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TOGETHER, WE CAN SOLVE HUNGER.



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GOOD
NUTRITION
FOR LIFE
INSIDE



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HUNGER
TO HEALTH
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STAYING
HEALTHY WHILE
OVERCOMING
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FOOD for Thought

Helping our Idaho
neighbors since 1984.

Volume 33, Issue 1 Spring 2018

Fresh Produce in a Food Desert



In the community around Snake River Elementary School in north Nampa, there are not many places to get healthy food. The only food options for families are a dollar store and a convenience store, neither of which carry fresh fruit and vegetables. However, thanks to The Idaho Foodbank School Pantry program and its fresh produce pilot, Snake River Elementary is providing fresh produce in a food desert.

In January 2018, The Idaho Foodbank launched a fresh produce pilot in an effort to supplement the food already provided through the Backpack and School Pantry programs. Snake River, which became a school pantry partner in April 2017, was one of the eight elementary schools selected for the pilot.

Since the fresh produce pilot launched, attendance has improved at Snake River, the only school in the Nampa School District that can make that claim.

Family Community Resource and Engagement Coordinator Mari Ramos believes the pantry is the main reason why. "It's been very well received," she said. "Kids want to come to school and they're excited about getting food. They're excited about the apples and pears which is great."

"Kids want to come to school and they are excited about getting food."

Mari Ramos, Family Community Resource Coordinator

There are many stories of success that Mari has seen with the fresh produce pilot. In particular, she recalls a single mom who used to come to the pantry regularly. The mother was finishing school while trying to find a full-time job and paying for healthy food was difficult for her. However, Mari recently spoke with the woman and was pleased to hear that she found a full-time job and hasn't visited the pantry in months.

"The people are always so grateful," Mari said. "Offering them fresh fruits and vegetables helps them feel like we care about more than just feeding them. We care about their health." 

To see more stories of food recipients and donors, go to idahofoodbank.org/stories



Dear Friends,

When we talk about food insecurity, we often do a disservice to those who are enduring hunger by making it sound as if it were an isolated, onetime event. It's not.

Hunger is almost always one piece of a larger, more complex picture. Through our many local and national partnerships, we're seeing more clearly how a single life event can set off a downward spiral of misfortune that can take years to recover from. For example, an unexpected health condition requiring medical care can add financial and emotional burdens beyond what an individual or family can absorb. This can result in having to make hard choices about where limited dollars are spent.

Choices like whether to pay for medicine or utilities. In this scenario, food is almost always the first budget item to be cut.

Often, families will turn to inexpensive, less healthy food options. Calories become more important than nutrients. While understandable, these choices can only contribute to the downward spiral. Poor nutrition increases the chances of more health problems, which result in more medical costs and therefore, less money for the nutrient-dense foods that are essential for good health.

We've learned that you can't achieve individual well-being by focusing on food security alone. Real change requires a broader, more inclusive approach. One that involves new partnerships and collaborations as well as redoubling our commitment to the distribution of more fresh fruits and vegetables that began some years ago.

We must:

- Work with our donors, including those in the agricultural community, to provide the nutritious foods people of all ages need to function at their highest level.
- Partner with health professionals to identify patients dealing with hunger early in order to provide interventions and avoid more complications.
- Turn to our supporters to help us move beyond simply providing any food, to providing the right kinds of food to promote healthy individuals, families and communities.

This newsletter highlights some of the struggles our neighbors are facing. But just as importantly, it tells the stories of the individuals who are helping. More and more, The Idaho Foodbank is a network populated by not only pantries and kitchens, but also clinics and classrooms. Doctors, health coaches, nutritionists, farmers, grocers, and industry leaders all working together to make a difference for all Idahoans.

We are committed to doing what we can to decrease the number of Idahoans who are food insecure. It's thanks to the commitment from people like you that we can celebrate those successes knowing that individuals who are in need will have the resources required to lead healthy and active lives.

Thank you,

Karen Vauk, President/CEO

Good Nutrition for Life

Professionals in the medical field know how powerful nutrition can be for the health of an individual.

"People talk all the time about how health is 90-percent nutrition," said Nicole Schmidt, Wellness Coach at Catalyst Medical Group in Lewiston. "Nutrition is absolutely one of the most important things in a person's life."

Not having adequate nutrition can lead to health issues for Idahoans who are food insecure. When those health issues are compounded, medical costs skyrocket. Before long, a family is having to decide between going to the doctor and buying food. Choosing inexpensive food options that are less nutritious can start the cycle all over again.

That recognition of the importance of nutrition is what motivated Schmidt and her coworker Darrah McCall to teach a 6-week Cooking Matters class. The program from Share Our Strength, is available in Idaho through The Idaho Foodbank.

