



# Pantry Times

helenafoodshare.org | NOVEMBER 2019

## “Jeff” said, “I’m Hungry.”

Jeff\* had the look of a man who has worked in physical jobs his entire life, with dirt or grease embedded in the calloused cracks of his hands. He arrived at Helena Food Share on a Thursday night at 5:30 pm, thankful that our new extended hours now made it possible for him to shop between his two part time jobs.



Emergency Snack Bags have high-energy foods that provide nutrition for individuals with immediate need.

Jeff had never been to Helena Food Share. He never even expected to *need* to be at Helena Food Share. But Jeff was between paychecks and he couldn't afford to rent an apartment, so he was living in his car. When he sat down to complete the paperwork so he

could shop, the volunteer asked him, “How are you doing today?” Jeff’s reply: “I’m hungry.” Though this is the need we fill each day, this is not usually the answer we get to the question. The volunteer asked “When is the last time you ate?” Jeff paused. The volunteer could see behind his deep brown eyes that he was considering answering with the truth. Then Jeff looked away and said, “Two days ago.”

### *Two days without food.*

Our volunteer immediately handed Jeff an Emergency Snack Bag, a special pack of high-energy foods that provide nutrition for individuals with an immediate need. Jeff tore open a nutrition bar and began eating. As the check-in process continued Jeff told more of his story. He said he'd moved to Helena, thinking he had a full-time job; however, it turned out to be only part-time. Jeff now wanted to head to Billings because he heard of a laborer job there that would be full-time. But right after he got the lead on the full-time job, the car that Jeff was living in broke down. He needed to save money for the repair to get to Billings, so he had sacrificed buying food.

Fortunately, Jeff knew where to come for help. And that help is made possible by you. You are there for all our customers -- all those

people working two jobs and just getting by. All the seniors whose fixed incomes aren't stretching far enough. All the families facing hard times they never predicted. All the veterans trying to get the ground beneath their feet. And the kids, who could go hungry over the weekend if not for your generous support of the Kid Pack program.

We haven't seen Jeff since he first shopped at the pantry. We hope that he got his car fixed and is able to get that full time job. But we know that when the next person comes along needing food we will have it on our shelves because of generous donors like you. ●

### **Helena Food Share distributes Emergency Snack Bags to these locations:**

- Access to Success
- Career Training Institute (CTI)
- Florence Crittenton
- Good Samaritan Ministries
- Job Service Office
- Leo Pocha Memorial Clinic
- Lewis & Clark County Sheriff
- Office of Public Assistance
- Project for Alternative Learning
- PureView (Health/Dental)
- Office of Public Assistance
- United Way
- Veteran's Administration
- WIC Offices

\*To protect customer privacy, we have changed names and other identifiable information in the story above.

# Mary: Giving from Her Heart



Mary Riitano has generously supported Helena Food Share for over ten years. Mary describes herself as someone who likes to share what is in her heart. Mary says she gives to Helena Food Share because it does so much good for our community. Because it's a local place, Mary knows that the money is going to the services and needs right here in the area. And, she can see her dollars at work.

Mary Riitano gives to Helena Food Share monthly. We call our monthly donors Hunger Heroes. Most Hunger Heroes use a credit card, debit card or their checking account number on file to make an automatic donation. Some mail in checks like clockwork every month.

But Mary has a different method of delivering her monthly donation. Mary comes down to the Pantry and stands in the long

line that customers stand in when they come to shop.

With so many other ways to support Helena Food Share, why does Mary stand in line at the Pantry to make her gift? Mary says this is because she is not separate from anyone who stands in line. She is no different from anyone who stands in line because she has been there. She has been that girl who needed help.

The men standing in line strike Mary in particular. She can picture her parents needing help and struggling for their dignity, especially her father. Mary says it's humbling to see so many men putting aside their pride to get what they need, and this is what her dad has had to do. Seeing what needing help looks like, living those things, leaves an opening in your heart to share what you can. Thank you for sharing your heart Mary. 🍎

*To Become a  
Hunger Hero  
Sign up online at  
[HelenaFoodShare.org](http://HelenaFoodShare.org)*

## FAST FACTS

★  
ABOUT  
**OUR FOOD PANTRY**



**2,285**  
Holiday Meals  
provided in 2018.



**6,000 pounds**  
of food per day  
what it takes, on average, to  
help our neighbors with some  
of the food they need for  
themselves and their families.



