



Creating a Hunger-Free Community

Pantry Times

Winter 2024



We believe nutritious food is a building block for healthy communities.

Checking-in with Customers

The smiling face of a volunteer greeter welcomes customers when they arrive at the Pantry to check in and shop. Customers get to know the volunteers and often share stories of what brings them to Helena Food Share.

Volunteers Loretta and Barbara take turns checking people in on Thursdays. Loretta shared a memorable encounter with a young mom with a small daughter who was new to Helena Food Share. "While helping her complete a registration form as a

gratitude, thanking us for the food."

Mo and her husband, Lauren, volunteer each Monday. They get to know most customers, many of whom shop on the same day of the week. They help them find specific foods to meet their health needs or offer a smile or a kind word. Mo shared, "Now and again, someone comes to check in, and the record shows they haven't been in



Barbara and Loretta at the check-in station.

"People need to know we are here if they need help and not to feel bad about asking for help."

new customer, I learned she was now homeless and hoping to get some much-needed food for her family. Her husband was in the hospital following a severe work accident and would not be able to work for some time. It was her first time asking for food support. She was distraught, not knowing how they would navigate the challenges that lay ahead for her family. Volunteers helped her through the shopping process, and while the future remained uncertain, she left with a smile of

for two or three years. When I said to one woman, 'I haven't seen you for a while,' she replied, 'I just lost my job. I don't

want to be here, but I need help with food.' I told her, 'That's why we're here.' The woman smiled and added, 'But I'll find another job.' People need to know we are here if they need help and not to feel bad about asking for help."

Check-in volunteers love to hear customer updates. Loraine recently told us, "A regular shopper came in, and as we were visiting, he said with a smile, 'I need to update my address.'" Loraine knew why this was such

good news. She knew this man had been homeless. He was only able to pick up a few items each week since he didn't have a place to store or cook food. "He was so excited to tell me that he could begin shopping for the full amount because he now had a home to call his own." The customer, who was once homeless, had found a place to live, and while he still needed help with some of his food; he was on the road to brighter days.

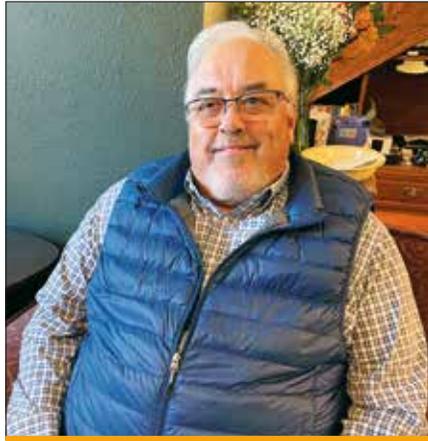
No matter why a customer needs food support, Helena Food Share is here to ensure that hunger is no longer a factor. Your donations change lives and mean so much to those we serve.

Building a Stronger Community: A Conversation with Bruce Whittenberg

We are excited to share an inspiring conversation from a recent visit with Bruce Whittenberg, a committed Helena Food Share volunteer and donor. Bruce has been a leader in Montana and the Helena community—as a publisher, founding director of Leadership Montana, and Director of the Montana Historical Society during the launch of the campaign for their new museum. His dedication and generosity have played a key role at Helena Food Share, supporting operations as a volunteer and as a donor to the new Community Food Resource Center.

As we talked, Bruce shared his passion for helping others, his unwavering belief in the power of community support, and his trust in Helena Food Share's ability to address food insecurity in the Helena area.

Bruce volunteers to deliver groceries to homebound individuals and families who cannot shop at the Pantry. When asked about his experience, he said, "Volunteering at Helena Food Share has given me a profound



Bruce Whittenberg

understanding of the challenges many in our community face. I've been delivering groceries for a few years and have seen the immense challenges some of our neighbors face. As a volunteer and a neighbor, you want to make sure that you don't forget that. You want to understand the need that's there and to help out whenever you can."

When asked about his support for the new building, Bruce said, "The need for Helena Food Share services keeps growing. As the community grows, the pace will pick up even more, so we've got to have a facility to keep up with the need. It's also part of what communities do—we find ways

to support one another. Looking to the future, I am confident the building will help keep up with the demand. It will make things more efficient and much easier to provide the services needed to support customers.

Thank you, Bruce, for sharing your motivations and commitment to helping build a hunger-free community.

