

Summer 2021



2201 Darwin Rd. • Madison, WI • 53704
(608) 442-8815 • info@riverfoodpantry.org

Curbside Distribution Hours

TUES, THRS, FRI: 10am–3pm
WED: 2pm–7pm

Donation Drop-Off Hours

MON: 8am–1pm
WED: 11am–6pm
TUES, THRS, FRI: 8am–3pm

The River Food Pantry is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization and your contribution is tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

EIN: 20-4179749

riverfoodpantry.org



Fully Nourished

Community Newsletter

INCREASED ACCESS TO FREE FRESH PRODUCE



Food-insecure households across Dane County have increased access to free fruits and vegetables, thanks to a recent grant The River received from the Inland Empire Community Foundation.

With this funding, The River is purchasing more fresh produce than ever before for all of our programs to help our community eat healthier.

An additional 10 pounds of produce is available for households to choose from to take home with their weekly groceries. In addition, our meal programs, FAM and Munch, include at least one extra piece of produce.

We will also soon be providing educational cards with details on preparation, storage, and recipes for specific fruits and vegetables.

From papayas and mangoes to cabbage and bok choy, there is a wide variety of high-quality fruits and vegetables to choose from.

"I do feel my daily energy has improved. My husband's blood sugar levels have also gone down," said The River's client, Brandilyn. "So all the hard work from The River Food Pantry is truly paying off for the community."

We do our best to shop from Dane County farmers to help support the local economy.

Thanks to our amazing volunteer, Karen Houdek, The River's garden is growing vegetables and herbs, which are used in our meals.



We will happily accept your fresh garden donations for local families to enjoy!

LEADING THE RIVER FORWARD



I hope this newsletter finds you enjoying Wisconsin's beautiful summer. This has always been my favorite time of the year, as I love the longer days, flower gardening and opening the windows whenever possible.

I want to give a big thank you to all our volunteers, donors and community partners who have stood with us this past year. From volunteering outside in inclement weather to donating stimulus checks, you have all found ways to help ensure that our neighbors receive an ample supply of healthy food when they need it most.

Thanks to our community's generosity and regular feedback from our stakeholders, The River has been able to:

- **Celebrate** the 15th birthday of The River in May and the 5th birthday of Munch in June.
- **Restore client choice** through the ePantry, our new online grocery ordering system coming in August.
- **Offer much more fresh fruits and vegetables** through all of our programs thanks to a generous grant from the Inland Empire Community Foundation.
- **Accommodate the schedules of working individuals and families** by shifting our Wednesday distribution hours to 2–7pm recently.
- **Explore opportunities for a larger facility** where we can expand and welcome our clients indoors once again, as we have outgrown our 11,000 square foot space on Darwin Road.

We are grateful to announce that an anonymous donor has offered to **match all donations to The River up to \$25,000 through Sept. 21**. Please consider making a gift today to help feed twice as many neighbors in need.

We still have work to do. Dane County is home to thousands of children, seniors, veterans, families, people with disabilities, and those experiencing homelessness who face food insecurity.

With your help, The River will continue to work with our community to increase access to healthy food and resources so that no one goes to bed hungry.

With deep gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Rhonda Adams'.

Rhonda Adams
Executive Director



HAPPY 5TH BIRTHDAY, MUNCH!

Five years ago, the first mobile lunches were packed into a van and delivered to low-income neighborhoods through our mobile lunch program, Munch.

Munch has come a long way, now serving over 1,000 lunches every week to both children and adults in Northside neighborhoods on non-school days. This summer, Munch expanded to the Darbo-Worthington neighborhood as well.

Thank you for helping to grow this popular program!

ePANTRY: NEW FOOD PANTRY ONLINE ORDERING SYSTEM

Of all the changes at The River caused by the pandemic, perhaps the largest one was moving pantry sessions outdoors to support the health of clients, volunteers, and staff. While this transition was necessary, it was difficult as it took away something our clients value greatly: choice.

