



NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2018

A SHORT FALL AND A SHORTFALL

We sure missed out on fall this year - it was so disappointing not to be able to enjoy some mild autumn days! Now that the weather has turned cold, it seems that our thoughts turn to those in need in our community. This is why folks are sometimes surprised to learn that it is summer, not winter, when we see the highest visitation at the Food Shelf. During June, July and August, area households made 12,464 visits to the Food Shelf and took home a total of 20,923 pounds of food. Each monthly visit provides families with enough food for about 10 meals. Because two-thirds of the food we distribute is purchased with donated funds and because donations are less in the summer, the Food Shelf had to dip into its reserves in September in order to keep the bills paid. Now is the time we count on your support to put us back in the black. Your donation now will help us continue to provide families with one of the most basic needs - food.

STUFF-A-TRUCK

The 27th Stuff-a-Truck is underway! Traditionally the focus has been on area schools, but businesses and other organizations are encouraged to join in the fun by collecting food and monetary donations. If you would like more information about how you can participate, please call Mary at 218-444-6580.

FALL CLEAN-UP

About 25 people showed up for our annual Fall Clean-up event. We were able to clean up the Farm and do deep cleaning in the warehouse, store, waiting room and kitchen that we would not otherwise accomplish. Many thanks to all those who participated, and to Dave's Pizza for feeding this hard-working crew!



Most of our awesome 2018 Fall Clean-up Crew!

NEW STAFF AT BCFS

In mid-July, the Food Shelf welcomed Volunteer Coordinator Emily Fairchild. Emily is most recently from Kansas City, Missouri where she was the Campus Life and Leadership Coordinator for Metropolitan Community College. Emily works with our regular volunteers, coordinates student workers and groups, and promotes volunteer opportunities. "It has been so helpful to have Emily here," said O.J., a regular volunteer from Trinity Cass Lake. "She is kind and positive and has a great way of getting us to do what needs to be done." If you have not already met Emily, please stop to say hello on Monday, Wednesday or Friday, between 9 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thanksgiving greetings to you from your Bemidji Community Food Shelf! As I look back on the past year we have many reasons to be thankful. Permit me to list a few:

- I am thankful for the privilege of serving our fellow citizens who are in need
- I am thankful for Mary Mitchell, our Executive Director, and her staff for their outstanding leadership
- I am thankful for the 700 plus volunteers who make our work possible
- I am thankful for the decision of local congregations who began this ministry 32 years ago
- I am thankful for our local vendors who donate nearly 40% of the food we distribute
- I am thankful for our donors who support our work financially with their generous contributions
- I am thankful for the many who contribute their talents to our work: accountant, carpenters, plumbers, tech support, etc.

We are a faith-based outreach. Jesus told us to “love our neighbors.” It is a privilege and a responsibility to do so.

Keep up the good work!

Jim Fretheim, President, BCFS Board of Directors

VOLUNTEER NEWS

Hello from your new Volunteer Coordinator! I am Emily Fairchild and was hired in July 2018 as the new part-time Volunteer Coordinator. This is a brand new position at BCFS, and I am brand new to the Bemidji area! I am originally from Iowa and moved here from Kansas City. I am scheduled Monday/Wednesday/Friday from 9am-2:30pm and my role is to train, coordinate, and supervise volunteers, as well as recruit new community volunteers. Many of the folks volunteering with the Food Shelf have been with us for a long time, so this position is intended to provide support and recognition for those volunteers. It has been a pleasure to work at the Food Shelf and engage with all our wonderful volunteers! There is truly good work happening here and I am thankful to be a part of it.

Volunteers from our member churches and community have been working diligently to provide customers at the Food Shelf with a quality experience. We have also had students from Bemidji State University and Oak Hills Christian College join our team of volunteers, usually on Fridays. As we head into winter, we are looking to recruit more volunteers to serve our customers. We are especially seeking interviewers as well as volunteers for certain Wednesday shifts. Interviewers work shifts from 9am-12:30pm or 12:30pm-4pm and have specialized training to use our computer program. If you are interested in fulfilling an interviewer role or one of our special Wednesday shifts, please let me know.