Construction Update



At the end of October, Dick Anderson Construction and local contractors began site preparation. It has been a very productive few months of moving and leveling dirt, burying pipe to connect to city water and sewer, installing the stormwater detention system, and completing concrete work for footings and the foundation.

The construction timeline of one year puts occupancy of the building in late fall. In the next month, the floor will go in and by mid-spring, we'll see the structure going up. Watch our social channel for more updates.

We're getting close to reaching our fundraising goal. Your gift to the campaign will make a difference.

Pantry Times | January 2024

Pantry Times is a publication of Helena Food Share.

Contact Us:

(406) 443-3663

To Volunteer: ext. 106

To Donate: ext. 103

To Get Help: ext. 110

Helena Pantry:

1616 Lewis Street, Helena

East Helena Mobile Pantry:

50 Prickley Pear, East Helena

Office: 1437 Helena Avenue, Helena



[HelenaFoodShare.org](https://www.HelenaFoodShare.org)

- 2023 -
By The Numbers



Meeting The Need



8,776 Individuals served

4,094 Households served

5,344 Emergency Food Packs distributed to people in urgent need of calories

86,444 Food assistance services

1,898,090 Pounds of food distributed through all services

Grocery Share



32,035 Grocery Share services provided to customers

2,318 Holiday meals provided to customers

2,178 Kids served through Grocery Share

1,403 Seniors Served through Grocery Share

Feeding Kids



45,000 Kid Packs given to kids in need

25 Area schools distribute Kid Packs

10 Elementary schools where students learned about and made nutritious food with the Charlie Cart

Helping Seniors



1,477 Senior Commodities boxes distributed

270 Farmers Market coupons distributed for fresh produce

827 Mobile delivery services provided to seniors and others with mobility challenges

Donors, volunteers, and staff are essential to ensuring no one in Helena goes hungry.



Hudson drops off food collected at his 5th birthday party.



Volunteer prepping produce for Pantry distribution.



Jonathan keeps the garden growing all summer with fresh produce.



Nutrition



Amount of food in pounds

44,252 Food rescued/by grocery stores

6,180 Food purchased by Helena Food Share

89,805 Food provided by federal food programs

11,914 Food drives & individual donations

8,864 Fresh produce donated by local gardeners

Volunteers & Staff



839 Volunteers

17,109 Hours worked by volunteers

11 full-time & 6 part-time Staff kept programs and operations running

8.23 Staff equivalent provided by volunteers

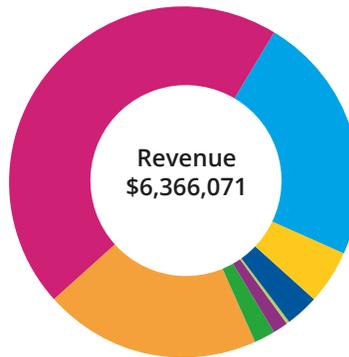
People hungry. 2023 Highlights:



Bruce Day and Tim Joyce with donors during the 2023 Turkey Challenge at the Lewis and Clark Library.

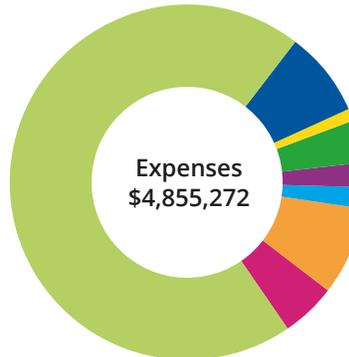
- 2023 - FY Financials

Revenue by Source



- Food Donations | **45.5%**
- Individual Contributions | **23%**
- Business Contributions | **5%**
- Foundation Grants | **3%**
- Federal & State Grants | **.2%**
- Community Group Donations | **1.5%**
- Other Income | **1.8%**
- Building Campaign Grants & Donations | **20%**

Expenses by Program



- Grocery Share Food Program | **70%**
- Kid Pack Program | **8%**
- Senior Food Programs | **1%**
- Holiday Share Program | **4%**
- Other Food Assistance | **2%**
- Emergency Food Packs Program | **2%**
- Communications & Fundraising | **8%**
- Administrative Operations | **5%**

Reserved Funds

\$1,265,147 Reserved for Building Construction

\$100,304 Reserved for Kid Packs

Allocation of Expenses



- Program Services | **87%**
- Communications & Fundraising | **8%**
- Administrative Operations | **5%**

Our Mission

Serving our neighbors in need by providing food in a respectful and dignified way and by working with others to eliminate hunger in the greater Helena area.

