



FEEDING MONTANA

News from Montana Food Bank Network

HOLIDAY 2014

mfbn.org

Thank you for helping me and my community!

My name is Pat. I come to this Food Bank because I live on Social Security and that just doesn't go a long way. The food is really helpful to me. Last year I lost my husband. We lived in this valley for almost 20 years, and we would have celebrated 32 years together this year. Between us we had six children and 27 grandkids. I've got grandkids everywhere! I've been coming to the Food Bank for a while now, and it helped me out when I was caring for my husband. He was totally disabled and couldn't even get out of the house.

Now I live with a friend, so we can share expenses and work around the house. We share the food I get here, too. Everybody says we look like sisters, so we might as well be! My biggest issue right now is keeping my van from falling apart. It's got a lot of glitches and needs tires. And, of course, having enough money for gas is tough. Receiving food from the Food Bank allows me to stretch my budget.

A great Thanksgiving meal

The Food Bank helps us out a lot during the holidays. It's great to get a nice

"It's great to get a nice Thanksgiving meal, and I thank God for that help."
—PAT

Thanksgiving meal, and I thank God for that help. I love coming here. They have such a great variety of food, and I especially love getting the meats. Coming here is like seeing family, the people are so friendly. It's just great! Without this place it would be really hard to get enough food.

If I ever get into the position where I can give back, I want to start bringing food here. This place is helping our community. And that means a lot because the economy is rough. If I could meet someone who supports the Montana Food Bank Network, I would just walk up and give them a hug and say, "You know what? Without you guys, we couldn't eat. So, thank you."



Pat gets a basket full of food at the Flathead Food Bank.

Read more about the MFBN's work with our partner agency Flathead Food Bank on page 3.

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Caring for our seniors

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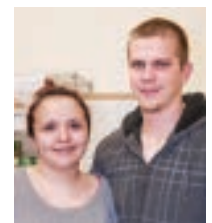
The Chuck Wagon—reaching rural neighbors

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You help feed our kids

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More than 30 years of fighting hunger together

A WORD OF GRATITUDE

FROM GAYLE GIFFORD



Gayle Gifford
Chief Executive Officer
Montana Food Bank
Network

As we look forward to celebrating the upcoming holidays with our families, we're also looking forward to helping hungry Montana families enjoy that same experience. We don't want families like Timothy's or James and LaCrecia's, and seniors like Pat to have to choose between paying the heating bill and putting a holiday meal on the table. Providing the extra food assistance helps ease the financial burden and lets them know their community cares.

Our seniors are especially vulnerable to hunger during these winter months. This year our Food Security Council is looking at the issues of senior hunger in our state. Understanding their specific food needs will help us be even more effective at meeting them.

This year I was privileged to participate in the hunger study, visiting partner agencies and hearing the stories of people we serve. What impressed me was how resilient and adaptable these families are. They persist in overcoming, even though each day is a struggle. While they may not have much, they are so grateful for what they do have.

In this season of counting our blessings, you, our friends and supporters, are at the top of our list. We might serve the entire state of Montana, but we are a community-based organization, and we couldn't do this work without your faithful and generous support. Thank you!

With gratitude,

Gayle Gifford, Chief Executive Officer
Montana Food Bank Network

Thank you for helping me feed my grandkids

My name is Timothy. When I came to the food pantry today I had almost no food in the house. Money is just really tight for my family, and we need the food in the last stretch of the month. Without it—we would all go hungry.

I joined the Army back when I was 18, and later worked most of my life doing metal fabrication and welding. Now my wife is bedridden, so I take care of her. Winter is the hardest time of year, trying to keep up with the heating and other bills. So it feels great to be able to come here and get help. Without it, there's days I don't know if I could feed my grandbabies or my wife.

A special Thanksgiving meal

We come here to get a turkey for Thanksgiving, and it means a lot to us to be able to have a turkey for our dinner. Being able to give our grandkids a special holiday is just something we can't afford, and that really breaks my heart.

I really appreciate the people who support the Food Bank. And I just want to let you know how much the food really helps us. And not just me, you're helping a lot of other people out as well. So thank you.

"Without that extra assistance, we'd be going hungry."

