



# Pantry Times

helenafoodshare.org | JANUARY 2018

## Because of you, seniors like Julie have help when they need it.

She worked hard her entire life, often two jobs at a time. Through various positions, Julie Murray built a small retirement account. She also draws from her limited social security retirement benefits. What Julie didn't anticipate was that her life's work would not be enough to support her in retirement. "I really thought I'd have no problem at this stage in my life because of social security and my retirement," Julie explains.

After paying rent, heat bills, medical expenses and a modest gas allowance she has nothing left for food. That's how Julie first found herself at Helena Food Share looking for help in 2016. "Let me tell you, Helena Food Share is a godsend."

Julie comes to Helena Food Share only when she needs it. "I won't get senior commodities in January because I'll have enough to get by," she says. What she does get, she always tries to stretch and share with family members who also need a little help from time to time.

This summer, Julie got to know Helena Food Share in another way. It was a warm summer afternoon and Julie watched the staff hustle to fill the Helena Food Share Farm Stand with fresh produce before opening the pantry to customers at 12:30 p.m. Having stocked shelves and coolers while working at



Town Pump years ago, Julie knew how to make displays look nice and offered to help.

"I staged it all that day," Julie recalls. "Then I said, 'Can I come back next week and help?'"

Helena Food Share staff eagerly accepted Julie's help and she soon became a volunteer fixture at the Farm Stand. There she enjoyed conversations with other customers about canning produce to help through the winter. She swapped recipes and kept the Farm Stand shelves looking top notch.

Julie began helping in other ways. For Helena Food Share's 30th Anniversary, she baked pies. When the weather turned colder and the Farm Stand was shuttered for the season, Julie joined the Friday volunteer crew. After a holiday, a time typically hard to recruit volunteers, Julie shows up.

"I'm more than happy to help in any way I can," Julie says. "I feel so good when I come here to volunteer."

After surgery on both feet and a painful daily struggle with arthritis, Julie is no longer able to work a 9-5 job. A social person, Julie said finding her place at Helena Food Share gave her a new sense of hope. As both a customer and volunteer, Julie said she sees the importance

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-Julie, Helena Food Share Customer & Volunteer

of a food pantry in the community.

"I'm so grateful there's a place like Helena Food Share to come and get what I need," Julie says. "This place is life-sustaining. You come when you need it and, when you can, you pay it forward."

To pay it forward, visit [helenafoodshare.org](http://helenafoodshare.org) ●

# A Second Calling

Like you, Roberta is feeding neighbors.

After 31 years as a teacher in Helena, Roberta Spangler has found a second calling in retirement. Roberta is a volunteer at Helena Food Share. She started nearly seven years ago and hopes to “stay forever,” she says.

At her greeter station in the front of the pantry, Roberta checks customers in as they enter to shop. A line often forms by her station as customers wait for their turn to shop in the bustling pantry. Roberta takes the opportunity to chat with customers and find out how their day is going. Upbeat and energetic, Roberta has a knack for turning someone’s hard day into a great experience at Helena Food Share.

“I see people come in that I used to teach,” Roberta says. “That has to be hard for them to see me. But I’m always so happy to see them. I love it here more than anything and I love the customers.”



Roberta says she sees folks come to Helena Food Share who are desperately trying to find work and create bright futures for their families.

“I don’t see lazy people,” she says. “I see people who work or they’re trying to find work or they’re disabled. But they don’t have enough for shoes for the kids, gas in the car and heat in the house.”

Roberta also worries for the senior citizens who visit Helena Food Share. “I think seniors have the hardest time,” Roberta says. “They often don’t have the ability to work and social security isn’t enough to live on. Thank God for commodities to give them a little extra help.”

In addition to distributing commodity food supplies to more than 350 seniors every other month, Helena Food Share provides farmers market coupons to more than 300 seniors each summer.

Along with volunteering, Roberta is a Hunger Hero. Each month she makes a donation to help Helena Food Share keep serving the customers she loves.

“I give because I really, really like all these people I get to see here,” Roberta says. “When you’re emotionally, physically and financially helping people, that goes a long way in their lives.”

To find out how to become a Hunger Hero and make a difference in your neighbors’ lives, visit [helenafoodshare.org](http://helenafoodshare.org).

“I think seniors have the hardest time, they often don’t have the ability to work and social security isn’t enough to live on. Thank God for commodities to give them a little extra help.”

-Roberta, Helena Food Share Volunteer.

## Senior Hunger and What We’re Doing to Help

- Nationally, 1 in 6 seniors struggles with food insecurity.
- On average, 460 seniors visit Helena Food Share for Grocery Share food assistance each month.
- In partnership with Rocky Mountain Development Council, more than 365 seniors participate in the Senior Commodities Program every other month.
- In 2017, Helena Food Share provided more than 300 low-income seniors with \$50 worth of farmers market coupons. Seniors redeemed their coupons at local markets to buy healthy produce they might not otherwise be able to afford.
- Pads for Paws donate more than 24,000 lbs. of pet food each year to Helena Food Share. Many of our senior customers live alone with a beloved pet. Ensuring they can feed animal companions is a concern for many seniors.



# Staff Profile: Teresa Asleson

You're helping create a healthy community like Teresa.

Teresa Asleson, Program Operations Assistant at Helena Food Share, brings a heart of service and a great attitude to work each day.