A Song of Hope: **2024 Report to the Community**

In Helena, there lies a beacon of hope for each of our neighbors when anything limits their ability to afford the most essential requirement for life – food. This past year, Helena Food Share was again a place where compassion intertwined with action, strengthening programs to alleviate hunger in almost every neighborhood in our community.

As in prior years, the landscape continues to shift. A continuing increase in the number of families seeking weekly groceries stems from rising food and healthcare costs, increases in housing, and the reality that life events can sometimes upend a family's security. The numbers speak volumes, but the stories within the Pantry write the lyrics born of the human spirit's resilience.

Each day, staff and volunteers orchestrate a symphony of care. Every shelf or box packed is a lifeline extended, a promise fulfilled. **Grocery Share** continued to see an increase in customers throughout the year, serving an average of 70 more families monthly than in the year prior. It's a testament to our collective commitment to ensuring no one goes hungry.

But the melody doesn't end there. As the school week winds down, **Kid Packs** brim with hope, filled with nutrition and possibilities. Our weekend food support for school kids has witnessed a 7% rise in demand. Due in part to increased need in our Helena and East Helena schools and to now serving the need in the Canyon Creek, Lincoln, Boulder, and Basin schools.

Our seniors find solace in the supplemental **Senior Programs** offered when limited incomes meet rising costs. More elderly members of our community



Bruce Day points to the crowd while Board members Andrea Groom, Renee Martello, Trish Klock, Steve Fawcett, Jon Satre, Candie Cain, Thomas McArdle, Chris Cordingley, Dan McCauley, and Alyssa Sorensen look on during the groundbreaking ceremony for the new building.

receive essential nutrition through these USDA programs, lifelines to combat both hunger and isolation.

Yet, within these numbers lies a refrain of resilience, unity, and unwavering support. It is composed of staff, volunteers, and a community banding together, standing tall against adversity. As the need grows, so does our determination. Together, we create a chorus of compassion, feeding not just empty stomachs but the souls of our community. We invite you to turn the page to see the impact you and Helena Food Share had on our community in 2023.

2024 Board of Directors

Steve Fawcett, *Chair*, Dan McCauley, *Vice Chair*, Jon Satre, *Treasurer*, Christopher Cordingley, *Secretary*, Candie Cain, Brenda Carney, Brett Clark, Georgia Cummings, Andrea Groom, Sara Groves, Trish Klock, Thomas McArdle, Sarah Norcott, Adrian Sagan, Alyssa Sorenson

Farewell & Welcome

Three Board members completed their outstanding service to Helena Food Share at the end of 2023. Renee Martello, Controller at Montana State Fund, served for 6 years. Her financial expertise was invaluable as Treasurer and in leading many Board discussions. Melanie Reynolds served for 6 years, bringing her broad public health and policy expertise to most every Board discussion and decision. Angela Terry, Business Manager at Montana Radio, served for three years, helping to guide and support our marketing efforts. We say farewell to each of them with gratitude for their service and dedication to Helena Food Share.

New in January are three exciting appointments to the Helena Food Share Board. Georgia Cummings, Director for Upstream Academy, Sarah Norcott, Director of Regulatory Corporate Counsel for Northwestern Energy, and Adrian Sagan, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, join as new Board Directors for 3-year terms. Welcome, and thank you all for your commitment to serve.



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Pantry Times
HelenaFoodShare.org

HUNGER HEROES

Are passionate monthly donors on a mission to end hunger in our community

WHAT'S INSIDE:

- Stories from the Pantry
- Report to the Community
- New Building Update



PAT IS A HUNGER HERO!

His **\$25 each month** ensured a Senior had fresh produce every week last year.



TOM IS A HUNGER HERO!

His **\$10 each month** provided 75 meals for one of his neighbors last year.



LUCY IS A HUNGER HERO!

Her **\$100 each month** provided 3 meals a day for someone facing homelessness last year.



YOU Can Become a Hunger Hero, too—it's easy!

- Sign up at HelenaFoodShare.org/Give
- Or check the Hunger Hero box on the enclosed envelope

