

2022 Montana Hunger Relief FORUM

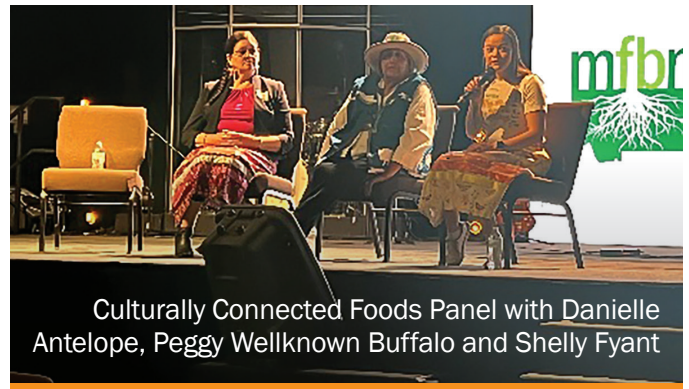
We at Montana Food Bank Network were delighted to hold our annual Montana Hunger Relief Forum for the first time since May 2019. This forum gives MFBN and our partner agencies an excellent chance to gather for learning and networking opportunities. COVID-19 precautions prevented the gathering in 2020 and 2021, so we were excited to bring partners together again this year! Hosted by our Programs and Agencies Department, the forum took place in Missoula on May 18th and 19th.

"THANK YOU, THIS IS THE MOST FUN CONFERENCE I HAVE EVER BEEN TO!"

- Susan Kelly, Centerpole Foundation

The audience for this forum was comprised of MFBN's partner agencies, including food pantry, shelter and soup kitchen operators, senior center partners, as well as Backpack and School Pantry Program coordinators from across the state. New this year, we provided a virtual attendance option and had twelve partners tune in online. Attendance for the two-day event totaled fifty guests, twelve presenters and seventeen MFBN staff members.

We were thrilled to have engagement and support from KPAX news anchor Jill Valley, Missoula's Christian Life Center, Western Montana Growers Coop, Missoula Food Bank & Community Center, Montana No Kid Hungry and Producer Partnership. Katie S. Martin, author and Executive Director of Connecticut Foodshare, gave the keynote, opening presentation and shared valuable opportunities for reinventing food bank and food pantry services. Breakout sessions, presentations and workshops on topics such as grant writing, board engagement and local food purchasing were conducted by Rachel Gooen Consulting, The Dotted i, Hopa Mountain and MT DPHHS,



Culturally Connected Foods Panel with Danielle Antelope, Peggy Wellknown Buffalo and Shelly Fyant

along with several trainings provided by MFBN staff. An extra special thanks to FAST Blackfeet's Danielle Antelope, Centerpole Foundation's Peggy Wellknown Buffalo and Arlee Community Development Corp's Shelly Fyant for their insightful panel conversations on indigenous and traditional foods, we learned so much from these panelists!

"THANK YOU FOR HAVING ME, I LOOK FORWARD TO HELPING YOUR PARTNERS WITH GRANT-SEEKING RESOURCES IN THE FUTURE."

- Hannah Cortez, The Dotted i

The forum this year was an inspiring two-day conference full of engagement, learning, reconnecting, collaboration and fun! Now more than ever, it's paramount that partners and organizations, working towards a hunger-free Montana, rely on each other and improve food accessibility and food assistance programs together. MFBN is thankful to host a forum that helps solidify those relationships which build upon the foundation for a better, stronger Montana.

INSIDE

PROTECT YOUR FUTURE 2 | CONNECTING COMMUNITIES 3 | A DONOR'S STORY 4



CEO CORNER

Your donation to Montana Food Bank Network provides direct support for people experiencing food insecurity.

In March of this year, MFBN launched its statewide education and awareness campaign. You may have already seen our MFBN semis with eye-catching wraps or billboards with the messages BIG SKY. BIG CHALLENGE. or BIG SKY. BIG IMPACT. These may be short messages, but they come with a much bigger meaning.

Montana is big. Its diverse population and landscape is challenging ... but for 38 years Montana Food Bank Network has, with the support of our generous donors and our network of partners, tackled the challenge of food insecurity and made a big impact.

Through MFBN's many programs, we help people navigate complex public assistance systems, ship monthly food boxes delivered to doorsteps or at a nearby pick up location, provide kids with take-home meals for weekends and school breaks, enable partner food banks and pantries to have adequate supplies of healthy foods, including fresh produce, so that no one

in their community is turned away and encourage our lawmakers to expand and streamline programs that bring people out of poverty.

This is a pivotal moment for MFBN and our partners in addressing food insecurity. We need our local producers and growers. We need our lawmakers to continue to fight for public assistance programs that support families as they move out of poverty. We need you — our individual, foundation and corporate donors — to support MFBN's programs that continue to source and distribute food to all corners of our vast state. This is a big challenge, but we are committed to working with all of our partners for another 38+ years making a big impact in the lives of all Montanans.

