



# Pantry Times

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**MONTANA Harvest of the Month**

You've now read about the Harvest of the Month. May's featured items is Chickpeas. Do you have great chickpea recipe to share? Email it to us at [info@helenafoodshare.org](mailto:info@helenafoodshare.org).

## Super Karen

### Hunger Hero & Volunteer

Helena Food Share is blessed with hundreds of volunteers. They can be found working hard at the Helena Food Share Pantry, at food drives, assembling kid packs, rescuing groceries, assembling mailers, and gardening. In total during 2018, volunteers provided 22,962 hours - that's the equivalent to 11 full-time employees!

When moving over a million pounds of food over the course of a year, many hands make light work. However, we also need volunteers for the administrative duties that come along with providing over 74,000 food assistance services in a year. Among the people who help support the administrative and development staff is Karen Witte.

When Karen shows up at the office on Thursday afternoons, she is a breath of fresh air and is ready to put her head down and get to work. In her year and half helping in the office, Karen has likely cut 100,000 pieces of paper and stuffed just as many envelopes, if not more!

When asked why she volunteers, Karen thoughtfully responds, "I feel like I am helping to make a difference." And she is.



Because she believes so deeply in helping others, Karen and her husband also support Helena Food Share as monthly donors - or Hunger Heros. Because of monthly supporters like Karen and Ron, Helena Food Share is able to count on a certain level of income each month. As a non-profit, that relies completely on donations in order to serve our neighbors in need, managing cash-flow can be tricky.

You can become a Hunger Hero too! Just check the "Donate Monthly" box on your enclosed remit envelope or visit [helenafoodshare.org/hunger-hero](http://helenafoodshare.org/hunger-hero).

## Fresh is Best

**Thursdays in June**

- June 6 Safeway
- June 13 Van's Thriftway
- June 20 Albertsons (Both Locations)
- June 27 Super 1

## Food Drives



# Pantry Times

[helenafoodshare.org](http://helenafoodshare.org) | MAY 2019

## Food & More: You made the difference for this young woman.

Lisa struggles. To her, it feels like for every step forward she makes, something comes along that forces her two steps back.

Life hasn't been easy for Lisa. She struggled academically through high school and was thankful to graduate. Her mother passed away when she was just 19, and Lisa lost the only family she had ever known. As Lisa struggles with finding her way in the world, she has found an invaluable resource at Helena Food Share: food.

Lisa loves the fresh fruits and vegetables and says she doesn't think she has ever had such a healthy diet. But Helena Food Share has provided many other things for Lisa that you may not expect.

Because she gets help with her food, Lisa is able to use her small income to do things that some people take for granted. It was monumental for Lisa to have the \$11.25 she needed to pay off her library fines. She is ecstatic that she can once again check out books.

Lisa was also able to purchase cleaning products like bleach, extra baking soda,



"It is reassuring that the community has my back, that they would help me and so many others. I can't express how grateful I am to you." - Lisa

cleaning wipes and spray. She adds, "it may seem like I bought a lot of things, but I didn't get everything all at once. It took a long time to be able to get these extra things. I took advantage of sales, coupons, and the Dollar Store.

Lisa shares that right now, if she were to miss even one day of work, she's worried that she would find herself homeless. She calculates every penny she can earn and expense she can predict.

"It is reassuring that the community has my back, that they would help me and so many others. I can't express how grateful I am to you besides sharing my experience and volunteering in the future."

Thank you for what you've done for Lisa. Your continued support is the reason that Lisa and so many others in our community have the food and support they need to make it through. ●

## FAST FACTS

★  
From The Pantry

**OVER 6,000 POUNDS OF FOOD ARE SHARED FROM THE PANTRY DAILY.**

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**8,744 INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING LISA, RECEIVED FOOD IN THE LAST CALENDAR YEAR.**

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**IN 2018, 1,667,972 POUNDS OF FOOD WERE SHARED FROM HELENA FOOD SHARE**

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# Adding More Healthy Options To Customers' Carts

The ability to consistently access enough food for a healthy, active life can be challenging for those who struggle with hunger. Food insecurity can force choices about how to use any resources available for food. Would you buy a box of macaroni and cheese for .65 cents or would you buy a bundle of green leaf lettuce for \$2.00? So many of those who come to Helena Food Share for help with food are faced with these decisions regularly. And, when they are looking at their options, they have to factor in how far the food will go.

Fresh produce and healthy lean meats are sometimes available at Helena Food Share to those who need them. But eating healthy is expensive, and our resources are limited compared to the number of people who shop at Helena Food Share.

To increase consistent access to healthy options, we are excited to announce a new partnership with St. Peter's Health! Together, we hope to improve the health of our community and ensure everyone has access to nutritious food. This partnership will help bring a healthy and consistent supply of food to the shelves and coolers at Helena Food Share.