Raised in central Minnesota, Teresa landed in Montana after attending forestry school and taking a job with the US Forest Service. Early in life, Teresa learned the value of healthy, shared food.

"Coming from a large family and being raised by a single mom, we were fortunate my grandparents farmed. This provided food to supplement our dinner table," Teresa says.

After she retired from the Forest Service, Teresa started volunteering at Helena Food Share. Teresa says joining a team committed to feeding neighbors in need is something that resonated deeply with her.

"I admired the staff's commitment and passion as they helped customers with respect and dignity," Teresa says. "When the program operations assistant position opened up, I decided it was a place I wanted to work and a mission to feel proud of."

Teresa splits her position with John Dendy. Together, they are responsible for helping direct the work of volunteers in the pantry, serving customers and keeping the pantry in top shape.

"My day is fulfilled when I have an opportunity to connect with customers; many who have taken great strides to be here," Teresa explains. "I'm satisfied when they walk out our doors with food they need and a smile on their faces."

Teresa is committed to making sure each customer is treated with dignity and respect at Helena Food Share.

There is one group of customers that especially tug at her heart.

"Our senior customers are special to me," she says. "Many struggle with asking for a 'hand up,' or they live alone and have physical or transportation challenges. Creating a positive shopping experience for seniors is important to me



because I want them to feel comfortable to come back when they need help."

Whether she's stocking shelves, unloading rescued food, overseeing volunteers or greeting her favorite senior customers,

**"I admired the staff's commitment and passion as they helped customers with respect and dignity"**  
-Teresa, Helena Food Share Staff.

Teresa works with kindness and compassion to create "a healthier community we can all be proud of."

To find out how you can help seniors facing hunger, visit [helenafoodshare.org](http://helenafoodshare.org) or call us at 443-3663. 🍎



## HELENA FOOD SHARE STAFF

Bruce Day  
Executive Director

Kim Dale  
Program Director

Daneal Lightner  
Development Director

Hannah Stiff  
Communications Manager

Jami Kirksey  
Volunteer Manager

Kara Snyder  
Program Manager

Jackie Hanson-Felber  
Development Coordinator

Rachael Howard  
Executive Assistant

John Dendy  
Program Operations Assistant

Teresa Asleson  
Program Operations Assistant

Steve Brewster  
Driver

Dave Anderson  
Driver

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Karen Smith



## Pantry Times

### Contact Us

Phone 406.443.3663

Email [info@helenafoodshare.org](mailto:info@helenafoodshare.org)

 Find us on Facebook!

 Follow us on Instagram!

### Learn more

Get a "behind-the-scenes" tour the second Tuesday of each month, and enjoy lunch with us! Call or email us to sign up for a tour.



Montana Nonprofit Association



- ▶ 6x9 mailing envelopes for outreach
- ▶ Help covering wild game meat processing costs at Tizer Meats
- ▶ Back-up cameras for Helena Food Share trucks
- ▶ Television or computer for safety presentations to volunteers and staff
- ▶ Ice melt

Please contact Hannah for more information about the Helena Food Share wish list. Call **443-3663 x 105** or email at [Hannah@helenafoodshare.org](mailto:Hannah@helenafoodshare.org) Thank you!

## Upcoming Events

- ▶ **Jan. 24 & 25 Senior Commodity Distribution**  
1616 Lewis Street Pantry  
8am – 10:30am
- ▶ **Jan. 17 Community Cocktails**  
Gulch Distillers  
*A portion of proceeds donated to HFS*  
4:00pm – 8:00pm
- ▶ **Feb. 13 Mardi Gras Red Ale Release Party**  
Blackfoot River Brewing  
*A portion of proceeds donated to HFS*  
4:00pm - 8:00pm
- ▶ **Feb. 13 Downtown Helena Fat Tuesday Party**  
Blackfoot River Brewing, Bridge Pizza, Miller's Crossing, Park Avenue Bakery  
Throughout the Day
- ▶ **Feb. 17 FREE Tax Clinic**  
1616 Lewis Street Pantry  
Call 443-3663 x 106 to make an appointment
- ▶ **Feb. 24 Dueling Pianos**  
Best Western Premier Hotel  
*Tickets at [funeventsmt.com](http://funeventsmt.com), at HFS Admin Office or call 443-3663*  
7:00pm – 11:00pm
- ▶ **March 2 Black Donnelley's Concert**  
Grandstreet Theatre  
*Tickets at HFS Admin Office or call 443-3663*  
7:00pm
- ▶ **March 7 Doorsteps to Kid Packs Food Drive**  
Citywide event, food pick up after 1pm
- ▶ **March 17 FREE Tax Clinic**  
1616 Lewis Street Pantry  
Call 443-3663 x 106 to make an appointment
- ▶ **March 19 Community Night On Broadway**  
On Broadway, 106 E. Broadway  
*Portion of proceeds donated to HFS*  
5:00pm - 9:30pm

## Downtown Helena Fat Tuesday Party for Helena Food Share on Feb. 13!

The flagship event in this fun-filled day is the Blackfoot River Brewing release of the Mardi Gras Red Ale. Proceeds from the Red Ale are donated to Helena Food Share. Throughout the day, Park Avenue Bakery, Miller's Crossing, The Bridge Pizza and others will be offering Mardi Gras themed dishes & drinks. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to Helena Food Share.

Mark your calendar and check our Facebook page for updates on all the Fat Tuesday festivities.