

The River Food Pantry
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Inside This Issue:

The Extra Help That's Needed	1
Annual Report	1
MUNCH	2
Friend of The River: Meet Steve	2
Hands of Hope	2
The Directors	3
News Bites	3
Feed The Need	4

Our Mission:

To bring a message of mercy and hope to those in need by providing nutritional basics and encouragement; to be a unifying, servant hearted and community building expression of Jesus Christ in Madison.

The Extra Help That's Needed by Hannah Becker

Many children in north side neighborhoods struggle with food insecurity.

"You just don't know the struggles that families are dealing with inside their homes," Felicia Davis, Director of DSS Community Center that provides an after school program for youth in the Brentwood neighborhood, said. "A lot of kids in my program will ask if I'm feeding them because it'll be the last meal they're going to eat that day."

In 2015, 39% of individuals served at The River were children. Many parents like Rae* (name changed for privacy) visit The River Food Pantry to provide nutritious food for their family. Rae is a single mother of three that regularly visits The River Food Pantry for groceries.

"It's important for me and my children to sit down at home and have family dinners," Rae said. "I'd like to do it more often but with working two jobs, we try to have our family dinners once a week."

Like many mothers, Rae said visiting The River helps her save money which goes towards paying bills. "I'm a strong, independent woman so at first it was hard for me to accept the fact that I needed help," Rae admits. "But I had such

a good experience my first time at The River and my kids couldn't get over the amount of food I brought home."

Rae said The River Food Pantry has helped make their family dinners more special. "We should really be calling them our family feasts with the amount of food we can make now," Rae said chuckling.

"I wish I could be home more often to make dinner but I'm doing the best that I can for my family and I know things will get better," Rae said. "For right now, The River is greatly appreciated in my home and in many others in the community."

Even though The River helps Rae provide healthy food for her children, she said she has concerns that her children aren't eating enough healthy food when she's busy working.

In its tenth year of serving the community, The River plans to help more families like Rae's and

provide lunches for children directly in their north side neighborhoods and parks when other lunch programs aren't available to them.

"Parents need extra help when they have to work," Felicia said. "I do not have the capacity to serve these children everyday. So for The River Food Pantry to come and provide resources, especially for our kids, that'll be a relief for many families."



Felicia said children participating in DSS Community Center would utilize a program that's directed to feeding youths in the north side neighborhoods.

With the help of volunteers and donors, The River Food Pantry will be kicking off a new program in June to provide lunches on weekends and during school breaks for children living on the north side.

More information on page 2.

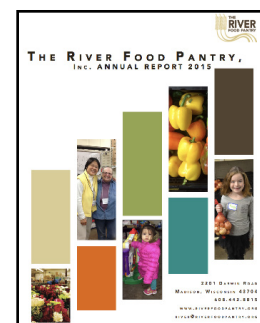
Annual Report

In 2015, 30,605 total households visited The River, that's 1,272 more families from 2014.

The River distributed 2 million pounds of food, \$862,586 worth of clothing, furniture and

household items and served 27,825 meals.

The River Food Pantry's 2015 Annual Report can be found on The River Food Pantry's website, www.riverfoodpantry.org.



Pantry Needs**Non-perishable food:**

- Canned Protein (Tuna, Chicken, Spam, etc.)
- Peanut Butter
- Canned or Boxed Pasta Meals
- Canned Fruit
- Canned Veggies
- Cereal
- Hamburger & Tuna Helper
- Soup
- Pasta
- Canned Pasta Sauces
- Baby Food
- Oatmeal

Personal Items:

- Soap, Lotions, TP, Diapers, Vitamins
- Shampoo & Conditioner
- Feminine Hygiene Items

Donation hours: Mon-Fri
from 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

The River Focuses on Feeding Children-Can You Help?

Many children in Madison struggle with food insecurity. On the north side, where 80% of the children live in low-income families, the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) offers free breakfast, lunch and snacks to all children during the school year. Many of those children could benefit from additional meals provided on weekends and during school vacations.

The River is partnering with north side neighborhood leaders and residents to create a long-term project called MUNCH (Madison Urban Nutritional Children's Hotspot) that will provide additional meals to children during weekends and school breaks, all year round.

