

Thank you for helping our family get back on our feet

Hi, I'm Christine and I'm here with my daughter Allie to get a basket of food. A couple of months ago my husband had to switch jobs, and now we're trying to get back on our feet. He works doing deliveries for construction. When he was between jobs, things got really hard. When your payments have to go out at certain times, but the money isn't coming in, finances can get real tight! Being able to come to Flathead Food Bank (a partner agency) and get food helps us out a lot. It means we can still have something to eat when we need to pay our bills.

We're struggling now, but when we get back to being a two-income family, we'll be fine. Allie is finishing up high school with an online program so she can work. And I'm ready to get back out into the work force as well. Several years ago I had a stroke and got very sick, and it's taken me a long time to get back to being myself

again. I'm doing a lot better. I've done a lot of different jobs in my life, but it's hard to find a job when you've been out for a while.

"...it's really nice to know the Food Bank is here to fall back on." —CHRISTINE

When the cupboards are bare

There have been times when we've had to go without a meal. Sometimes my mom brings us something from her freezer that we can eat. We do a lot of our own cooking and baking, even bread. Hunting has gotten too expensive for us with the price of gas, so we do a lot of gardening in the summer. We grow tomatoes, zucchini and cucumbers, which we pickle.

It feels good knowing we can come here when we open the cupboards and there isn't much there. I want to say thank you to the people who are providing the food. During the months when we just don't have enough food to feed our family, it's really nice to know the Food Bank is here to fall back on. Thank you!



INSIDE

More than 30 years of fighting hunger together

Helping families through a difficult winter

PAGE 2



Our Mobile Food Pantry is on the road!

PAGE 2



Changing lives!

PAGE 3



A WORD OF GRATITUDE

FROM GAYLE GIFFORD



Gayle Gifford
Chief Executive Officer
Montana Food Bank
Network

Winter is such a difficult time of year for those who don't have enough income to meet their needs. From struggling to have enough food for meals, to transportation issues or paying for medical care for winter illnesses, each of these factors challenges families who are already struggling on a day-to-day basis.

Not only do we need to meet the needs of families who are struggling, but as we distribute food across the entire state of Montana, we're also adopting programs that address the needs of a variety of communities—especially our rural communities. Mail-a-meal is one of those programs, reaching rural areas by using the Postal Service to deliver shelf-stable boxes of food to pre-qualified people in need. For a small community, all it requires is a business or organization willing to receive the food for distribution.

For families like Christine's or Shane's, knowing they can count on the Food Bank during these difficult winter months means a great deal. And we're so grateful for the way you've continued to support and grow with us in our mission. You've responded to our needs in so many remarkable ways this year, showing your willingness to support us in the long-term fight against hunger. Thank you for investing your time and resources to help feed those who are hungry in Montana.

With gratitude,

Gayle Gifford, Chief Executive Officer
Montana Food Bank Network

Our Mobile Food Pantry is on the road!

Last fall, the Montana Food Bank Network rolled out an updated Mobile Food Pantry Program thanks to the sponsorship of Northwest Farm Credit Services, CoBank and Walmart. Designed to reach underserved rural areas, MFBN's new 'Chuck Wagon' truck has been distributing food to Shelby and Fort Benton.

With the help of outstanding community partners and dedicated Northwest Farm Credit Services volunteers, Mobile Food Pantry distributions provided supplemental food assistance to 185 households in these communities. Participants receive a box containing about one week's worth of food for a family of four, as well as fresh produce. As a result of the program, the Sagebrush Food Pantry in Shelby will be joining MFBN as an active partner agency!

Your support is helping us reach out to hungry families in our underserved, rural communities through the Mobile Food Pantry Program. This spring, be on the lookout for the Chuck Wagon rolling down a highway near you!



Volunteers at our
Mobile Pantry
distribute food
to 185 households.



Hunger's Hope Awards:

Honoring those who make a difference

At the Feeding Hope Gala on November 14, 2014, the Montana Food Bank Network presented our Hunger's Hope Awards to individuals and organizations who have made a significant difference toward ending hunger in Montana.

