



The River

Summer 2017

Quarterly Newsletter of The River Food Pantry

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.

Doing More to Address Childhood Hunger

By Hannah Becker

In June 2016, The River launched a mobile lunch program now known as Madison Unites to Nourish Children at Home (MUNCH). The program provides bagged lunches to children living in low-income neighborhoods on the north side when they're not at school.

"We focus so much on the achievement gap; it is a shame that we don't see the hunger gap at the center of that schism," a Blackhawk Middle School educator said. "There is such a direct

correlation between 'achievement' and fulfillment of basic needs."

The program started at just one neighborhood, the Woodland Park apartments, and distributed 30 lunches each day. Now, in May 2017, MUNCH has expanded to six north side neighborhoods and distributes roughly 325 lunches every Saturday, Sunday, and non-school day.

"To drive up to a site and see kids already waiting in line for us and running out of their homes to get lunches gives me mixed emotions," Dennie, a volunteer for MUNCH shared. "The kids come in all sizes, shapes, colors, shy, talkative, immigrant, non-immigrant, shoes on, no shoes, coats on, no coats. That's what keeps me volunteering with MUNCH."

This summer, MUNCH will be distributing lunches every day of the week, ensuring no child goes hungry during their summer break.

"I feel good knowing that the kids in my neighborhood are getting a good lunch even when they are not in school," Carrie, a volunteer for MUNCH said. "I feel lucky that



A young girl from the Brentwood neighborhood handed a MUNCH volunteer this "flower" as a way to say thank you after receiving a packed lunch.

while I am volunteering I get to work with a wonderful group of people who enjoy being together and have a lot of fun while doing something good for the community. I am grateful to have MUNCH in my life."

Parents and community leaders have also expressed how much the neighborhoods appreciate the free lunches. A mother who shops at the pantry said when The River's MUNCH van visits her neighborhood, her four children run knocking on their neighbors' doors yelling, "Lunch is here!"

To learn more about MUNCH and find out ways you can help support the program, visit our website at www.riverfoodpantry.org.



Volunteers prepare over 600 bagged lunches every Saturday morning at The River Food Pantry kitchen.

The 2016 annual report for The River Food Pantry is now available. Your continued support, dedication, and contributions helps The River serve as a valuable resource for families in our community. Each year the number of shoppers at The River increases.

In 2016, 31,446 families shopped for groceries and clothing at the pantry. 27,060 community meals were served and The River's mobile lunch program (MUNCH) distributed 10,400 lunches.

Please visit The River Food Pantry's website to read more about The River's impact on the community in 2016.



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Word From the Founders: Andy & Jenny

This past year has been the best yet at The River! We do say that every year, but it's true. Every year that we spend providing more nutritious food to more people who need a helping hand is a great year for us!

The River was 11 years old in March of 2017. It's truly amazing to witness how much we have been able to accomplish since 2006. The River is the busiest food pantry in Dane County, and every year there are significant increases in the number of people who access our services. Currently, The River distributes over 48,000 pounds of food to about 650 households and serves 500+ hot meals on a weekly basis. 39% of the people that benefit from the food pantry are children.

Childhood hunger has become more and more of a concern since we opened The River 11 years ago. Consequently, a new program was added last June to provide lunches to children and teens on non-school days and on weekends. The new mobile lunch program helps address that

need and has quickly become very popular with struggling families. For the first quarter of 2017 we are handing out over 2300 lunches a month to children and teens. We anticipate growing this program to more neighborhoods in 2017.

Last year stands out from the others also because we made the decision to begin the process of hiring an experienced Executive Director. It is very important to us that The River is sustainable for as long as there are hungry people in Dane County. We also want to position The River to continue to grow and offer more food assistance more efficiently to more people. There is so much more yet to be done.

It was both an honor and humbling experience for us when dozens of very qualified people showed an interest in leading The River into the future. One applicant truly stood out from the rest. We are very pleased to introduce Charles McLimans as our new Executive Director.



We are excited about how The River is positioned for the future! We are excited about our new roles working with Charles. We plan to continue to serve The River indefinitely and all of us are committed to the mission of providing mercy and hope to those struggling to put food on their table.

We are extremely grateful for all the support from so many over the last 11 years and we look forward to deepening partnerships with you for many years to come.

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. For every 97 cents 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.



Meet The River's New Executive Director: Charles McLimans



I feel humbled and blessed to have been chosen to lead The River. For me this is so much more than a job, it is a vital mission and ministry that builds and strengthens community by providing hope, mercy, dignity, and abundance to our neighbors. I feel called and sent to participate in this mission alongside all of you. Expressing it in my Christian tradition, this is how we build the kingdom.

organization on behalf of the community we serve.

