



# FEEDING MONTANA

News from Montana Food Bank Network

SPRING 2014

mfbn.org

## We're thankful for the Food Bank— knowing people care gives us hope

My name is Gayelyn and I can't tell you how much it means to get a box of food from the Food Bank. Every bit we get feels like Christmas to me. The canned fruit is a luxury and I love getting a bag of dried prunes! It's a relief to know we're going to get veggies and meat and have rice and beans that will last us for a while.

My husband and I moved to a very rural area eleven years ago. We both live on disability. He is a diabetic, and I have multiple sclerosis, so going to doctors is expensive. For many years I worked in the medical field. After I was diagnosed, it was depressing to have to give up working and be unable to support my family. But I can still walk, so I'm thankful.

### Having enough to eat helps us stay warm

Winters are long and that's the hardest time—just trying to survive and stay warm. We push a carpet under the doorjamb for warmth.

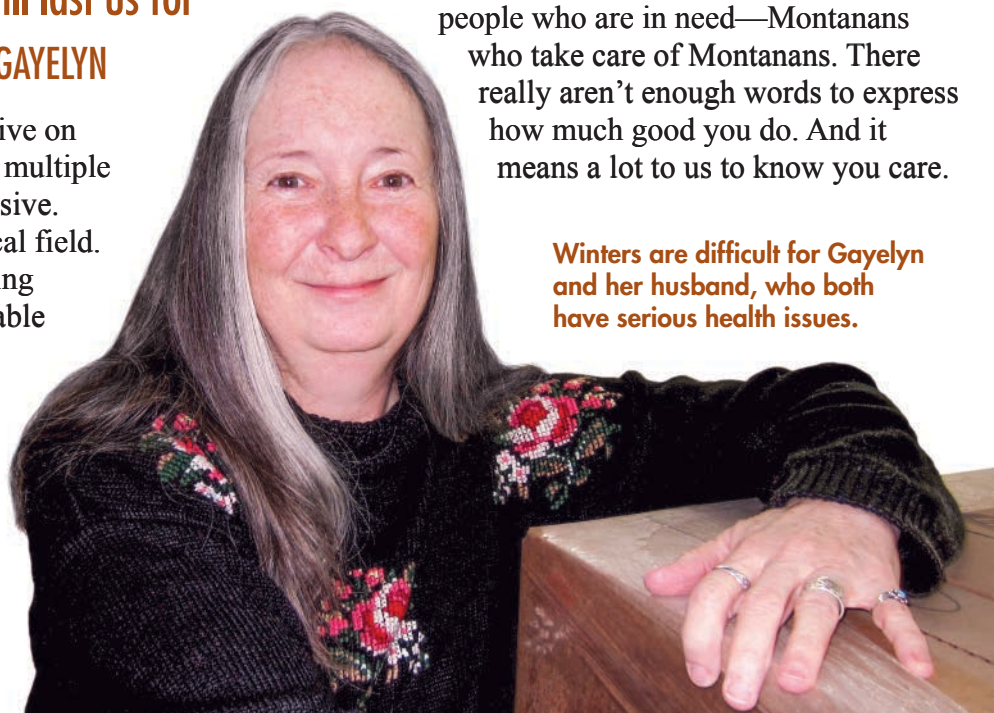
**"It's a relief to know we're going to get veggies and meat and have rice and beans that will last us for a while." —GAYELYN**

A lot more of our money goes towards paying utilities, which means less for food. But food is important in the cold months. When you eat regularly it helps you stay warm and it keeps your outlook up. We couldn't survive without the food we get from the Food Bank.

I used to think it was a stigma to go to the Food Bank, but they are truly compassionate. You can see they care when they greet you with a smile. I am so thankful for the people who donate to the Food Bank.

People who dig deep and help so many people who are in need—Montanans who take care of Montanans. There really aren't enough words to express how much good you do. And it means a lot to us to know you care.

**Winters are difficult for Gayelyn and her husband, who both have serious health issues.**



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## A WORD OF GRATITUDE

FROM GAYLE GIFFORD



Gayle Gifford  
Chief Executive Officer  
Montana Food Bank  
Network

Winter can be especially difficult for those who are struggling financially. By March, families are feeling the pinch from all the expenses that go along with the cold weather—higher utility bills, sick children, cars breaking down, lack of work. By March and April, our agencies are seeing an increase in distribution as a result of families needing to use the Food Bank more often.