While we worked to box up the widest variety of groceries as possible for curbside pickup, our team began exploring an online ordering option to empower households to choose their own groceries again—only this time with a click.

This summer, we are thrilled to launch Dane County's newest food pantry online ordering system, called ePantry!

The River's ePantry will be open for orders in August. Once a month, households will have the option to order their groceries online.

Based on household size, families select from a variety of healthy and nutritious food, including fresh produce, meat, dairy, culturally relevant offerings, and special dietary options, such as vegetarian and gluten-free items.

Designated pick-up times will be available Wednesday through Friday. Clients who are homebound can still access ePantry and have their groceries delivered through River Delivers, a free delivery service to those who are unable to visit the pantry.

Thanks to a collaborative effort between staff, supporters and the community, this exciting technological innovation will increase access to healthy food in Dane County and restore client choice.



Client choice is important because it:

- **Gives clients a sense of dignity and control**
- **Allows clients to tailor the resources they receive to be the best possible fit for their own unique situation**
- **Limits waste**

Through client feedback, we have learned that many are looking forward to this new service. We are already brainstorming ideas to make ePantry accessible to all—not just those with internet access. We look forward to working with our community to grow ePantry to meet the need for food assistance throughout Dane County.

Have questions or want more information? Email epantry@riverfoodpantry.org or visit riverfoodpantry.org/epantry.



VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS NEEDED

We invite you to volunteer with:

- **River Delivers:** Become a River Runner to deliver groceries to households without transportation.
- **Curbside Groceries:** Help with curbside distribution, register clients, pack boxes, load vehicles and more.
- **FAM:** Help prepare and serve to-go meals for entire families to take home.
- **Munch:** Assist with lunch production and/or delivery to children and adults in low-income neighborhoods.
- **ePantry:** Pack boxes of custom orders, stock shelves, and assist with distribution.

Sign up to volunteer at riverfoodpantry.org/volunteer.

SOAK UP SUMMER MATCH!

Make the most of your summer and make the most impact.

Donations made to The River by Sept. 21 will be **MATCHED**, dollar-for-dollar, up to \$25,000, thanks to an anonymous donor.

Gifts from generous donors like you have helped The River sustain operations through one of the most difficult times our community has ever endured.

As we emerge from the pandemic, The River is experiencing a decline in donations. For many of the families and individuals that depend on The River for food, recovering from the effects of the pandemic will take time.

We need your support to continue nourishing Dane County with weekly groceries for curbside pickup or delivery, freshly prepared to-go meals, and mobile lunches for low-income neighborhoods.

Thank you for considering a gift today to help feed twice as many neighbors in need. **For every dollar you donate, 97.5 cents goes directly to those we serve.**

To give to The River, visit riverfoodpantry.org/summer, scan the QR code below, or mail your check using the enclosed envelope.



TENNEY KIDS ROLL OUT THE BARREL

While enjoying their to-go meals from The River's Birthday Bash in May, Eva (age 8) and Camryn (age 5) were figuring out how to help feed people who use the pantry.

With help from their families, Eva and Camryn recruited their neighbors to go door-to-door with 200 food drive fliers. On collection nights, the girls pulled a donation barrel around the neighborhood using a platform on wheels built by their grandfather.



This kid-sponsored food drive collected over \$100 and 536 pounds of kid-friendly foods, as well as toothbrushes and toothpaste, for local families in need.

Extra special thanks to Eva and Camryn's family for all the time, energy and creativity you put into making this food drive a great success!

To learn more about organizing a food drive for The River, please visit riverfoodpantry.org/ways-to-support.

AN EGG-CELENT DONATION



Since the pandemic began, Darhyl Moore has generously donated 20 dozen eggs each month to The River for local families to enjoy.

"I know what it feels like to be without and that is not a good feeling, especially for the kids," he said.

In addition to sharing eggs, Darhyl provides healthcare resources to The River's clients on a regular basis.