There is a very special spirit and culture at The River that I noticed right away. I would describe it as joyful, loving, and abundant. When we give to others it brings joy to everyone involved. We are a philanthropic organization and a charitable organization. Philanthropy in Greek means 'love of humanity,' and Charity comes from the Latin *caritas* meaning 'loving-kindness.' These virtues and values are alive and very evident at The River, thanks to all of you.

Our founders, Andy & Jenny, have laid a very solid foundation for the continued and future success of our mission. The River family is so blessed that they will continue to provide inspiration and service to our

Please stop by to say hello or come and join us for a meal. Let's remember to keep one another in prayer as well as we move forward together on this River journey.

Number of Households Served in Recent Months:

February 2017:

2,381 households

2,027 community meals

March 2017:

2,796 households

2,495 community meals

April 2017:

2,529 households

2,294 community meals

Your support makes this possible.

Thank You!

Food Drive For The River

Stefanie and her three children ages 7, 4, and 1 years old went door to door in their neighborhood handing out flyers and picking up donated food for The River. They collected over 160 pounds of food and personal items!

Following the neighborhood food drive, Stefanie and her family hosted a food drive outside of the Sun Prairie Pick 'N Save for the weekend. She couldn't believe the response they got from shoppers. They had collected over 650 pounds of food and \$350 for The River!

"The whole experience was very touching for me and my family," Stefanie said. "I can promise this food drive won't be our last, I believe it is just the beginning!"

Over 650 families shop at The River Food Pantry every week for groceries, clothes and a hot meal. Hosting a donation drive with

friends, family, coworkers and neighbors is a great way to help families who are struggling to put food on the table. Head to The River Food Pantry's website to read Stefanie's full story and to learn how you can host a food drive.



Stefanie and her family raised over 800 pounds of food and \$350 for The River from food drives.

Food For Good

As a community-funded organization, The River relies on donors and volunteers to help the pantry sustain a strong presence in the community. We invite you to take a seat at the table and help contribute to The River Food Pantry experience by volunteering on site, hosting a fundraising event or providing a cash donation.

\$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 a cart full of food for five families a week



\$150 = Serves 300 community meals



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

Join the conversation in fighting hunger:



Shop online & support The River
smile.amazon.com

amazonsmile
You Shop. Amazon Gives.

Staff

Founders

Andy Czerkas & Jenny Czerkas

Executive Director

Charles McLimans

Operations Director & Volunteer Coordinator

Rhonda Adams

Development Director

Amy Lord

Lunch Program Manager

Julie McCoubrey

Pantry Manager

Dwayne Jordan

Kitchen Manager

William Berkan

Communications

Coordinator

Hannah Becker

Lunch Program

Coordinator

Joey Dunscombe

Warehouse Coordinator

Jon Clark

Administrative Assistant

Michele Withers

Driver & Pantry Assistant

Bill Littel

Pantry Assistant

Seve Strook

Get Involved!

You can choose where you help... in the **kitchen**, **clothing** or **pantry** area.



Join Us!

Tuesdays & Thursdays:

11am-1pm & 4:30-6:30pm

Fridays:

4:50-8pm

Mondays & Wednesdays:

Help us set up by stocking shelves, sorting clothes and other projects.

Call us at 608.442.8815.

Want to help? Individuals can just show up at the times listed above.

Want to bring a group? Email us with your **group size** and **available dates**. Must receive an email from The River staff to confirm.

Shoppers & volunteers are offered a hot meal at each pantry session.

volunteer@riverfoodpantry.org | www.riverfoodpantry.org

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The River Food Pantry is an equal opportunity provider.



The River Hours

Tuesday & Thursday

Food Pantry & Clothing:
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Tuesday & Thursday

Food Pantry, Clothing & Dinner:
5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

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

Saturday

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

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

Sunday

Site distribution 11:20 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Donation

Monday & Wednesday

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

Tuesday, Thursday & Friday

9 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Pantry Needs

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

Personal Items:

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

Gently Used Clothing:

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

You Vote, Charities Win

The PGA Tour Volunteer Challenge is a fun and easy way to help the PGA Tour raise funds for charity. Help raise \$10,000 for The River Food Pantry by simply casting your vote and sharing with friends and family. Voting ends Saturday, June 24th.

Visit <http://bit.ly/votefortheriver>
Fill out the required information
Remember to validate your vote by checking your email