That's why we're so grateful for faithful friends like you who recognize that there are hungry Montanans year round—people like Gayelyn and Timothy who rely on the Food Bank for survival. This year we're also facing cuts in public assistance that are going to be painful to struggling families. With your help, we want to be ready to step up to the challenge of meeting those food needs this year.

We're thankful to be able to reach out to our deeply rural communities because of the generous corporate partnerships with companies like Northwest Farm Credit, who support our efforts to reach underserved communities. Not only are they providing funding, but they're also offering facilities and people to help with distributions in remote locations. Additionally, our new Mail-a-Meal program will serve those in rural counties where we have no partner agencies.

Every season brings its own challenges and opportunities. And knowing we can count on friends like you, who share our commitment to working to end hunger in this state, makes all the difference. Thank you for your generosity during the holidays and for the compassion you show to hungry Montana neighbors all year long.

With heartfelt thanks,

Gayle Gifford, Chief Executive Officer  
Montana Food Bank Network

**As struggling Montanans face painful cuts in public assistance, we thank you for the compassion you show all year long.**

## Volunteer Spotlight: Ameriprise Financial

Missoula's own Ameriprise Financial staff invested their time in the Montana Food Bank Network when they came out to volunteer as part of Ameriprise Financial's National Day of Service. Working as a team, they repackaged 7,000 pounds of apples and nearly a ton of bread. Let's just say they've built up quite a portfolio of gratitude around here!



Ameriprise Financial volunteers work to repackage food into smaller, family-sized portions for distribution.

Last year volunteers dedicated over 10,000 hours to the Montana Food Bank Network to help us break the cycle of hunger in Montana. To find out how you can organize a volunteer group or volunteer as an individual, please contact Katie Lane, Volunteer Coordinator, at 406-721-3825, ext. 252 or [klane@mfbn.org](mailto:klane@mfbn.org)

## 30th Anniversary Gala: Honoring those who make a difference

Our 30th Anniversary Gala on November 14, 2013 was a night filled with pearls and possibilities. Two-hundred people gathered in Missoula to celebrate 30 years of feeding hungry Montanans and to support our continuing fight to end hunger. The gala raised over \$40,000—that means 120,000 meals for hungry children, seniors and families across Montana.

The event was a success because of the generosity of our sponsors, volunteers, in-kind donors and guests, including special guests Governor Steve Bullock and First Lady Lisa Bullock. We also honored our Hunger's Hope Award recipients who make a difference in the lives of those who struggle with hunger in our state: MAZON, Dan Weinberg of the Angora Ridge Foundation, Jerry Long—MFBN volunteer, and Cheryl and Karahan Balli of Studio Pandora. Mayor John Engen was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award for his work engaging community programs as an avid anti-hunger advocate and volunteering at our local partner agencies.



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We're thankful to each of these honorees and to all those who support the Montana Food Bank Network with funds, food and time. Thank you for your longstanding partnership with us.

# I'm thankful for the food because it has kept me alive

My name is Timothy and I'm thankful to the Food Bank for providing food for the meals I receive here. I've gotten clean and sober and the food has kept me alive.

I was born here in Montana, but I've ridden the train all over. I've seen a lot of the country on the rails. Those were some lean times. We drank a lot of instant coffee and water just to survive. Sometimes we'd go to a homeless shelter and spend the night.

I came from a good family, but I was a rebel. And I was an alcoholic. But all that's changed for me now. I came back to the area because I wanted to be back home and close to my daughters. I raised two daughters

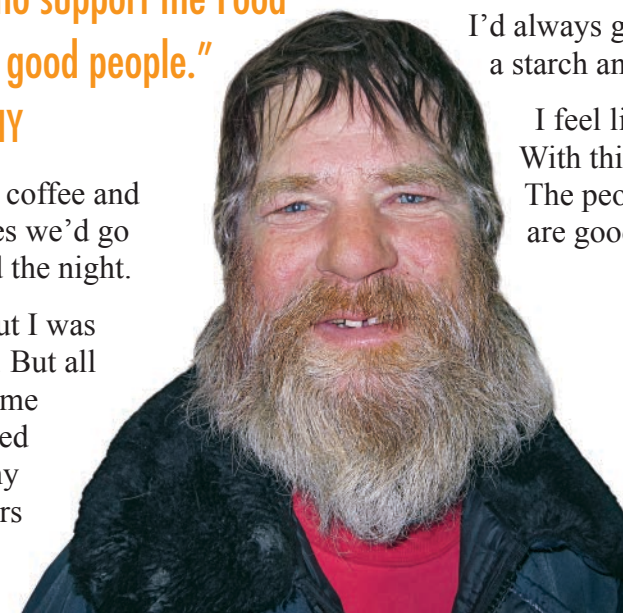
who are grown now. My goal is to work and stay clean and sober. I see that as my mission.