Thank you for all you do.

Gayle Carlson
President & CEO
Montana Food Bank Network

Protect Your Future WITH MONTANA FOOD BANK NETWORK

Recently, MFBN partnered with FreeWill, a free online estate-planning tool, to provide a valuable resource to our community. Everyone should have an estate plan to support their future and protect the ones they love. A will is the best way to protect the people, pets and communities you love. Save your family stress and complications by giving exact instructions on how to handle your estate and start a philanthropic legacy with MFBN to end hunger in Montana.

How does FreeWill help you do this? FreeWill's self-help solutions for common estate planning needs help you create a legal will completely free of charge and makes it easy to create other important estate planning documents, so you are prepared for your future.

FreeWill can also be paired with an attorney for more complex needs.

If you choose to create a legacy with Montana Food Bank Network, you can easily add the necessary language to your will to memorialize your gift intentions.

To learn more about FreeWill or other ways you can leave a legacy gift to MFBN, visit mfbn.org/planned-giving.

FREEWILL

Connecting Communities WITH MONTANA'S LAWMAKERS

Montana Food Bank Network's Policy Department advocates for policies and programs that ensure all Montanans have enough food. We educate lawmakers about hunger in Montana, but we can't tell the whole story ourselves. Montana's anti-hunger community includes many voices that are paramount to bring to the table when we're talking about reducing food insecurity. That's why we are holding community conversations with lawmakers and a wide range of our partners who have important knowledge about hunger in our state.

MFBN is hosting meetings to bring together diverse perspectives, share knowledge about hunger and discuss the goal of getting healthy food to all Montanans. The community members that participate in these conversations include state legislators who

shape laws, food pantry managers who feed Montanans in need, representatives who work with vulnerable seniors and farmers who grow food in our state.

Including Montanans who have experienced hunger themselves is a key aspect of the meetings. These community members are experts on hunger; they know what it is like to visit a food pantry or sign up for public nutrition programs in order to meet their family's basic food needs. Lawmakers cannot make informed solutions to hunger without these perspectives, and experiences.

It's crucial that Montana's lawmakers hear from these hunger experts to shape policy in our state. Through these conversations, community partners build relationships with one another and with their lawmakers. Additionally, our lawmakers better understand what hunger in Montana looks like — and their essential role in reducing hunger in our state. Montana can reduce food insecurity through collaboration and public-private partnerships. We are working to build connections between those who write our laws and those who see hunger every day.

To learn more about MFBN's advocacy and public policy efforts and how you can get involved, visit mfbn.org/public-policy.

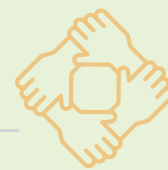


FEED MONTANA 2022

Montana Food Bank Network is excited for this year's FEED MONTANA, our annual month-long fundraiser that is held every September. This campaign aims to raise funds for the upcoming holiday season when the need for food assistance increases as temperatures begin to decrease and added winter expenses often compete with putting food on the table.

FEED MONTANA 2022's goal is to raise \$80,000; that equates to at least 400,000 meals!

We welcome and challenge individuals, businesses and groups to join us in our mission to end hunger and help raise funds to meet our 2022 goal. What better way to come together as a community than to help feed Montana and take a stand against hunger!



To learn more about FEED MONTANA and to get involved, visit mfbn.org/feedmt.

IN THE HOBBY OF *Helping Others* – A DONOR'S STORY

In the spring of 2020, as COVID-19 was beginning to spread, Laurie Kurth wondered what she could do to help. Throughout her career, she had often been in a position of responding to disasters, but now that she was retired, she realized the best thing she could do was remain home and stay healthy for her herself and her family and friends.

It wasn't until her sister and niece, who are both in the medical field, were struggling to find enough facemasks that Laurie knew exactly what she could do to help, sew facemasks. Since Laurie lives along a bike path in her community, she used it as a natural stage to hang her handmade masks along a clothesline for passersby to take for free. Soon she started receiving donations for her handiwork and decided to send the donations onward to non-profits who were helping people through the pandemic.

Once summer arrived that year, Laurie joined other vendors and began her farmers' market sales. She continued to give the facemasks out for free at her stand but provided a collection jar for those who wished to donate. That summer Laurie raised over \$800, and she continued to collect donated funds through to the next year. Although facemasks are not in high demand



Laurie's facemasks hanging on a clothesline along the bike path.

these days, Laurie is always thinking of creative new ways to turn her fabric stash into helping cash.

Montana Food Bank Network is thankful to be one of the recipients of Laurie's fundraising efforts and is greatly appreciative of the kindness and support she has shown and continues to show to Montana communities facing hard times. There are many meaningful ways you can give back to friends, families and neighbors in need, and we thank Laurie for sharing hers.

To learn about the different ways you can donate, visit mfbn.org/ways-to-give.

mfbn Montana Food Bank Network

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