

Fall 2018



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The River Food Pantry is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and your contribution is tax deductible.

riverfoodpantry.org



Fully Nourished

Community Newsletter

SHARE IN OUR VISION

By Charles McLimans, President and CEO



Food, resources and faith to build a stronger community is what The River has offered the community for

the past twelve years and what we will continue to offer until we achieve our vision of **a fully nourished community**.

Our year-long planning process, based in appreciative inquiry, included the voices of hundreds of individuals representing all stakeholders groups; clients, volunteers, donors, board, staff, community partners, community members and community leaders.

We invite you to join us in making our shared vision a reality.

Humans require sustenance in body, mind and spirit to be fully nourished. People also require stable households in which to move, grow, and thrive. We will continue to stretch ourselves to provide healthy and nutritious food to anyone who needs it, while setting the table for onsite collaborative programming that addresses four areas of household stability — food, housing, health, and work/life. The hopes, dreams and aspirations of the community and the family that make up The River are represented here as our mission, vision, core values and guiding principles.



Explore our new strategic plan at riverfoodpantry.org/fully-nourished-community.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

"I didn't want to sit at home, I wanted to give back because our family receives things from The River. I've learned how to be organized and how to work with other people. I also learned some life lessons working with the other volunteers."

-Ray G., Full-Time Summer Volunteer

MUNCH: LESSONS LEARNED

By Anna Novak, MUNCH Program Intern

My summer interning with the MUNCH program was an incredible and invaluable learning experience. As I head back to school for my final semester, I will truly miss the program and the people it introduced me to, both coworkers and the families I developed relationships with when out with the MUNCH truck. I made so many meaningful connections through everyday interactions during the MUNCH program. I don't take those connections for granted. My summer 'job' was much more than a job and didn't feel like work at all; it was a unique experience that helped me grow as a person while nourishing the Northside of Madison.

Whether through working with The River's staff, volunteers, or community members, I learned so much because of this experience. I learned to be a more effective leader and to work with diverse populations. Each day with the MUNCH program was different, teaching me to stay on my toes and adapt to whatever was thrown at me. Being adaptable with the goal of improving community nutrition challenged me and encouraged my personal growth. Each day I was surrounded by the most determined and passionate people I have ever met. They inspired me to better myself, both personally and professionally.

The River, along with MUNCH, would not be as strong as it is without the dedicated volunteers. Volunteers really are the muscles behind the operations. I was fortunate to lead and work directly with up to twelve volunteers each day – from making hundreds of sandwiches while listening to 80's rock to delivering lunches to eight different stops on the Northside, I got to know and respect so many incredible individuals,



families, and business groups. Without such wonderful volunteers dedicating their time, MUNCH would not be able to assist the number of families it does every non-school day.

As a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I am unintentionally shielded from the surrounding community. I never realized the desperate need for a place like The River Food Pantry. Through this experience, I've learned just how vital The River and MUNCH are to the Madison area outside of the university bubble and how many lives it touches daily. I am so fortunate for the opportunity to have stepped outside of campus with MUNCH. My summer has opened my eyes to the challenges that the Madison community faces.

I think everyone should have access to nutritious food. MUNCH aligns with my beliefs by bridging the hunger gap that exists when school is not in session. I am so appreciative of everything I have learned and experienced over the summer and I would not be the person I am today without The River Food Pantry and the MUNCH program.

FUN FACT

A family of four can save up to
\$800 every month
shopping at The River.

Your \$80+ monthly gift
makes this possible.

riverfoodpantry.org/donate

GET INVOLVED

Want to help us provide food, resources, and faith to build a stronger community? Get involved in these volunteer opportunities!

At the pantry: Help with public shopping sessions, stock shelves, clean and more.

At registration: Use your computer skills to assist with client and volunteer registration.

In the kitchen: Help prepare and serve community meals.

With MUNCH: Assist with lunch production and distribution.

In the community: Raise funds, food and awareness in the community by hosting a food drive.

Visit riverfoodpantry.org or email volunteer@riverfoodpantry.org to learn more.

MEET THE WUEST FAMILY

By John McCracken, Development Assistant

If you've been to The River on a Friday night in the past six years, you've met Justin. He describes himself as a "people person" and his wide smile and welcoming attitude are contagious. Alongside his parents Phil and Kathy, the Wuests have been at The River for quite some time. Sometimes as clients, sometimes as volunteers, but always as helping hands.