—TIMOTHY



Montana Avalanche team members are knocking hunger out of the ballpark!

The Montana Avalanche 12U Tipps Girls Fast Pitch Softball Team knows what it means to use their teamwork to volunteer! They've repacked hundreds of meals for Montana families and volunteered at our fundraiser to help sell raffle tickets, raising enough money for 1,300 meals. MFBN's own chief operations officer, Brent Weisgram, is also their coach. Thank you, Avs!



This Girls Softball Team has packaged hundreds of meals for hungry Montana families!

MFBN's new mobile food pantry serves rural communities

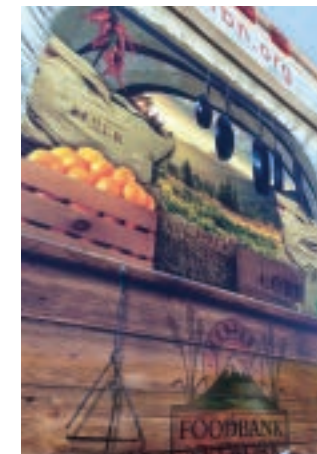
Northwest Farm Credit Services and CoBank generously donated \$90,000 to the Montana Food Bank Network (MFBN) for a new refrigerated mobile food pantry truck. The Mobile Food Pantry will allow MFBN to provide emergency food assistance and services to hungry children, families and seniors in rural areas of Montana. It's one more way we're using your donations to get nutritious food to Montanans who are underserved or lacking in local food pantries and full-service grocery stores.

The Mobile Food Pantry will work with local community volunteers to establish a regularly scheduled drop-off location. Food will be distributed either farmer's market-style or as a pre-packed food box. The 50-pound food box contains: fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy items, canned goods, pasta, beans, snack foods and baked goods. Our Mobile Food Pantry will also provide an opportunity for local service providers to conduct outreach and connect those coming for assistance with public food programs and other existing resources.



Thank you for doing your part to help us feed hungry families in underserved and rural communities across our state. And if you see our "Chuck Wagon" out on the road—wave hello!

"By supporting the Mobile Food Pantry, Northwest Farm Credit Services and CoBank have helped MFBN move one step closer to our goal of ensuring that all Montanans have access to healthy, nutritious food," says Gayle Gifford, CEO of the Montana Food Bank Network.



Our mobile food pantry truck design was inspired by MFBN's own semi-truck CB handle on the road: 'The Chuck Wagon.'

Hungry in Montana: our 2014 report

Every two years the Montana Food Bank Network conducts a survey of food pantry clients from urban, rural and reservation areas across our state. With more than 200 food pantry clients sharing their stories and struggles, the survey allows us to gain a better understanding of both the contributing factors and the consequences of hunger in Montana. The resulting Hungry in Montana report is an enormously valuable tool for education, advocacy and effectively meeting the food resource needs in our state.

Just a few of our 2014 findings were:

- 43% of households in need included children, 33% included seniors
- These households were living on very little income, with 75% reporting living below poverty and nearly 1/3 of households living in deep poverty (an income of less than \$1,000/month for a family of 4)
- Despite low incomes, just 58% of surveyed households were currently receiving SNAP benefits
- Nearly half of all households in need reported that adults had to skip meals to ensure others could eat or because there wasn't enough money for food. In 52% of these households, adults skip meals once a week.

To see our complete Hunger in Montana 2014 report, visit mfbn.org/research available in late November.

Agency Spotlight: Bringing holiday meals to hungry families

Our agency partner, the Flathead Food Bank, is bustling during the holiday season, getting ready to provide holiday meals for 1,200 families at Thanksgiving and 800 families at Christmas. Much of the Flathead Food Bank's staple items come from the Montana Food Bank Network. "We have a fantastic relationship with MFBN," says Director Lori Botkin. During the holidays MFBN sends out turkeys, turkey breasts and hams for the Flathead Food Bank's holiday distributions.

Lori became involved with the Food Bank ten years ago, and feeding this community has become a passion for her. "The children have a special place in my heart. They can't help the situation that they're in," says Lori. "And the seniors have an incredible place in my heart. They're who we are; they're who we came from."

