



From the President's Desk

For lo the winter is past...flowers appear on the earth: the season of singing has come. Song of Solomon 2:11-12

Sigurd Olson reminds us that "summer is a season of richness and abundance. It is a time building strength and storing strength for whatever may come." While this is certainly true in nature it is not the case for many in our community. Summer brings an increasing need for food in our community and we are doing our very best to provide for those who come to the Food Shelf.

We are grateful for all of those who have contributed food and money to us via our Bemidji postal carriers. Thanks to our postal employees for collecting your gifts for our distribution.

The Bernick Family Foundation of St. Cloud, MN recently presented us with a check for \$5,000 to help with the construction of our Deep Winter Greenhouse. We are so appreciative of this gift! Thanks to Hannah Klemm for her careful management of our Farm.

June 13 was a day of celebration as we were the recipients of a National Football League Legacy Grant of \$30,000. This grant will enable us to purchase a van to transport food and equipment. Twenty children from the Boys and Girls Club of Bemidji joined us for this great event. Kudos to Jack Judkins for finding a van for us.

Director Mary Mitchell and I are in the process of interviewing each of our board members. It is a real pleasure to hear each person's story and to receive their suggestions for our shared work. These interviews are of great help to us as we seek to be as efficient as possible in providing for those in need among us.

July brings our "Open Your Heart Summer Challenge" Our goal is to raise \$20,000 to help us meet the many requests for help that the summer brings. An added incentive is that we will receive a partial match through Hunger Solutions! I hope you will consider making a special gift to this campaign!

It is a real pleasure to work with our Director Mary Mitchell. She gives outstanding leadership to this work. Be sure to thank her for her work the next time you are at the Food Shelf.

Thanks again for your partnership in this important program of providing healthy food to those who are most in need in our community!

~ Jim Fretheim, President BCFS

BEMIDJI COMMUNITY FOOD SHELF NEWSLETTER JULY 2017



Open Your Heart Summer Challenge

The OYH Summer Challenge aims to boost food shelves in Minnesota when they need it most. When school is out, families that rely on free and reduced breakfast and lunch programs for children have to provide more meals. Over 50% of the food we distribute is purchased with donated funds and we face our biggest challenge in the summer months.

The Summer Challenge is carried out in partnership with Hunger Solutions of Minnesota, who administers a matching grant to all participating food shelves. The grant is about a 10% match up to a maximum of \$5,000. This year our goal is \$20,000. This campaign makes such a difference to our ability to serve our families, many of whom we only see in the summer months.

It is easy to help your neighbors. You can give online by going to our facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/bemidjifoodshelf/> or our website: www.bemidjifoodshelf.org. Or use the attached form. Donations can also be dropped off at: 1260 Exchange Ave SE.



**Please take the
Summer
Challenge
and keep the
Food Shelf
humming!**

Volunteer and Community Appreciation Ice Cream Social

Our Annual Appreciation Ice Cream Social will be held August 20th from 2-5 p.m. Please park near the mural and come through the gate into the raised bed area behind the food shelf. Create your own sundae, relax, visit, and tour the Farm with our wonderful Farmers.

The Many Happenings of The Farm Project

The farming season is in full swing as are its labors. Thanks to the hard work of Farm volunteers, staff and the Americorps NCCC Oak 5 team which is here through the end of June, we've finished planting and accomplished much more. Our summer Farm Assistant, Jordan Lutz, has been a wonderful addition to the Farm crew and deserves special applause. He brings a can-do attitude, a wonderful work ethic and an eagerness to learn.

We're trying out a few new things on the farm this year, and seeing some savings in time and labor; always welcome rewards. Jack Judkins, Farm volunteer extraordinaire and Board Vice President lent us a great tractor implement that allowed us to prepare much of our growing space, mulch it, and install drip tape all at once! It is an enormous time saver.

'Deep mulching' is something we wouldn't have accomplished without Oak 5. Any bare spots we saw were covered with as much as 6 inches of leaves or hay to keep the weeds down, the water in, and add organic matter to the soil as it breaks down. We can see the difference between the spots we covered and ones we didn't: thriving veggies and protected soil versus parched ground and weeds silently doing as nature intended; getting that ground covered. As we move into the maintenance period of watering and weeding, all this mulch will save not only water but much hand wringing and labor. Harvesting will start soon and then we'll literally see the fruits of our labor.

The Developmental Achievement Center (DAC) Farmers are back with us until the end of September. They are tending the raised bed area behind the Food Shelf warehouse with their fearless leader, Farm Assistant Manager, Candy Barthel. Along with her entourage of committed volunteers, she guides the DAC Farmers through planting, weeding, watering, and watching their efforts grow. This year, Candy is also serving as the coordinator for the Farm's Community Raised Bed Project. Throughout the season, she is guiding families living at Bemidji's low-income housing projects through planting, tending, and harvesting their own backyard raised bed gardens.

