

THE DISH

WINTER 2021



MEET AMBER

Thousands of Heartland families like Amber's have found themselves in the unexpected position of needing food assistance due to the pandemic. Food Bank for the Heartland and our network of partners across Nebraska and western Iowa are working relentlessly to provide them with the meals they need.

On a chilly Saturday morning, Amber sits in her car amid rows of other vehicles in the parking lot at All Saints Episcopal Church in Omaha. All the individuals and families there are waiting for the Food Bank's drive-up mobile pantry to begin.

Amber has been to this monthly mobile pantry before. Her husband lost his job of 10 years in June due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He eventually found another one, but his earnings are 50% less. After paying bills, the family has \$60 each month to spend on food, and that is not enough.

Amber has been visiting the Food Bank's mobile pantries to feed her two young children. **She said the food she receives is a blessing. Her children especially appreciate the fresh produce.**



Volunteers load fresh and shelf-stable food items into awaiting vehicles at the Food Bank's mobile pantry at All Saints Episcopal Church in Omaha.

"We are struggling," Amber said with tears in her eyes, "but we are going to be okay."

Dedicated volunteers from All Saints wheel out shopping carts filled with bags of fresh apples and carrots, a frozen turkey, and a community pack of pasta, tomato sauce, rice, macaroni and cheese, and other nonperishable staple items. They load all the food directly into the trunk of Amber's car.



Thank You for Helping Make the Holidays Brighter for Families in Need

The Food Bank asked for help stocking the shelves in the distribution center, and the community's response was overwhelming!

More than 6,300 pounds of food were donated during the Shine the Light on Hunger drive-up food drive on December 5. Over 130 vehicles came to the Food Bank to give nonperishable items for families in need during the holiday season.

Your generous support is providing meals to our neighbors who need them most. We could not do it without you. And, thank you to the Food Bank volunteers and staff who unloaded the food donations directly from vehicles to prioritize health and safety during the pandemic.

Letter from the President & CEO

2020 brought unprecedented challenges for Food Bank for the Heartland and the communities we serve. Thousands of individuals and families across Nebraska and western Iowa experienced unemployment, disruptions in schooling, financial hardship, and food insecurity due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and they turned to us for help.



The demand for emergency meals surged. We met many neighbors like Amber who never expected to need help accessing food for her family.

The Food Bank has risen swiftly to tackle these challenges. We forged innovative partnerships throughout our 93-county service area, altered distribution methods to prioritize safety, and worked relentlessly to communicate about available food resources.

Last year we provided over 28 million meals — the most in our organization's history. This feat was possible by the outpouring of support from our volunteers, donors, network of pantry partners, and other advocates.

During the darkest days, I have witnessed the best of humanity. I am inspired by my colleagues and partners for their collective perseverance and compassion in the face of adversity.

We usher in 2021 mindful that many challenges of the previous year will persist. The economic impact of the pandemic will be long-lasting. But, we have hope. We know that our diverse, dynamic community of supporters will continue to step up and rally around our neighbors in need.

This year Food Bank for the Heartland will commemorate 40 years of proudly serving Iowans and Nebraskans. Together we will overcome this crisis and strengthen our community. Because of supporters like you, we will remain here feeding children, seniors, and families for years to come.



Brian Barks
President & CEO

TOP FOOD DONORS CONTRIBUTE OVER 6.4 MILLION MEALS

Thank you to our top food donors in 2020. Collectively, these companies donated more than 6.4 million meals to the Food Bank! We are so grateful to those listed below and the thousands of others who have supported our mission and operations.

Aldi
Baker's
Conagra Brands
Costco
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Flowers Bakery
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Jack Links
LALA
Mondelez
Omaha Steaks

Reinhart
Rotella's Italian Bakery
Sam's Clubs
Smithfield
Target
Tyson
Walmart



ANNUAL HOLIDAY CAMPAIGN GENERATES MEALS FOR HEARTLAND NEIGHBORS

Thank you to Conagra Brands Foundation for presenting the 14th annual Shine the Light on Hunger campaign during the holiday season benefitting Food Bank for the Heartland. The campaign raised critical meals for children, seniors, and families in need and awareness of increased food insecurity across the Heartland due to the pandemic.