"If I can help one family, whether it be with food or healthcare, then it makes me a stronger person and hopefully the chain of giving will never be broken," he said.

Thank you, Darhyl, for supporting our community in many ways!

MOST-NEEDED ITEMS THIS SUMMER

Bar soap
Bleach
Body wash
Crackers
Deodorant
Diapers (Size 4-6)

Dish soap
Garden produce
Gluten-free items
Low-sodium
canned items
Microwavable meals

Pasta
Pasta sauce
School supplies
Shampoo
Shelf-stable juice
Sugar-free items

Toilet paper
Toothbrushes
Toothpaste

Donation drop-off hours at riverfoodpantry.org/hours

2021 COMMUNITY IMPACT

January 1–July 10

THANKS TO YOUR SUPPORT, THE RIVER SERVED:



2,370,150
pounds of
food and supplies



3,190
households



19,822
household visits



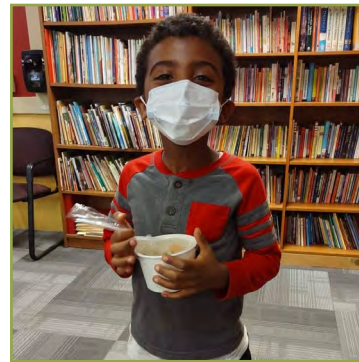
23,525
lunches to children and
adults through Munch



30,800
to-go meals through FAM
(Family At-Home Meals)



5,888
deliveries of groceries to
the homebound through
River Delivers



71,275
pounds of food and
supplies to other local
organizations

WORTHY OF NOTE

- **723 new families** in Dane County registered to pick up curbside groceries and meals.
- Each household took home an **average of 120 pounds** of food and supplies per visit.

MADE POSSIBLE BY:



1,069
volunteers



14,258
volunteer hours



1,000's
of generous donors

GIVING MONTHLY: THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO FIGHT FOOD INSECURITY

Fighting food insecurity in Dane County depends on steady, reliable support from committed supporters like you.

Why become a monthly donor?

- You choose the amount, and your donation is spread out over the year.
- Your gift provides us with a **reliable, steady stream of financial support**.
- Reduces administrative costs and is an environmentally-friendly choice.
- Demonstrates **commitment and stability** for people facing food insecurity.
- You can update or cancel at any time.

Two ways to begin monthly giving:

1. Online with your credit card at riverfoodpantry.org/donate. Set a monthly donation amount and choose "Monthly" under "Select Donation Frequency."

OR

Support The River Food Pantry
97.5% of donations go directly to those we serve

Donation Amount

| | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|---------|
| \$25 | \$50 | \$100 |
| \$250 | \$500 | \$1,000 |
| <input type="text" value="\$"/> | | |

* Select Donation Frequency: Ending (Optional):

2. Through your bank account (ACH) by completing the online form at riverfoodpantry.org/payment. Print the completed form and mail it in with a voided check to The River at 2201 Darwin Road, Madison, WI 53704.

Thanks to our generous monthly donors who collectively gave \$260,000 in 2020. Help ensure The River can continue to nourish Dane County, when and where it's needed most!

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY AND SAVING ON TAXES



Max Weber is a proud supporter of The River who wants to inspire other donors to make IRA donations to charity.

"Over the past year, my wife Maureen and I have been making contributions to The River through our IRA," said Max. "This allows us to not only support our community, but to save on taxes!"

If you are age 72 or older, the IRS allows you to make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from your IRA, SEP IRA or Simple IRA. A QCD is a transfer of funds directly to a qualified charity, such as The River Food

Pantry. If you take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA(s), amounts contributed can be counted toward satisfying this distribution. You can make additional QCDs from your IRA once you have satisfied your RMD or if you are not required to make a RMD. In each case, they are non-taxable events.

