



## Our Food-Sharing Philosophy: Our Mission in Action

Every issue of this newsletter features stories that highlight one of our philosophy statements. In addition to showcasing the impact of your support, these stories illustrate how our philosophy guides our work. The board members, staff, and volunteers of Helena Food Share are led by these statements every day. They reflect our worldview and emphasize how Helena Food Share connects with the broader community.



*A volunteer stocks produce bins.*

These statements are displayed on our office walls, printed on the backs of staff and volunteer t-shirts, and featured on our grocery rescue trucks. They also inform the development of every food program, event, and strategic plan we undertake. Our staff meetings begin by sharing stories that demonstrate how our



*The Community Food Resource Center was built through the generosity of over 800 donors and serves the greater Helena area.*

philosophy shapes the values embedded in our daily work. In this issue, we are excited to share some highlights of how our philosophy has recently come to life.

### ***We believe that every gift is significant.***

Our first story is one of celebration. Over the four years of the public campaign to build the Community Food Resource Center, donations of every size—ranging from \$5 to \$1 million—combined to help us reach our final goal. Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our community, we have secured the full funding needed to complete the campaign through individual contributions, foundation support, and multi-year pledges.

These commitments made by supporters like you have allowed us to achieve our campaign goal and turn our vision into reality.

The broad support from our extended community has enabled us to bring the Community Food Resource Center to life, allowing us to fully focus all our fundraising efforts on continuing to strengthen our programs.



### **We believe...**

- no one should go hungry
- access to food is a basic human right
- nutritious food is a building block for healthy communities
- in handling food respectfully and eliminating food waste
- in the spirit of human kindness
- that by working together, we accomplish more
- every gift is significant
- by sharing food, we share hope.

Continued from page 1

**We believe access to food is a basic human right, and by sharing food, we share hope.**

The Grocery Share Market serves as a vital resource, providing access to food for those in need. In the Community Room, classes empower participants to transform that food into delicious, nutritious meals. These initiatives exemplify the powerful connection between access to food, nutrition education, and overall health, ultimately fostering hope and building a brighter future for our community.

With four cooking stations, the new Community Room is an exciting hub, where we offer a wide range of cooking and nutrition classes for everyone from Helena Food Share customers to the general public. With some classes organized by community organizations for their clients, many more can benefit from healthy cooking education.



*Nola Freestone (right) leads a pie-making class last fall.*

This spring, Carroll College students hosted meals in the Community Room for Helena Food Share customers and others.



*Participants share a meal at the Carroll community dinner.*

February featured chickpeas in both Mediterranean- and Indian-style recipes, while the March meal allowed participants to create their own Buddha Bowls with assorted grains, legumes, leafy greens, and vegetables. The



*PAL students prepare grain bowls.*

students and their instructor shared valuable insights on meal preparation and illustrated how the ingredients support a healthy lifestyle. Most importantly, it was a shared meal.

St. Peter's Health holds its Inch by Inch nutrition classes in the Community Room, emphasizing lifestyle changes to prevent diabetes and heart disease. The cooking demonstrations and tastings actively engage enrolled participants in supporting their health.

Helena Food Share also plays a crucial role by organizing various

cooking classes, including two winter sessions on crockpot meals with registered dietitian, Chloe Lundquist. At the end of class, participants took the crockpots home to continue their culinary journey. Another recent class utilized items from the March Senior Commodities distribution for our senior customers. Also this spring, PAL high school students discovered the importance of nutrition in a series of classes at Helena Food Share. During the cooking classes, their teacher, Brooke Kupcho, was joined by Kim Lloyd from St Peter's Health, chef Margaret Corcoran, and Food Share staff, as students learned to create grain bowls and homemade pasta with sauce.

Together, the classes in the Community Room reflect our shared philosophy. Each class, each shared meal, and each new skill gained strengthens our community and ensures that hope is not only offered, but sustained—one recipe, one conversation, and one neighbor at a time.



*Meal prepared in the Lifestyle Medicine class.*



Fresh, nutrient-dense produce donated from a local Community Garden.

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

Last year, local gardeners donated an impressive 65,904 pounds of fresh produce, including items from backyard gardens, community gardens, and from growers in the Helena Valley, as well as at Helena’s



A volunteer prepares donated garden produce for the market.

weekly Farmers Market. Our market coolers were filled with an abundance of fresh greens, tomatoes, apples, zucchini, carrots, onions, berries, herbs, and much more, which were distributed to customers directly or used for preparing meals in our kitchen each day.

Fresh produce plays a vital role in promoting health and is an

essential item in our Grocery Share Market. Customers are especially grateful for these items, and their faces light up knowing that they were grown locally and supplied by their neighbors. Additionally, some customers who have their own gardens donate their extra produce to share with fellow shoppers.

Wild game is also a welcome addition to the Market, serving as a nutritious staple for many families in our community. Montana hunters, in collaboration with the Montana Food Bank Network, utilize the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks’ Hunters Against Hunger program to process and donate wild meat to local food pantries. In the Helena area, this meat is distributed through Helena Food Share.

When purchasing a Montana hunting or fishing license this year, please consider donating to Hunters Against Hunger to support this important program. You can also donate directly to the program through the Montana Food Bank Network (*use the link below*).



Donated wild game offers essential protein to families.

Join your neighbors in building a healthier Helena community. Whether you dedicate a row of your garden to fresh produce or support Hunters Against Hunger to help fund wild game processing, you make it possible for more families to access vital nutrition.

Learn more about both programs on our website — [HelenaFoodShare.org/Nutrition/Support](https://HelenaFoodShare.org/Nutrition/Support).

*Community Food Quarterly* | **SPRING 2026**  
A publication of Helena Food Share

**Contact Us:**  
(406) 443-3663

To Volunteer: ext. 106  
To Donate: ext. 103  
To Get Help: ext. 110

**Grocery Share Market:**  
1280 Boulder Avenue, Helena

**East Helena Mobile Pantry:**  
50 Prickley Pear, East Helena

**Office:** 1280 Boulder Avenue, Helena



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



Creating a Hunger-Free Community

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Community Food Quarterly



*We believe that by working together we accomplish more.*

## Grow-A-Row!



## Your Garden Can Be a Lifeline— And So Can Your Pantry

With school out soon, more families will be facing empty cupboards. **Make a difference by dedicating a garden row to Helena Food Share.** Fresh, local produce makes a world of difference for families in need, giving them the nutritious food they deserve to thrive.

### **Don't have a green thumb? You can still help**

We are currently in need of:

- **Canned Food:** Vegetables, Fruit, Meats
- **Canned Meals:** Stew, Chili, etc.
- **Boxed Meals:** Mac & Cheese, Hamburger Helper, etc.
- **Cereal:** Regular- or Single-serve Size
- **Condiments:** Mustard, Ketchup, Mayonnaise, etc.
- **Snacks:** Crackers, Granola Bars or Protein Bars

Every donation provides food with dignity and care for a neighbor in need.

**Together, we can grow a stronger, hunger-free community.**



Creating a Hunger-Free Community