## Food boxes and a new start

The Food Bank has meant a lot to me over the years. There were many years when I was camping and I would get a food box. A lady would come down here and distribute them every week. I'd always get some canned goods, a starch and some meat. It meant a lot.

I feel like I've gotten a new start here. With this help, I know I can make it. The people who support the Food Bank are good people. Thank you.

**"The Food Bank has meant a lot to me over the years—the people who support the Food Bank are good people."**  
—TIMOTHY



Timothy enjoys meals at Missoula 3:16 Rescue Mission, one of our partner agencies serving hot meals to those who are struggling and hungry.

## Montana Public Radio drive supports MFBN

The final results from the Montana Food Bank Network Fall Pledge Drive Challenge are in! Thanks to the generous listeners who support Montana Public Radio, thousands of dollars were raised to feed hungry Montanans. Instead of sending thank-you gifts to participants in the radio station's pledge drive, Montana Public Radio contributed 5% of the pledge to the Montana Food Bank Network. With a matching grant from Missoula Federal Credit Union, \$9,763 was raised. That's food for just over 29,000 meals! A big thanks to MPR staff, listeners and volunteers!



## Thank you for adding joy to the holidays during Day of Giving

For needy families, hunger doesn't take a holiday—and that struggle for food can turn the joyous holiday season into a season of suffering. Last December Rosauers Supermarket in Missoula, along with the Montana Food Bank Network, hosted a **Day of Giving Fundraiser/Foodraiser**. It was an all-day opportunity to donate funds or food to benefit 21 local Missoula area food banks, senior centers and shelters.

The Day of Giving raised over \$2,100 and 3,920 pounds of food. Of that, 186 pounds of food was donated to MFBN's Missoula area partner agencies. That meant over 9,500 holiday meals for our hungry neighbors. Thank you for giving and thanks to our Day of Giving partners: Rosauers Supermarket, Montana Radio Company, KECI 13 Missoula and Pepsi.



© Katie Lane 2013



# At the end of a cold winter, your support brings food and hope to struggling Montanans!

One in seven people across the state of Montana is at risk of hunger. And behind each of those statistics is a family with their own story of hunger and struggle made more difficult during the cold winter months. It may be a parent struggling to provide dinner out of an empty pantry, a senior in a rural area whose nearest grocery store is many miles away, a man or woman who lost a job and lives with the constant chill of winter because they can't afford the heating bill. At the Montana Food Bank Network, **we are committed to reaching out with food and hope to make a difference in each one of these stories.**

After thirty years, we've built a network of strong partnerships and continue to be a leader in hunger education, advocacy and innovation in our state. We're proud of how much we've accomplished over the years, but each year brings its own challenges. We know the



recent SNAP benefit cuts will be painful for families who are already struggling, and the increased need will put a new burden on our partner agencies.

## Reaching rural and underserved counties

We're also continually working to find ways to reach our deeply rural communities. Distance and weather can affect our ability to deliver to those rural communities that also lack partner agencies. This year we're excited to be launching our **Mail-a-Meal program** in an effort to meet that need. In counties without food pantries,

families can register with a local point person to receive a food box. Once a month, Mail-a-Meal boxes packed with non-perishable goods will be shipped to that community for distribution.

We are so thankful that the Montana Food Bank Network has friends like you who believe in our mission and entrust us with your resources, knowing we stretch each dollar as far as possible to feed our hungry neighbors. Your continued support is important so we can reach all of our impoverished communities, whether they are urban, small towns or deeply rural. You can return the enclosed form with your gift, or give online at **mfbn.org**. Your gift today can make a lasting difference in the lives of our hungry Montana neighbors.

### Stay connected to the work you support!

 Visit us at [facebook.com/feedingmontana](https://facebook.com/feedingmontana)  
 Follow us on Twitter @mfbn

## MY SPRING DONATION

**YES, Gayle, I know families are struggling across this state, and I want to help provide food and hope.**

**Here's my gift of:** ☐ \$250 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$25 ☐ Other \$\_\_\_\_\_

☐ I commit to a monthly gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_. My first gift is enclosed.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

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.

**FEEDING AMERICA**



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