Starting in June 2016, The River plans to start distributing lunches every Saturday and Sunday in a small neighborhood behind the PDQ on Northport Drive. As funding allows, The River would like

to expand to a total of seven north side neighborhoods and parks, and hopes to serve an estimated 50% of children in the neighborhoods.

With the help of volunteers, the lunches will be prepared and wrapped at The River Food Pantry on Saturday mornings for delivery to low income neighborhoods on Saturday and Sunday.

Discussions with interested parents from the neighborhoods are being held to finalize meal contents and distribution schedules and locations. Parents will be involved in all distributions and food production.

The River also plans to partner with the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) in a pilot program to deliver lunches to the Woodlands neighborhood during the 8 weeks of summer school. Depending on the outcome, several more neighborhoods could be

added for summer school lunch delivery in the future.

For more information on how you can help fund this essential endeavor or volunteer, please contact Andy and Jenny Czerkas at river@riverfoodpantry.org.



Rhonda poses with two of her favorite shoppers at The River. In 2015, 39% of individuals served by The River were children.

Hands of Hope

Give monthly and be the hands of hope to our neighbors in need.



Join online at:
riverfoodpantry.org/donate

Friend of The River: Meet Steve by Steve Sachtjen

I have been supporting The River Food Pantry since the beginning. Over the past ten years, I've experienced countless touching moments because of The River.

I can still recall the first Friday night pantry session; volunteers

from church all coming together with the same mission, to serve. The relationships built between volunteers as well as with shoppers at The River is just incredible.

Once a shopper personally asked me to pray with him. As a religious man, that moment has stuck with me over the years.

I've also connected with numerous shoppers while driving them home from the pantry. Just hearing their stories, learning about their family and understanding their struggles. I've built a personal relationship with many of them and their families because of those drives.

During the holidays I've had the honor of going into family's homes and deliver gifts for Christmas. From watching the children's faces light up knowing they have a gift to open for the holiday to sitting down and

praying with the entire family, it was one of the most humbling experiences I have ever had.

As I've said many times throughout the years, what I get out of The River is more than I've ever gave. You see, I was born and raised in Madison. Sherman Avenue was the neighborhood I grew up in. Food is a basic need and The River Food Pantry is a safe place for families and individuals to not only come for food but to share faith, to connect with others and to find hope.

It has always been easy for me to bring interested supporters, family members and friends to The River Food Pantry so they get the full effect of how involved and important The River is to the community. I'm proud to be a part of The River Food Pantry and look forward to what it will achieve in the future and the lives it will impact.



Steve, far right, has been a supporter of The River for ten years and has been a part of The River Food Pantry board since the beginning.

"What I get out of The River is more than I've ever gave."

Word From the Directors: Andy & Jenny

Thursday, March 31, 2016 was special as it officially marked our 10-year anniversary!

The River Food Pantry opened on Friday, March 31, 2006 and served 31 households and 70 hot meals. There was lots of excitement and anticipation in the air that night. It was the culmination of a 5 month, all volunteer build out project.

By August of that year, we

were serving over 100 households each week along with 150 hot meals. The need was great and we grew very fast.

With God's grace we had the needed funds to operate those first couple years. We (Andy & Jenny) didn't know much about fundraising and didn't need to initially.

"The need was great and we grew very fast."

People were generous and we had just enough funds to operate. We also knew everyone who donated, and often were able to express our heartfelt gratitude in person. In those first few years there were no paid staff. We were all volunteers.

Growth was huge that first year. It soon became obvious we either needed to cap how many families could come on Fridays, or

add more food pantry sessions. Rather than turn people away, the second pantry session started in September 2007.

Today The River is open to the public five times a week and

serves three community meals. 600+ households use the food pantry every week, along with 550+ hot meals.

We have needed help with raising enough funds to support the efforts for several years now, but with God's grace we manage to get by.

Thousands of people have contributed to The River over the past ten years with their time, money, expertise, and advice! We wish we could know every single person who has helped out on a personal level. If you haven't been to The River recently, please consider stopping by to see us.



The River helps roughly 150 families and serves over 150 meals on Friday nights alone. Thanks to all of the volunteers and donors over the past ten years that have made this possible!

97 cents of every dollar goes to providing food and services.