The Montana Food Bank Network partners with over 200 local agencies to distribute 8 million pounds of food across our state each year. Your support is making a difference!



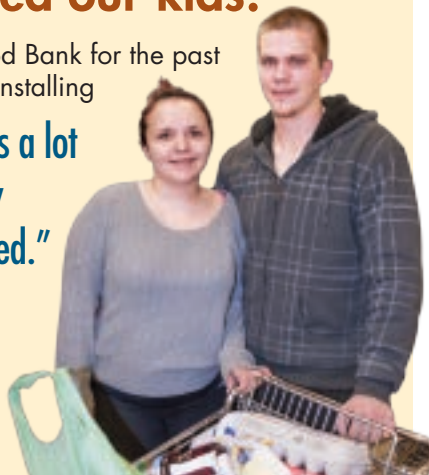
Lori Botkin runs the Flathead Food Bank, which provides 1,200 families with a Thanksgiving meal.

Thank you for helping us feed our kids!

LaCrecia and James have been coming to the Food Bank for the past few years to help stretch their dollars. James works installing flooring, and LaCrecia works as a waitress. They manage to pay most of their bills with what they make, but buying gas and food can be challenging when the money runs out. LaCrecia and James have three children, and LaCrecia's two younger sisters also live with them. "It is definitely hard to feed that many kids throughout the month," says LaCrecia. "We buy most of the food, but this just helps a lot with so many mouths to feed."

"This just helps a lot with so many mouths to feed."

—LACRECIA



Since LaCrecia works nights, James does most of the cooking for the family. About the variety of the food they get, James says, "It changes our diet...makes it more full." Both James and LaCrecia are thankful for the Food Bank. Without it, James says, "We would be eating a lot more Top Ramen, which is all we could afford. We'd have to scrape the bottom of the barrel and go shopping with 20 bucks."

"We definitely need the help and we're appreciative," says LaCrecia.

Your gifts help feed working families like James and LaCrecia's, and so many others across the state who are struggling this holiday season. Would you send in your gift today? You can return the enclosed form with your donation, or give a gift online at mfbn.org. Thank you for being one who cares this holiday season.

Wish you could do more?

I recently overheard one of our volunteers say that he wished he could do more to help the Food Bank. I reminded him that he was a faithful volunteer and a generous donor. He agreed, but he wanted to be doing more while still providing for his family's future.

I suggested he talk with his accountant about other ways to support the Food Bank through developing a wiser giving plan or giving non-cash gifts, something that could benefit both his family and the Food Bank.

Non-cash donations may be a more beneficial choice for many of our donors than simply writing a check, because it offers more benefits. You can also make a gift that costs you nothing during your lifetime. A legacy gift to the Food Bank will help ensure our ability to feed hungry children and their families in the future.



I'd like to send you a complimentary copy of the bulletin "Giving Wisely," to help you think about these giving options. To receive your copy, please contact me, Bill Mathews, at 406-721-3825, ext. 244, or at bmathews@mfbn.org

The information contained in this article is for educational purposes only. For legal or tax advice, the Montana Food Bank Network recommends contacting your legal or tax advisor.

Feed Montana Stadium Sell-Out

We are partnering with the University of Montana Grizzlies to SELL-OUT Washington-Grizzly Stadium and help end hunger in Montana. Fill a virtual seat for \$5 and your donation provides enough food for 15 meals! All proceeds help feed hungry children, families and seniors in Montana. Visit feedmt.org to start filling seats!

#GIVINGTUESDAY™

After the shopping deals of Black Friday and Cyber Monday, create a new tradition with your family this holiday season by giving hope to hungry families on **#GivingTuesday**. Visit mfbn.org on Tuesday, Dec. 2 to donate...and spread the word on Facebook and Twitter.  

MY HOLIDAY DONATION

YES, Gayle, I want to help struggling families by providing food and hope this holiday season.

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

- ☐ I commit to a monthly gift of \$_____. My first gift is enclosed.
☐ Please send me a copy of the free report, "Giving Wisely"
☐ 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

FEEDING
AMERICA



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.

CARD NUMBER _____

EXP. DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____

TELEPHONE # _____

My email address is: _____

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

Your gifts change lives!

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