QCDs may be appealing if you do not itemize deductions on your tax return. QCDs are easily used and are available from most financial institutions that are custodians for IRA accounts. The transfer process is easy and quick. You indicate the charity and the amount and the financial institution writes the check and sends it either directly to the charity or to you for personal giving. Paperwork required is minimal. You keep a list of the charities and amounts given to be used in filing next year's taxes.

"For many of us, it is as simple as that," said Max. "For others, it may be useful to consult with your tax or financial advisor for clarification." You can also contact The River's Director of Development, Julie Wiedmeyer, at julie@riverfoodpantry.org or 608-442-8815 ext. 5.

THE POWER OF LEGACY

A family, who wishes to remain anonymous, shared their story to demonstrate the power of legacy:

"Moments really do matter. In the last year of my mom's life, her most significant concern was, 'Did I live a meaningful life?' I saw the wisdom in the sparkle in her eyes. She had accomplished so much in her life, raising six kids, supporting her husband through many trying times, and yet she wasn't finished. After several conversations, she decided to leave 10% of her estate to The River Food Pantry in her will. Gathering for family meals was at the center of our upbringing and adult life, and she wanted that experience for others. Because no one should have to decide between feeding their family and paying a bill."



The legacy of those family meals continues in the 1,000–1,500 to-go meals freshly prepared by The River each week, thanks to this generous donor.

If you would like to learn more, email Julie Wiedmeyer, Director of Development, at julie@riverfoodpantry.org or call 608-442-8815 ext. 5 to speak to Julie directly.

A BIG THANK YOU TO FAIRWAY INDEPENDENT MORTGAGE CORPORATION!



Sometimes support comes to us in ways we never expect. Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation has a unique partnership with The River.

It started last summer when an employee stopped by to donate an abundance of produce from his home garden, and it has grown into a company-wide partnership. Fairway has committed to offering regular volunteer support on the first Wednesday of the month by filling all our positions on that day.

Other creative ways they have supported our staff and the people we serve:

1. Providing quality diversity and inclusion training
2. Guiding workshops that build staff cohesiveness
3. Donating bubbles and chalk for children on our Munch route



We are stronger because of the support we receive from Fairway employees. If you and your business would like to look at customized volunteer opportunities, please contact volunteer@riverfoodpantry.org.

THE RIVER STAFF

Executive Director
Rhonda Adams

Director of Development
Julie Wiedmeyer

Interim Director of Operations
Helen Osborn-Senatus

Controller/HR Manager
Bob Garrison

Communications Manager
Becca Carpenter

Meal Manager
Chris Tuttle

Meal Coordinator
Rachael Maynes

Volunteer Coordinator
Debbie Bormann

Grants & Donor Data Coordinator
Hanna Jeske

River Delivers Coordinator
Amanda Prusak

ePantry Coordinator
Michelle Kowaletti

Pantry Coordinator
Jon Clark

Food Recovery Coordinator
Ben Kauth

Program Assistants
Jarod Hoffarth & Erica Dorsch

Operations Specialists
Mike Peters, Ryan Horton, Lynn Olson, Bethany Michiels & Riyad Alabbasi



Learn more about The River's community impact in our 2020 Annual Report at riverfoodpantry.org.

2020 Annual Report Update:
\$5,000–\$9999 Advocate,
Irving and Dorothy Levy
Family Foundation



2201 Darwin Rd.
Madison, WI 53704



REMEMBER YOUR FIRST BLUEBERRY?



The River's mobile lunch program, Munch, delivers healthy lunches to children and adults in 10 low-income neighborhoods in Madison.

Recently, we included cartons of blueberries on the Munch route. One boy said to another, "I've never tried blueberries."

Our staff member, Jarod, encouraged him to eat one and he immediately spit it out. His friend urged him to try again.

The boy cautiously put a second blueberry in his mouth, rolled it around with his tongue and bit it. He turned to his friend and said with a smile, "I DO like blueberries!"

Whether it's new fruits or old favorites, sharing free healthy food with hungry families is made possible by generous supporters like you. Thank you for your continued generosity!