**110 households**  
The average number of  
households per day that come  
to the Lewis Street  
Pantry for help with food.

# WISH LIST WISH LIST WISH LIST WISH

## TOP NEED

### A New Kid Pack Delivery Van

Holy smokes, you should see the one that we have now! We're lucky to make it to all the schools - especially in the winter. We've been window shopping and have found the perfect van. We are hoping a generous donor or business might be able to help.

- 4-Wheeler with a Snow Plow
- Clorox Cleaning Wipes
- Tall Kitchen Garbage Bags
- Someone to Stripe our Parking Lot

If you can help with any of these items, please call Liz 406-443-3663 x. 104 or email [liz@helenafoodshare.org](mailto:liz@helenafoodshare.org).

# Elinor's Smile

There's something constant about Elinor Edmunds Miller, and that's her smile. If Elinor is out on grocery rescue lugging 50-pound boxes of food onto the truck, she has a smile. If Elinor is entering data at the Pantry, she has a smile. If Elinor is helping a customer out to his vehicle and it's blowing snow, you guessed it -- Elinor is smiling.

Elinor had her first experience volunteering at Helena Food Share in 2004, when she brought a youth

group in to help with holiday meal distribution. Then in 2011, Elinor started volunteering regularly because as she says enthusiastically, "It's so much fun to be here."

Over the years, staff has changed, computer programs have changed and operating procedures have changed. When Elinor is asked the biggest change she's seen during her time here she doesn't hesitate with her answer. When Elinor first started volunteering, customers would get one produce item. Now Helena Food Share's Healthy Food Initiative, supported by St. Peter's Health, is a partnership with local and community gardeners who bring in their bounty to the pantry. As a result, there are days when customers are able to have four or five items of locally-grown produce. This, of course, makes Elinor smile.

Elinor credits her dedication to the wonderful and passionate community support that she sees for Helena Food Share. Since volunteer hours began being tracked by individual in 2014, Elinor has contributed 3,000 hours to Helena Food Share! Elinor

makes a difference to so many every week at the Helena Food Share Pantry. Her smiles light up the days of the customers and staff, who are thankful to have her help creating a warm environment in the Pantry. Thanks to Elinor and all the volunteers who contribute to the 22,000 hours annually that make it possible for Helena Food Share to operate. ●



**Leave A Legacy of Caring: Estate Planning and Helena Food Share**

Providing for Helena Food Share via a gift in your estate planning will assure that your caring and compassion will live on, helping us provide food to all who need it in our community. If you'd like more details about making a gift in your estate, please call our Development Director, Liz Harrison, at Helena Food Share: 406-443-3363, ext. 104



**Double Your Donation** 

*Donations made between October 1 and November 30 will be matched dollar for dollar up to \$40,000, thanks to a generous match from Town Pump.*

*YOUR DONATION* + *TOWN PUMP'S DONATION* = *MORE \$\$\$ TO FEED THOSE IN HELENA WHO NEED THE HELP.*



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Helena, MT 59624

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## Pantry Times

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# **SAVE THE DATE!**

## **2019 Turkey Challenge**

### **November 22, 9:00 - 5:30**



Let's make sure everyone in the Helena area gets to enjoy a holiday dinner this season. Bring a frozen turkey, or donate \$30 to help give a holiday meal to a neighbor in need.

At the  
Lewis & Clark Library,  
120 S Last Chance Gulch  
or donate online at  
[helenafoodshare.org](http://helenafoodshare.org)

**For more information, or to become a sponsor, call 406-443-3663, ext. 104.**

### **Upcoming Holiday Food Drives**

- ▶ **Saturday, November 2**  
**10:00-4:00**  
Both Albertsons Locations:  
3151 N. Montana Ave.  
600 N. Fee St.
- ▶ **Saturday, November 9**  
**9:00-4:00**  
*hosted by MESA Moving Van's Thriftway*  
306 Euclid Ave.  
**AND**  
Super 1  
3120 Queen Anne St.
- ▶ **Saturday, November 16**  
**10:00-4:00**  
Safeway  
611 N. Montana Ave.