the warehouse and on the Farm. Her work has already made a positive difference here. She will be here until August 2018. Please stop by her desk and say hello – she is right around the corner from the west door.



Upcoming Events

Monday, December 25, 2017

The food shelf will be closed.

Saturday, February 10, 2018

BCFS Annual Meeting at Bethel Lutheran Church

12:00 – Soup luncheon and business meeting followed by Public Keynote Address: Amanda Shongo, Nutritionist, NREMT, *Health Inequity in Relation to Cultural Norms and Social and Economic Environment*

**We wish you all a
blessed Christmas and a
Happy and Healthy
New Year!**





Bemidji Community Food Shelf
1260 Exchange Ave SE
PO Box 3118, Bemidji, MN 56619
218-444-6580 (o) 218-556-3249 (c)
www.bemidjifoodshelf.org
Check us out on Facebook!

Hours of Operation:

**MWF 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. and
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Every 3rd Monday**

**Bemidji Community Food Shelf
Contribution Form - DECEMBER 2017**

Mail completed form and your tax-deductible contribution to:
BCFS, P.O. Box 3118, Bemidji, MN 56619-3118

Here is my tax-deductible gift of \$ _____ to support the work of the Bemidji Community Food Shelf.
(Please make check payable to: BCFS)

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ I am interested in volunteering.

Thank you for your support!

_____ I am interested in becoming a monthly (sustaining) supporter.

(See www.bemidjifoodshelf.org, and click on an amount; then click on
“Donate Now”.)

_____ I am interested in supporting The FARM at BCFS.

_____ Please contact me with information about making a Legacy Gift to the BCFS.

_____ I wish to receive future newsletters via email.

Telephone/Cell: _____

Email Address: _____