



The River

Quarterly Newsletter of The River Food Pantry

Fall 2017

The River Food Pantry
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Want to get email updates from The River? Sign up on our website and be sure to add us to your contact list.

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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.

When School Was Out, MUNCH Was Out And About Delivering Meals

By Hannah Becker

Many children count down the days until their summer vacation begins, but without schools providing free meals, the summer months can be a very stressful time for parents who worry about their children not receiving enough food.



Staff from Double Tree by Hilton Hotel Madison volunteered for MUNCH production where they made over 800 sandwiches for one day.

"Students who don't get the nourishment they need over the weekend or school breaks are put at a disadvantage from their peers, putting their whole future at stake," a Blackhawk Middle School educator said.

From June to August, The River's mobile lunch program, MUNCH, addressed that issue by providing daily meals to children and teens directly in their neighborhoods.

From starting at just one neighborhood in June 2016, MUNCH has now expanded to eight northside neighborhoods and is distributing over 485 lunches every day.



This summer alone, MUNCH distributed 27,820 number of lunches, that's roughly 2,318 a week!

"This summer has been incredibly busy for MUNCH," Lunch Program Manager Joey Dunscombe said. "We added two neighborhoods and hope to add more, the more the better! And on that note, we could not have done this without our wonderful volunteers, of which MUNCH alone needs about 80 wonderful souls a week. We hope to keep growing our team this year and getting food to more kids."

While the program is intended for children and teens, adults are also given a packed lunch if they ask. No one who comes for a lunch is turned away.

"The Ridgcrest residents are so thankful for being added to the MUNCH route," Northside Navigator Danielle Washington shared. "The program is making food security more sustainable."

The MUNCH program embodies the guiding principals as The River Food Pantry, to touch people's lives with food, compassion, mercy and hope. MUNCH has also expanded by providing lunches to children who shop at The River's Friday night pantry session so they have extra meals over the weekend.

Even though the number of lunches distributed has rapidly increased, there are still too many children living in low income neighborhoods on the north side who

MUNCH
Mobile Lunch



The Green Bay Packers great Donald Driver stopped by a northside neighborhood over the summer to help with the MUNCH program (and give plenty of high fives and hugs).

could benefit from this program. There is a strong correlation between lacking nutrition, poverty and a lack of success in school. The MUNCH program is seeking to ease the negative impact of poverty with non-school day meals to help close the achievement gap between low income students and those that are not.

Visit The River's website, www.riverfoodpantry.org, to learn more about the MUNCH program and how you can be a part of it.

On August 24, The River Food Pantry was the proud recipient of a \$50,000 Brighter Futures Grant awarded by Great Lakes Higher Education Corporation & Affiliates. The money awarded was used to purchase a new and larger cargo van to expand MUNCH to feed more kids in more low income neighborhoods.

The River worked with The Creative Company and MadWraps LLC for a new MUNCH logo and vehicle wrap.

Director's Corner: Learning to SOAR



was our facilitator and introduced the group to Appreciative Inquiry and the SOAR process. I'm happy to inform you about the process and invite you to come along on the journey.

Appreciative Inquiry has been around since 1980 and is a systematic approach to discovering the best in people, organizations and systems, and building upon those strengths to create positive change.

As applied to strategic planning or "strategic thinking," as we like to say, we look at Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR). We begin by focusing on the strengths of The River, the many accomplishments, values, and attributes of our organization. We bring the very best of the past forward and build upon it to determine the future direction of our organization.

Another key component of the Appreciative Inquiry process is that it is inclusive. How many of you have been involved in organizational planning where leadership gets together for a morning or afternoon retreat, there's a lot of good discussion, and then one or two people draft a strategic plan? What happens to that plan? It sits on a shelf and collects dust, right? That's because the people it affects most didn't have buy in.