The community made financial gifts and donated nonperishable food items at Baker's locations across the Omaha metro and local arts and cultural organizations surpassing the 1.5 million meal goal this year. **We appreciate everyone who supported Shine the Light on Hunger.**

FOODIES PROVIDE URGENT SUPPORT

Food Bank for the Heartland Friends have continued supporting the organization throughout the pandemic. The Foodies hosted the Peanut Butter and Jelly Challenge and the Holiday Baking Challenge in the fall and rallied friends and family for support. Both drives collected urgently needed nonperishable food items and funds for the Food Bank.

During the spring, the Foodies will hold their annual Grocery Games fundraiser and prepare appreciation gifts for the teachers and staff members who administer the Food Bank's Backpack program in schools across the Heartland.

For more information about the Foodies, please contact Joani Mullin, community engagement officer, at (402) 905-4810 or JMullin@FoodBankHeartland.org.



Foodies Catherine Mahoney, Melissa McMullen, and Gabby Mormino stand in front of bins at the Food Bank filled with donated baking items from the Holiday Baking Challenge.



KETV reporter Katherine Garcia interviews Conagra Brands employee Lea Anne Dea in the Food Bank's Volunteer Center while other Conagra Brands employees assemble meals for the Backpack program.

KETV PARTNERS WITH FOOD BANK TO RAISE FUNDS AND AWARENESS

During these unprecedented times, thousands of people, foundations, and corporate partners throughout our community have stepped up to ensure no one goes hungry as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you to KETV NewsWatch 7 and the station's viewers for generously donating to Food Bank for the Heartland through the four KETV Giving Wednesday campaigns held on air and online in the spring and fall of 2020. The campaigns also raised awareness of the increased need for emergency food and the Food Bank's ongoing COVID-19 response in our communities.

The Food Bank is purchasing food in record quantities to meet the staggering demand, and the funds generated from the KETV Giving Wednesday campaigns have provided hundreds of thousands of meals for our neighbors across Nebraska and western Iowa.

FOOD BANK RECEIVES NAM'S CATALYST AWARD

Food Bank for the Heartland is humbled and honored to be selected as the recipient of the 2020 Catalyst Award from the Nonprofit Association of the Midlands (NAM). The Catalyst Award recognizes nonprofit organizations in Nebraska and southwest Iowa that inspire and drive excellence in the nonprofit sector. The Food Bank received this honor at NAM's annual Nonprofit Summit of the Midlands on November 13.

From the nomination:

"The organization's ability to partner on various initiatives makes the nonprofit sector in the area stronger. During a time of despair, (the Food Bank) has promoted unity, collaboration, and a deep, deep commitment to support ALL of our community members in need regardless of location."

"Brian (Barks') leadership makes our sector and our community stronger. He and his staff are the truest example of servant leadership and are doing whatever it takes to support our communities during this pandemic."



20TH ANNUAL CELEBRITY CHEF FUNDRAISER GOING VIRTUAL

Food Bank for the Heartland is preparing for the 20th annual Celebrity Chef fundraiser on March 4, 2021. We are thrilled to welcome back award-winning chef and television personality Curtis Stone!

Celebrity Chef is going virtual this year to continue the tradition of one of our signature events while prioritizing the health and safety of the community during the pandemic.

Chef Stone will do a livestreamed culinary demonstration from his kitchen to guests' homes. The event will also feature meal kits for guests, an online auction, and other unique components.

Thank you to our presenting sponsors, Conagra Brands Foundation and KETV NewsWatch 7. You may visit FoodBankHeartland.org to purchase tickets.



Leave your Legacy with a Planned Gift

To ensure Food Bank for the Heartland is there to help those suffering from food insecurity now and in the future, our community needs leaders like you who have a vision of — and commitment to — hunger relief.

As we take on the challenges of today and plan for tomorrow, please consider including the Food Bank in your will or other estate plans.

To learn more about planned giving opportunities, please contact Joanne Kamppinen, philanthropy officer, at (402) 315-2562 or JKamppinen@FoodBankHeartland.org.

"It is important to me to sustain the practice of providing critical meals to children, seniors, and families across the Heartland who are food insecure even when I am gone. If I can continue to help make lives better for others in my community, I want to do so, and including an exemplary organization like Food Bank for the Heartland in my estate plan will make this possible."

- Stephanie Wernig, PhD



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