First Lady of Montana **Lisa Bullock** is passionate about feeding children. She has recognized schools that have improved their school breakfast programs and created a Youth Leadership Council, working with students to address hunger in our state. **Ann Sharkey** has volunteered at the Food Bank since 2011 bringing her attention to detail, her efficiency and her passion to ending hunger in Montana. **Virginia "Ginny" Mermel** has the task of feeding low-income, food-insecure students in Billings through school pantries and Backpack programs, she has expanded the reach and scope of child-hunger programs and worked to ensure they have stable funding. Over the last decade, the **Good Food Store** has supported numerous fundraising events, donating enough money to MFBN to provide over 47,000 meals.



First Lady **Lisa Bullock** with
Gayle Gifford, CEO of MFBN
and Ross Tillman, Chair of the
MFBN Board of Directors.

Thank you for showing me how much you care

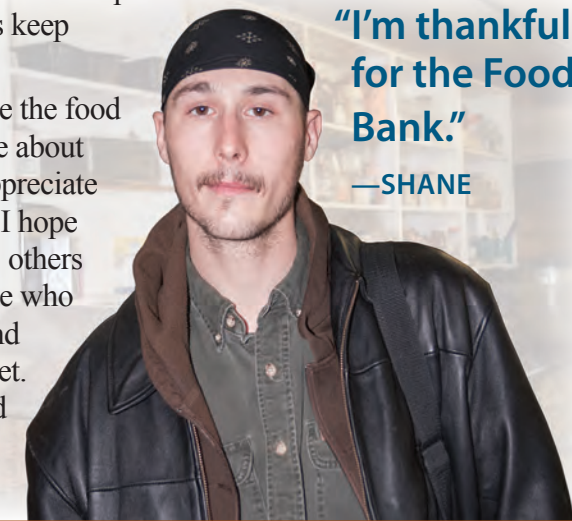
I'm Shane, and I'm living at the Poverello Center while I get back on my feet. I've had a lot of struggles in my life. I'm divorced and don't see my son very often because he's in another city. About five years ago I started having grand mal seizures and other health issues, so it's been hard staying in school, but that's what I'm trying to do.

I'm thankful for the Food Bank—the meals here are really good. They help me stay strong so I can work. I have a part-time job doing janitorial work. I'm in a lot of pain every day because of my health issues, but I'm trying to be strong so I can get reconnected with my son.

Food that keeps me healthy

I know what it's like to go hungry. Before, when I was homeless, I had to dig through the garbage to get enough to eat. Now I don't have to do that anymore. Not only does the food here help me fill my stomach, it also helps keep me healthy.

I know the people who provide the food choose to do it because they care about others, and that means a lot. I appreciate everything you've done for me. I hope you keep it up, because it shows others how much you care about people who have been down on their luck and are trying to get back on their feet. I thank you for this blessing, and I thank God as well.



"I'm thankful
for the Food
Bank."
—SHANE

Agency Spotlight: Seeing lives changed



Shelby is the kitchen manager at the Poverello Center, one of our partner agencies, which serves daily meals to the hungry.

Shelby Fowler has been cooking for hungry people at the Poverello Center for four years. "Every day when I get a smile or a thank you, that's giving back to me," she says. Shelby started volunteering at the shelter and then became their kitchen manager. She enjoys seeing the clients improve their lives and go out into the world. "Most of the people here are really caring, and really trying to seek change in their life," says Shelby. "It's a really positive thing, and I love helping people."

Shelby plans the meals based on what she gets from the Food Bank. Fifty percent of what she serves comes from MFBN, and Shelby is enthusiastic about the support she receives from the MFBN staff. "They're my solid base," she says.

"They really do care about what they're doing. And that's what makes a difference, when all of us collaborate in these types of environments."

To those who support the Food Bank, Shelby says, "They're amazing! And by helping, they're changing lives." Your support of MFBN means people like Shelby can cook for those who are homeless and hungry in our neighborhoods. Thank you!

A gift to help agencies meet winter needs

In December, the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation announced the distribution of a special holiday donation of \$206,000 to hunger-fighting agencies across Montana.

"At the Foundation, we're very aware that Montanans continue to struggle during these difficult economic times, and this donation is designed to help Food Banks, food pantries, Rescue Missions and homeless shelters across Montana meet the increased demand they are experiencing," says Mike Halligan, executive director of the Foundation.

Winter and the holiday seasons are a particularly challenging time for struggling families. Thanks to the Washington Foundation, the Montana Food Bank Network and our partner agencies throughout the state can step up our efforts bringing help and hope to those in need.