The Deep Winter Greenhouse is another exciting Farm project on which to keep appraised. Construction on this innovative, passive solar building is just starting and will be completed this fall. A community field day will be held once construction is complete so stay tuned to our Facebook and the local newspaper for announcements later this summer.

Despite all that we've accomplished on and off the Farm, we always appreciate your helping hands. If you want to see how the farm is doing, don't hesitate to come outside, say hello, take a little self-guided tour, or stay a while and get your hands in the soil.

~ **Hannah Klemm, Farm Manager**

NFL Super Bowl Legacy Grant for Van



On June 13, BCFS announced it is receiving \$30,000 from the Minnesota Host Committee and Super Bowl Legacy Fund. BCFS will be using the funds to purchase a commercial van to get our food from the Crookston food bank, bring plants, soil and supplies to families in the community raised bed program, pick up food at area stores, and possibly provide a mobile food shelf service in the future. About twenty kids from The Boys and Girls Club helped us celebrate by planting plants, mulching and drawing flowers and vegetables with sidewalk chalk. We are so grateful for this wonderful opportunity!



The Food Shelf Farm Needs Your Support!

The Food Shelf Farm Project has attracted a lot of attention since its start in 2014 and for good reason. Not only has it provided over 25,000 pounds of healthy, fresh produce for our neighbors, it has provided opportunities for learning and engagement for the entire community and beyond. The Farm has also weathered many challenges: too little rain; too much rain; weeds; and too few helping hands. Now the Farm faces its biggest challenge to date: lack of funding.

Two very generous grants from the Northwest Minnesota Foundation and Sanford Health initially got the farm growing by allowing BCFS to hire part-time staff and a project coordinator for the Community Raised Bed Project. These grants have now run out and we expect that we will have no funds for the farm starting as of October 31, 2017.

Foundations tend to like to fund new and innovative projects, but once a program has been running for a while it can be difficult to find operational funding. Therefore, we are turning to all of you to help keep our Farm Project healthy.

The Farm started for two major reasons: 1) Diet-related illnesses such as heart disease and diabetes are much higher here than the state average; and 2) Access to fresh produce is difficult for both the food shelf families and the food shelf itself. When we moved to our current location in 2012, the unused portion of our lot seemed like a wonderful blessing to address these problems. We've since expanded our operation to the adjoining Developmental Achievement Center property.

Why should I support the Farm Project?

- Since 2014, over 100 school, organizational and church groups have volunteered on the Farm
- Over 25,000 pounds of produce has been raised and distributed since 2014
- About 25 DAC consumers have learned new and rewarding gardening skills
- Forty families have learned to raise their own produce through the Community Raised Bed Project
- To date, seven AmeriCorps Teams have contributed to the Farm infrastructure and production
- A Deep Winter Greenhouse to be constructed in partnership with the University of Minnesota Extension will help us provide year-round greens and will offer opportunities for researchers across the state.
- Our water collection and composting systems and sustainable management practices are on the cutting edge for urban farms.
- Our mulching system diverts the community's yard waste from the waste stream and puts it to good use
- Last but definitely not least - our highly qualified Farm staff: Hannah Klemm and Candy Barthel; we want to keep them!

Please specify **"Farm"** in your donation. Summer Challenge match applies in July.

INTRODUCING OUR NEW...

...Bookkeeper, Beth Nordhiem Baker



Beth has degrees in finance and computer programming and Management Information Systems and data processing, and Special Ed. Beth's career has encompassed a wide spectrum of positions including 14 years in the military. She lives on a beautiful farm in rural Clearbrook with her husband Ken and two dogs and two cats.

...Treasurer, Natalie Rader



Natalie is an Assistant Manager at Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union in the Call Center. She has worked in banking for 17½ years and has a love of helping people achieve their financial goals. Natalie has lived in Bemidji since January 2000 with her husband Dale and 4 year old daughter Hattie. The family loves the outdoors, especially camping and biking.

...Secretary, Enid Peterson



Enid is a retired elementary teacher who previously lived in Bemidji from 1998-2008 and has now returned to the area in 2015. She works part time as an office assistant for Pathways Lutheran Outdoors Ministry where her husband Steve is the Executive Director. They have two adult children.



Bemidji Community Food Shelf (BCFS)

NEWSLETTER/JULY 2017

1260 Exchange Avenue, SE

Bemidji, MN 56601 (218) 444-6580

bcfs@paulbunyan.net

Hours of Operation:

MWF 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. and

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

We're on the Web!

www.bemidjifoodshelf.org

Like us on Facebook!

Bemidji Community Food Shelf

Contribution Form - JULY 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 and specify "Farm" if for the Farm Project)

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 Food Shelf Farm Project.

_____ 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: _____