Meet Jason

Jason Myers is a military veteran. For years he battled addiction and struggled finding consistent employment. One day, he met a graduate of Heart Ministry Center’s Fresh Start Program who was working for a company that had turned Jason down for a job sparking his curiosity.

Jason connected with the Heart Ministry Center and learned about its 15-week Fresh Start Program that provides participants with job skills training, financial education, therapy, food assistance, and other support.

The Heart Ministry Center, located in North Omaha, is one of Food Bank for the Heartland’s largest partner organizations. It serves approximately 650 people each week at its food pantry, medical and dental clinics, and through its case management program.

The Heart Ministry Center cares about our choices and treat everyone with dignity.

“The Heart Ministry Center is thoughtful about how the food is distributed,” said Jason. “They care about our choices and treat everyone with dignity.”

Jason enrolled in the Heart Ministry Center’s Fresh Start Program and worked hard to achieve his goals. He took an early bus to the center — often arriving before staff members. He graduated in August and now works as a case assistant at the Heart Ministry Center helping others.

“The Heart Ministry Center restored my dignity and my faith in humanity,” he said. “It gave me the tools I need to succeed.”

WoodmenLife’s Match for Omaha Gives! Doubles Your Impact on May 20!

“Omaha Gives! spans 24 hours, but the positive impact on the organizations, donors, and community at-large resonates far beyond one day,” said Brian Barks, President and CEO of Food Bank for the Heartland.

Omaha Gives! is May 20, and WoodmenLife is offering a $10,000 match for gifts made to Food Bank for the Heartland during this day-long, online giving initiative. Thanks to the generosity of WoodmenLife, the impact of each dollar donated during Omaha Gives! will be doubled! Your $10 donation can provide enough food for up to 60 meals for our neighbors in need.

Please consider making a donation to Food Bank for the Heartland during Omaha Gives! on May 20 at OmahaGives.org. You may schedule your donation today and it will be processed on May 20.

Omaha Gives! has raised more than $49 million for local nonprofit organizations in Douglas, Sarpy, and Pottawattamie counties since 2013 through more than 300,000 donations.
Letter from the President & CEO

April is a very special month! Spring is upon us and summer is just around the corner. Baseball season is underway (Go Cubs Go!) and golf clubs emerge from hibernation. Most importantly, it’s National Volunteer Month.

At Food Bank for the Heartland, volunteers are crucial to the work we do. The Food Bank purchases fresh produce in bulk and volunteers repackage it into family friendly sizes. Each week, volunteers assemble 8,100 backpacks which are delivered to schools to help feed hungry children. It’s because of you events like Celebrity Chef are a huge success!

Earlier this year I met a couple who are regular volunteers at the Food Bank. While working with them on an assembly line repacking a massive box of cereal into one gallon plastic bags, I learned they enjoy volunteering at the Food Bank because the staff is friendly, the volunteer experience is fun, and they leave feeling like they make a difference in their community. I couldn’t help but smile!

In 2019, more than 44,000 hours of time, the equivalent of 21 full-time employees, were donated by volunteers. That is remarkable! Every one of those volunteer hours assist our neighbors who struggle to put healthy food on the table. If you haven’t spent time with us in our volunteer center, I urge you to check us out. You won’t regret it. If you have volunteered at the Food Bank or elsewhere, I celebrate you!

Thanks for making our community a better place to live!

Brian Barks
President & CEO

Heartfelt Thanks to our Extraordinary Volunteers

Volunteers are the heart of Food Bank for the Heartland. Thousands of people come to the Food Bank each year wanting to make a difference in the lives of our neighbors in need. They package apples, onions, and other produce; sort donated food; pack BackPacks for local at-risk children; and help in countless other ways. In 2019, over 44,000 volunteer hours were donated!

April is National Volunteer Month, and we are saying thank you. We appreciate everyone who has generously given their valuable time to assist Food Bank for the Heartland. This extraordinary service has an immense impact on our operations. Our volunteers are helping feed thousands of children, families, and seniors across Nebraska and western Iowa.

If you are interested in volunteering or organizing a group to volunteer, please visit FoodBankHeartland.org to register or contact Spencer Cohorst, at SCohorst@FoodBankHeartland.org.
A Donor Bill of Rights

Philanthropy is based on voluntary action for the common good. It is a tradition of giving and sharing that is primary to the quality of life. To assure that philanthropy merits the respect and trust of the general public, and that donors and prospective donors can have full confidence in the not-for-profit organizations and causes they are asked to support, Food Bank for the Heartland declares that all donors have these rights:

- To be informed of the organization’s mission, of the way the organization intends to use donated resources and of its capacity to use donations effectively for their intended purposes.
- To be informed of the identity of those serving on the organization’s governing board, and to expect the board to exercise prudent judgment in its stewardship responsibilities.
- To have access to the organization’s most recent financial statements.
- To be assured their gifts will be used for the purposes for which they were given.
- To be assured that information about their donations is handled with respect and with confidentiality to the extent provided by law.

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Carla Hall Dazzles at the 19th Annual Celebrity Chef

Nearly 1,100 guests were captivated by chef and entertainer Carla Hall at the Food Bank’s annual Celebrity Chef fundraiser on March 5. Carla demonstrated some of her recipes on stage during an interactive culinary presentation and danced to the musical stylings of local band Envy during the first-ever Celebrity Chef after-party.

More than $500,000 was raised at the event to help feed thousands of hungry children, families, seniors, and veterans across Nebraska and western Iowa.

Thank you to Conagra Brands Foundation, KETV NewsWatch 7, WoodmenLife, and all our event sponsors. We are grateful for the attendees, volunteers, Food Bank board members, and staff members who made this year’s Celebrity Chef a success.

Save the date for our 20th annual Celebrity Chef on March 4, 2021.
Extends Your Positive Impact

By including Food Bank for the Heartland in your estate plans or naming Food Bank for the Heartland as a beneficiary of your will or insurance policy, you leave a legacy that provides nutritious meals to those who are hungry for years to come. A planned gift can be of any size; none too small. Most importantly, you can continue your legacy of support for Nebraska and western Iowa children, families, seniors and veterans in need.

To learn more about planned giving opportunities, please contact Kelly Ptacek, Vice President of External Affairs, at (402) 905-4808 or KPtacek@FoodBankHeartland.org.