News Bites

Blues Picnic

The River will again host a concession stand during the 14th Annual Blues Picnic. The picnic is June 18, noon-9pm at Warner Park. If you would like to volunteer to work the concession stand while enjoying some great blues music, contact river@riverfoodpantry.org

Food Drive Help

A great way to get involved with The River is organizing a food drive in the Madison area! Food drives are typically held on Saturdays with at least two volunteers. Food drives are not only a great oppor-

tunity to stock our shelves with a variety of non-perishable food items but also a great opportunity to inform people about The River Food Pantry and how they can get involved. If interested, go to www.riverfoodpantry.org and click on our volunteer tab to find a food drive kit that will help get you started.

Harvest Dinner - Save The Date

The River Food Pantry is pleased to announce that the 7th annual Harvest Dinner for Hunger will be held Sunday, October 9 at once again, the historic East Side Club on Monona Drive. This year's theme is Tackle Hunger.

Support The River by volunteering, donating a raffle or auction item, buying tickets to the event or spreading the word. Businesses interested in sponsorship opportunities or individuals looking to get involved can contact Amy at amy@riverfoodpantry.org.

School Supplies

The River Food Pantry is starting to collect school supplies for when the new school year begins. Please consider donating pencils, pens, folders, notebooks, backpacks or anything a student would need to excel in their schooling.

Staff

Administrative Assistant

Gina Leahy

Communications Coordinator

Hannah Becker

Development Director

Amy Lord

Directors

Jenny and Andy Czerkas

Driver

Sean Dilks

Food Services Manager

Janna Watson

Kitchen Manager

William Berkan

Operations Manager

Rhonda Adams

Pantry Manager

Dwayne Jordan

Warehouse Coordinator

Jon Clark

Cash Equivalence

Your contribution to The River Food Pantry goes a long way

\$10 = Provides \$100 worth of food with The Power of Ten

\$25 = Provides fuel for one Friday night of driving families home with groceries

\$50 = Keeps the truck running to pick up 40,000 pounds of food weekly

\$100 = Provides food for 5 families a week

\$150 = Serves 100 hot meals

\$200 = Provides rent and utilities to The River for one day

Stay Connected



Number of Households Served in Recent Months:

February 2016:
2,287 households

March 2016:
2,761 households

April 2016:
2,506 households

Your support makes this possible

Thank You!



About The River Food Pantry

The River Food Pantry is Dane County's busiest food pantry. For the past ten years, The River has been offering free groceries, meals and clothing to individuals and families in need.

Beyond nutritional assistance, The River provides a warm, welcoming family atmosphere where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

We are located in an 11,000 square foot warehouse at the end of Northport Drive, Madison, WI and open to all Dane County residents.

Your support is absolutely critical to meeting the needs of families in our area. No family should go hungry just because they cannot afford to buy food. We can affect so many lives by giving them hope. Please consider financially supporting The River Food Pantry today. If you are interested in learning more about The River, please contact us at (608) 442-8815 or email us at river@riverfoodpantry.org. We would be happy to hear from you!

The River Hours

Monday - Friday

Donations: 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday & Thursday

Food Pantry and Clothing:

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Tuesday & Thursday

Food Pantry, Clothing and Dinner:

5:00 - 6:30 p.m.

Friday

Food Pantry, Clothing and Dinner:

6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

(doors open at 5:00 p.m.)

The River is an equal opportunity provider.

GET YOUR TICKETS FOR FEED THE NEED!



WHEN: Sunday, June 5, 2016
3:00 - 6:00 p.m.

WHERE: The East Side Club,
Monona Drive

Don't miss this culinary tasting event to benefit The River Food Pantry! Sample a huge variety of local flavors, enjoy live music, all while supporting a great cause.

**Raise a glass. Raise spirits.
Raise awareness.**

Tickets \$40

www.riverfoodpantry.org



With generous support from our partners:



And generous contributions from our sponsors:



And generous support from media outlets:

Edible Madison Magazine | Madison Essentials Magazine | Maximum Ink Music Magazine

Thank you to our participants, entertainers, partners and sponsors!

This event will be indoor and outdoor on the lakeside lawn of beautiful Lake Monona. It is a rain or shine event. To learn more about The River Food Pantry, visit www.RiverFoodPantry.org.