Appreciative Inquiry strives to include the

Recently our board and leadership team got together for a "Day of Vision" to launch a strategic thinking process for our organization. Jay Ekleberry, from the University of Wisconsin,

voices, opinions, hopes, dreams, ideas of as many people as possible who are a part of our system. For The River, this includes all of you, our clients, our volunteers, our donors, our employees, our community partners, and the community at large.

So we invite you to join us on this journey.

We need your input to help us determine the Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results that will empower and embolden the future of The River. Over the next several months we will be reaching out to you through various means to invite your participation in the process. It may be through a town hall, a focus group, a survey, or a one on one interview.

One quick and easy way to participate right now is to take our online survey at riverfoodpantry.org/survey.

What is your dream for The River? Let's go.

Charles P. McLimans
Executive Director

Number of Households Served in Recent Months:

May 2017:

2,876 households served
2,487 community meals
2,305 MUNCH lunches

June 2017:

2,946 households served
2,789 community meals
5,523 MUNCH lunches

July 2017:

2,453 households served
2,759 community meals
9,005 MUNCH lunches

Your support makes this possible.

Thank You!

Your contribution to The River Food Pantry goes a long way.

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

\$40 = Drives families home with groceries on Friday nights for a month

\$100 = Provides food for five families a week

\$250 = Keeps the trucks running to pick up 50,000 pounds of food weekly

\$300 = Provides rent and utilities to The River for one day

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

United Way Giving Campaign

To support The River Food Pantry through the United Way giving campaign at your work place, you must specially designate us in the "option" box of the paper pledge form.

Though The River does not appear on the list of partner agencies, you can still send your charitable giving our way. Simply write in our agency number: **1232** and specify the dollar amount you want to send us under part "D". Your generous support through the United Way makes a difference.



Volunteer Opportunities

The River Food Pantry runs on volunteers! In 2016, volunteers contributed more than 40,000 hours which is equivalent to 20 full time staff members. The River will be working to address the need for improved volunteer engagement with the implementation of an online volunteer portal. Our very own Rhonda Adams will be focusing more of her time on recruitment, stewardship and engagement of current and potential volunteer relationships.

Go to riverfoodpantry.org to find more information on our upcoming volunteer opportunities and learn how to get involved.

Help At The Pantry



Help At Concessions



Host A Food Drive



Help With MUNCH



Help At Harvest Dinner



Staff

Founders

Andy & Jenny Czerkas

Executive Director

Charles McLimans

Director of Volunteer Engagement & Operations

Rhonda Adams

Development Director

Amy Lord

Lunch Program Manager

Joey Dunscombe

Operations Manager

Brad Boyle

Operations Assistant

Dwayne Jordan

Community Meals Manager

William Berkan

Communications Specialist

Hannah Becker

Warehouse Coordinator

Jon Clark

Administrative/Program Assistant

Michele Withers

Truck Driver & Pantry Assistant

Bill Littel

Hands of Hope

Just \$20 a month could provide a week's worth of groceries for a family. That's less than \$1 a day!

Join the Hands of Hope team and give monthly. Your ongoing gifts stay right here in the Dane County community helping neighbors in need of assistance. 97 cents of every dollar directly funds food, services, utilities, rent, programs and everything else it takes to keep The River stocked with food. Join online at riverfoodpantry.org/donate.



HANDS OF HOPE

Pantry Needs

Personal Items:

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

Gently Used Clothing:

- Bedding
- Shoes
- Coats when in season
- Fall clothing
- Other misc. items needed too

Non-Perishable Food:

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

Join the conversation in fighting hunger:



Shop online & support The River
smile.amazon.com

amazonsmile
You Shop. Amazon Gives.



The River Hours

Tuesday & Thursday

Food Pantry, Clothing & Dinner:

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

5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

(Doors open 30 mins prior)

Friday

Food Pantry, Clothing & Dinner:

6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

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

The River is an equal opportunity provider.

MUNCH

Friday

Lunch productions 8:30 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Saturday & Sunday

Lunch distribution 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Donation

Monday & Wednesday

9 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Thursday & Friday

9 a.m. - 7 p.m.