We believe that nutritious food is a building block for healthy communities and we work to ensure that everyone has access to it. Because of our shared vision to make a significant difference in lives of people in our community, especially for those in need, St. Peter's Health has given its support to enable Helena Food Share to purchase more healthy foods throughout the entire year. Through our partnership we hope to make these foods available consistently, especially after the local gardening and harvest seasons have ended and it is more difficult to supply fresh, healthy foods.

With healthy food items readily accessible, customer's diets will be positively influenced. Science shows that a positive change in diet can help with issues such as pre-diabetic/diabetic conditions, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

As our partnership with St. Peter's Health continues to grow, we hope to improve health and end hunger in our community.

Thank you to all of you who continue to support Helena Food Share. It is only because of community generosity that we are able to share nutritious food with our neighbors in need. 🍌

"St. Peter's Health recognizes the impact that healthy food options have on the well-being of our patients and community members. Study after study show the critical role healthy nutrition can play in the reduction of chronic diseases. Health systems have often been viewed as somewhere you go when you are sick, and we are actively working to change that mindset. We want to focus on "well care" just as much or more than we focus on "sick care". Partnering with the Helena Food Share is a great opportunity to do just that. This unique partnership not only helps to ensure our community members have access to healthy food options, but it also allows for an improvement in the health of our patient population and the health our local economy as well. We are excited to continue to grow this partnership, because only together can we build a healthier community."



Amy Emmert, RN  
Director of  
Population Health



To get a visual of what \$20 looks like when you're buying healthy foods vs. trying to get the most you can for your money, we went shopping! Both carts represent \$20 worth of groceries. The cart on the left is the healthy cart and the cart on the right is an attempt to get the largest quantity of food for \$20.

The cart on the left contains 4,216 calories, 4,472 mg of sodium and 165 g of sugar. The cart of the right has 16,462 calories, an astounding 41,110 mg of sodium and 651 g of sugar.

However, if this \$20 is also indicative of your last funds to feed your family, which do you buy?

Because of **YOU** and St. Peter's Health customers have options for a healthier cart and a healthier diet!

# Purple Barley? I'll Take Three!

Sally works in our administrative offices and also enjoys putting on cooking demonstrations for customers as they shop in the Pantry. Using the Charlie Cart - a mobile teaching kitchen - Sally has been working to help introduce different items that are part of the Montana Harvest of the Month. The Montana Harvest of the Month features a different Montana-sourced food every month. In April, Sally shared a recipe and gave out samples, the theme was grain and purple barley was featured.

Sally and our other nutrition educator volunteers get a variety of reactions as they give out samples. On one occasion, Sally offered an older gentleman a sample. He gave off the vibe that he was on a mission to get his shopping done and get on with his day. He had no time to stop for samples! However, after hearing other customers' delight as they tried Sally's Ital-

ian Barley Salad with sausage and kale, he could resist no longer.

Score one for the purple barley! This particular gentleman ended up coming back for three samples and was sure to take a bag a barley home.

In Sally's direct way of doing things, there is no rinsing of the barley and there is no soaking of the barley. It's simple. Put it in boiling water and cook it. Another customer told Sally how she prepares her barley. She most certainly believes in soaking it first.

The Charlie Cart and the Harvest of the Month spur customers into trying something new and into sharing how they implement these Montana grown pantry staples into their diets.

May's Harvest of the Month is chickpeas, which are a nutrient powerhouse. They are an excellent source of many nutrients including potassium, calcium,



iron, vitamin B-6 and magnesium and thrive in Montana's dry climate. To help connect customers to their food, there will be a small display of chickpea plants at various stages of growth. Customers will also have access to chickpeas during the month.

It is your generous support that provides highly nutritious, locally sourced food items to those in need. 🍌

# Planting Seeds & Harvesting You Make It Happen

Last summer, Helena Food Share's garden provided customers with a variety of fresh produce items. Foods such as kale, beans and spinach grew in abundance and customer's shopping options could not have been more fresh.

Of course, the garden doesn't simply materialize. It takes a lot of labor and a lot of planning.

At the end of March, students taking Gerald Schafer's Carroll College course, Gardening and Community Health, can be found shoveling snow off of the garden beds. This helps the earth beneath warm up more quickly. Under the wet, spring snow, green is uncovered. Gerald finds chives and then some parsley. Gerald's ex-



citement at this early-season green is contagious and the students enjoy checking out and sampling the greens that have been uncovered.

Gerald enjoys teaching the class and the students are engaged as he encourages them to connect with food in a new way. Gerald says, "you can plant seeds at any

time. When the conditions are right, the seeds will sprout."

This summer, when the Helena Food Share garden is at its peak, the Carroll students who have laid the strong foundation, will no longer be in town. Helena Food Share volunteers and staff will have taken over the efforts and the harvest will be washed, packaged and available for customers.

Because of those who give financially and those who give of their time, the Helena Food Share garden can exist to educate and provide nutrition to those who need it. Another budding example of how the Helena community works together to positively impact those with food insecurities. 🍌