Initially, the family came to The River as clients. Kathy, a career legal advisor, and Phil, a military veteran and former Oscar Mayer worker, needed nutritional assistance. Kathy was diagnosed with a rare blood disorder and her medical needs had caused her career to take a backseat.

"When we need The River, there's a variety in the food and nutrition offered here," Kathy said. "The community meals also help when we're in a bind." For the first year, The River helped them get their footing in the wake of her unexpected diagnosis. From stocking shelves, helping outside, preparing bags, and everything in between, the Wuests started to give back as regular volunteers. "There's a wide variety of things to do here," Phil said when recounting their history with The River.

After giving back through volunteering, the Wuests were faced with another challenge, one that affected many people in the Northside community. In 2015, Oscar Mayer announced they were closing their Madison facility and Phil, after working there for 24 years, was out of work. "It hit people hard," he said. At this same time, Phil began to experience heart problems and their medical expenses started rising.

"After Oscar Mayer closed, it affected the whole community. The need for The River was huge," Phil said. While the family worked to get back on their feet in the face of medical and economic challenges, they were always willing to help their neighbors. "Volunteering here gets you out of the house. It gives you a sense of purpose," Phil said.



Volunteering as a family has allowed the Wuests to grow closer together through hardships and they've made a great impression on everyone here. Justin is known around these parts for his great attitude and his nickname, Sheriff. "It started with an old family nickname and it just stuck," said Kathy. Sheriff Justin can be found helping direct traffic outside and making sure clients are getting the help they need.

"I don't have to worry about him when I am here," Kathy said, referring to her son's challenges with his developmental disability. "He's gaining independence and using his connections here to grow in the community. Everyone here has been accepting and very accommodating of his needs." Justin has fit in easily around The River and is always eager to help. "The people here have helped me cope and understand myself. It feels like family," Justin said.

Even now, Kathy is recovering from a recent cataract surgery. Despite this, she still makes a point to come volunteer. "You can come here and get connected to what you need," she said while helping to prepare for a shopping session. "It's not just helping us, it's helping the community."

Throughout their times of need, the Wuests have continued to lend a hand. Now, the family is a fixture to many of the people here. As The River expands its operations and mission, the Wuests will always have a place with us. Their help has been invaluable these past years and Phil let us know that they don't plan on going anywhere. "As long as we can, we will volunteer and connect with the community here."

The River Staff

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Charles McLimans

Director of Advancement
Rhonda Adams

Director of Operations
Lee Cole

Service Manager
Gary Barnes

Development & Communications Manager
Becca Carpenter

Community Meals Coordinator
Craig Ahrendt

MUNCH Program Coordinator
Joey Dunscombe

Operations Supervisor
Casey Motl

Warehouse Supervisor
Jon Clark

Development Assistant
John McCracken

Controller
Bob Garrison

Program Assistants
Erica Dorsch & Jenny King

Driver & Pantry Assistant
Bill Littel

Security
Jemal Massie



**Don't forget us on
#GivingTuesday
Nov. 27!**





2201 Darwin Rd.
Madison, WI 53704

The River Food Pantry's 9th Annual



Sunday, October 21
Madison College, Truax Campus

3550 Anderson Street, Madison, WI

4:30 p.m. Live music, appetizers, silent auction and raffles

6:00 p.m. Program of inspirational stories from those personally touched by The River, and dinner featuring culinary delights from:



Event hosted by NBC Channel 15's evening news anchor John Stofflet.

Get your tickets today and help plant the seeds for a fully nourished community!

Tickets \$75 (+ service fees)
riverfoodpantry.org

HARVEST DINNER
PRESENTING SPONSOR



WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT
FROM OUR PARTNERS



**THE RIVER'S
IMPACT IN 2017:**

33,012
HOUSEHOLDS
VISITED

65,946
MOBILE LUNCHESES
DISTRIBUTED TO
CHILDREN AND
TEENS ON NON-
SCHOOL DAYS

33,323
COMMUNITY
MEALS SERVED

96 CENTS
OF EVERY DOLLAR
WENT TO PROGRAMS
AND SERVICES



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Harvester Sponsor

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JLA Architects • Old National Bank
Pierce Family Foundation • Stifel • Willy Street Co-op



All proceeds benefit the services of The River Food Pantry. Learn more at riverfoodpantry.org.