Hungry in Montana 2014

MFBN's Hungry in Montana 2014 report highlights the experiences of food pantry clients across the state. Based on a survey of 200 pantry clients from rural, urban and reservation areas, the report provides an understanding of both the contributing factors and the consequences of hunger in Montana. The findings demonstrate the importance of addressing the root causes of hunger, while strengthening programs that help families keep food on the table. To learn more, read the full report at mfbn.org/research

Thank you for helping families through the difficult winter months

As spring approaches, so many of our families, seniors and individuals are still struggling with the effects of the difficult winter months. Often people get behind on their bills because of unexpected costs or difficulties. That's when affording food becomes harder and harder.

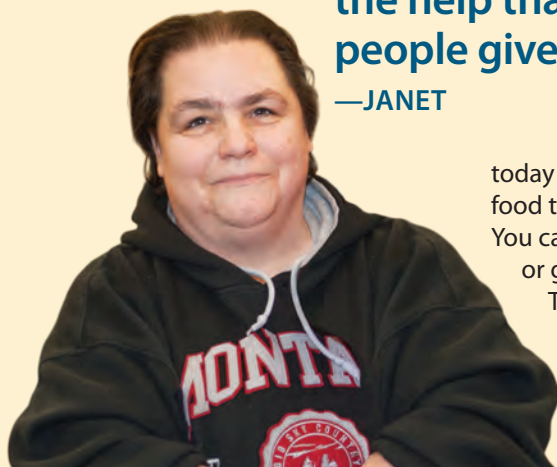
For Janet, coming to get food makes a big difference for her family. Janet has a teenager and an older, disabled daughter with a baby who also lives in the house. Janet remembers going hungry back when she was a young mother. "I'd feed my kids before I'd feed myself," she says. Although they are struggling now, things

are different. "The Food Bank helps a lot," she explains.

Although Janet's husband is over sixty-five, he's looking for work to support the family. He recently lost his farming job when the farm went under. Janet babysits to help keep some money coming in. But paying the bills and getting enough food to feed her family can be really hard. That's why she's so thankful to people who support the Food Bank. "Every bit helps," she says. "Thank you very much. I appreciate all the help that people give."

**"Every bit helps!
I appreciate all
the help that
people give."**

—JANET



We rely on your support to reach out to hungry families and individuals across the entire state of Montana. And every day your gifts make a difference in the lives of families like Janet's. Your gift today will help us provide nourishing food to those who need it most. You can return the enclosed form, or give a gift online at mfbn.org. Thank you for your faithful friendship to those who are hungry throughout the year! Your support changes lives.

Discover planned giving

Planned giving is a way to integrate your financial planning goals by providing you with tax and income benefits while supporting an organization you care about.

Bequest—Your Will may include a gift of a specific asset, a dollar amount or a percentage of your estate to charity.

Charitable gift annuities and charitable remainder trusts—These plans can provide you with lifetime income, a charitable income tax deduction and leave a nice gift to charity. We can help you sell assets such as stock or real estate, tax free.

Life estate—You can make a tax-deductible gift of your home and remain living in it for your lifetime. Additional strategies can provide you with cash, a charitable deduction and even income.

To find out how you can benefit from planned giving, contact Bill Mathews at 406-721-3825, ext. 244 or email him at bmathews@mfbn.org. Thank you for generously using your assets to help us feed those who are hungry in Montana.

Stay connected!

Visit us at facebook.com/feedingmontana
Follow us on Twitter @mfbn

MY SPRING DONATION

YES, Gayle, I want to make a difference in the fight against hunger in Montana.

Enclosed is my gift of: ☐ \$250 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$25 ☐ Other \$_____

☐ I commit to a monthly gift of \$_____. My first gift is enclosed.
☐ I have already included Montana Food Bank Network in my Will or Trust

Please charge my gift on my credit card:
☐ VISA ☐ MC ☐ AMEX ☐ DISC

NAME _____

CARD NUMBER _____

EXP. DATE _____

ADDRESS _____

SIGNATURE _____

TELEPHONE # _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

My email address is: _____@_____

Please make your check payable to:
MONTANA FOOD BANK NETWORK
P.O. Box 17830, Missoula, MT 59808-7830

Your donation is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. We will send a receipt for your records.

To charge your gift by phone, please call 406-721-3825 or give online at mfbn.org

Your gifts change lives!