Our Food Shelf depends on volunteers to operate, so we offer a big thanks to our many volunteers! By our records, we have had over **900** volunteers so far this year with the Food Shelf! We track this information through our Civil Rights Training forms, so please be sure to complete this form once per year when you volunteer. This summer, volunteers donated approximately **3,815** hours of service in our store area (July-September). This number does not reflect the many hours of service from AmeriCorps NCCC team Maple 6 who served during the month of August, of which we are so thankful, nor volunteers on the Farm (see Rachel’s report for volunteer hours served).

Thank you all for the welcome to the Bemidji community and our Food Shelf - I am happy to be here and look forward to continuing to be a part of the good work happening at BCFS.

Peace,
Emily



CHANGE IN HOURS OF OPERATION

Our hours have changed. We will now be closing at 3 p.m. on the third Monday of the month. If you need service and that was the only time you could come in, please call us to make other arrangements.

FARM REPORT

Fall greetings from the snow covered Farm at BCFS! The growing season has come to a close and now planning begins for next season. Despite a late start due to the cold weather, a long dry spell, and early frost, the 2018 season was a success!

I want to start off by saying a very big THANK YOU to all of you who supported our 3rd Annual Harvest Ball fundraising event in September! We were able to raise \$11,023 to benefit the Farm. Whether you came out to enjoy our locally sourced dinner, partake in the silent auction, or your business was a sponsor, we could not have done it without you!

We were fortunate to have two AmeriCorps NCCC teams help in the fields. Maple 4 was here in early June and aided in getting much of the seeds and starters in the ground. Maple 6 came in August for a month and harvested several thousand pounds of produce as well as erecting our new 72-foot-long high tunnel. Both teams were very professional, tons of fun to work with, and great young adults.

The Farm now has three season extenders: a 21-foot-long high tunnel who I've named "Minnie," that housed a majority of the tomato and pepper crops this year; the 36-foot that housed a majority of the tomato and pepper crops this year, and the newly constructed 72-foot. Both larger tunnels were funded through grant programs through Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which falls under the US Department of Agriculture.

As many of you know, the Farm also has a Deep Winter Greenhouse (DWG) which was partially funded through a grant and partnership with the UMN. This winter season is our first in doing research for the UMN and also growing leafy greens for our food shelf customers. Stop by for a tour during business hours to learn more!

With the snow on the ground and the season officially over, our total numbers are impressive. While we didn't reach our goal, the Farm still provided 7,281 pounds of produce. This included lots of tomatoes, peppers, summer squash, beans, lettuce, cabbage, leeks, beets, cucumbers, watermelon, winter squash, and pumpkins with all of it going directly to our Food Shelf customers. This could not have been accomplished without the help of all our volunteers this season. We greatly surpassed the goal for volunteer hours, coming in with 3,790 hours for the growing season!

Thanks for your continued support for the Farm and the BCFS.....Happy Holidays and see you in the New Year, Cheers! – Rachel Schaap, Farm Manager



FARM VISIONING

The Farm Project at the Food Shelf is undergoing a review. An advisory group of about 10 committed individuals met October 23rd to talk about the history and the future of the project, and will continue discussions through most of the winter. The Farm is a wonderful concept but is not sustainable in its current operation. Although we have been fortunate to have had several AmeriCorps Teams over the years, their future participation is not guaranteed. The advisory group will make recommendations to our board of directors for discussion and action. If you are interested in participating in this process, please call Mary or Rachel at 218-444-6580.

ADOPT A WEDNESDAY SHIFT

Do you, or your company, church or organization have a heart for service? Recently, two of our wonderful churches have each had to give up one of their volunteer shifts. We are seeking individuals, a church, an organization, or a business interested in adopting a shift. Both shifts are on Wednesdays: the morning shift (8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.) on first Wednesday of the month, and the afternoon shift (12 noon to 3:30 p.m.) on the second Wednesday of the month. Please contact Emily Fairchild at 218-444-6580 ext. 28 if you would like to learn more about how you can help.



**Bemidji Community Food Shelf Contribution Form
November 2018**

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: _____

Thank you for supporting area families!

_____ Please contact me about volunteering!

_____ I am interested in giving online and/or becoming a monthly (sustaining) supporter.
(See www.bcfsmn.org, and click on "Donate".)

_____ I would like this donation to go toward the BCFS 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: _____

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