"Being able to educate people who don't have the resources is such a great opportunity for us," said McCall. "Giving people a chance to know about healthy foods as well as educating them on reading nutrition labels, that can be so important."

To learn more about Cooking Matters, go to idahofoodbank.org/programs/cooking-matters

Our Vision

A hunger-free Idaho.

Our Mission

To help feed, educate and advocate for Idaho's hungry through collaborative partnerships to develop efficient solutions that strengthen individuals, families and communities.

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HUNGER to **HEALTH**

SPECIAL HEALTH SUPPLEMENT - SPRING 2018

FROM FOOD AS FUEL TO FOOD FOR HEALTH

For many years, The Idaho Foodbank's number one concern was bringing in the maximum number of pounds of food for distribution to Idahoans in need.

About five years ago the sources of our food donations began to change. Instead of national manufacturers, we were receiving more food from sources closer to home, like growers and retailers. The type of food began to change as well. Instead of shelf stable, there was more fresh and frozen food. The change in the sourcing and types of food coincided with a renewed emphasis on healthy eating.

While the Foodbank



was distributing more food considered nutritious, staff quickly discovered that many of the food recipients lacked the exposure and experience necessary to prepare some of the new food items. The need for cooking instruction and nutrition education was readily apparent.

Through Cooking Matters, a hands-on cooking program developed by the national organization Share Our Strength, the Foodbank is now able to provide people of all ages with the basic skills they needed to prepare more nutritious meals for themselves and their family.

Distributing more nutritious food and also providing those in need with the skills to utilize that food for the benefit of their health and well-being



represented an enormous change, but there was still more to be done.

Prescription for Change

Fruits, vegetables, proteins and whole grains are all part of a healthy diet. People who are food insecure lack predictable access to these kinds of nutrient-dense foods. Limited resources and competing demands for those resources like rent or medicine, will often push healthier, more expensive food choices to the bottom of their list.

Without access to the foods that constitute a healthy diet, people who are food insecure are at greater risk for chronic diet-related health conditions such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity.

(continued on page 4)

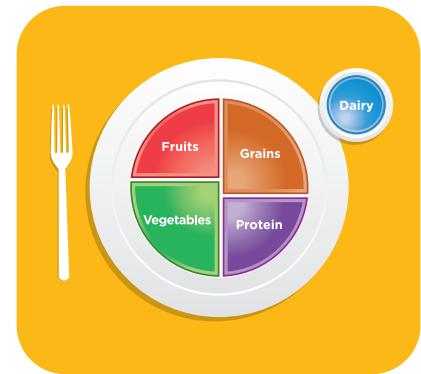
Working in collaboration with healthcare organizations such as clinics and hospitals is making it easier to identify patients who are food insecure; and then refer them to a nearby food pantry or feeding site for help. Healthcare partners are also working with the Foodbank's Mobile Pantry program to provide health screenings and even some medical care in conjunction with targeted food distributions.

More of the Good Stuff

Because nutrient-dense foods are so

important to physical and mental health, the Foodbank is prioritizing certain categories of food for collection and distribution. Categories include such popular food items as dairy, fruits and vegetables. Recommendations under the USDA's My Plate program will guide the size of each category to align with the food variety necessary for a healthy diet.

From hunger to health – the journey that is making Idaho families and communities stronger and healthier than ever before.



HELPING PEOPLE MOVE FROM HUNGER TO HEALTH

Nutritious Food

Growers, processors, manufacturers and grocery stores donate nutrient-dense foods essential for a healthy diet.



Childhood Nutrition

Backpack and School Pantry programs provide families with access to nourishing food in a familiar, nonjudgmental environment.

Nutritious Food



80%

The percentage of food collected in FY2018 rated nutritious.

820,000

Pounds of fresh produce received through Feeding Northwest regional collaborative in the last year.

211,000

People served on average each month.



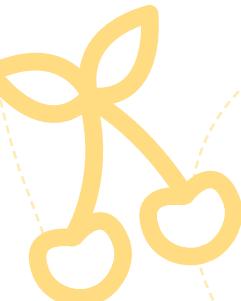
Senior Nutrition

Food boxes, distributed monthly, contain a wide variety of meal staples in addition to nutrition information.



Offering students fresh fruits and vegetables helps them feel like we care about more than just feeding them. We care about their health.

Mari Ramos, Family Community Resource and Engagement Coordinator, Snake River Elementary, School Pantry partner



Cooking Matters is a six-week program during which students learn fundamental cooking skills along with good nutrition. Cooking Matters at the Store is a two hour class that teaches how to shop for a healthy diet on a budget.



Health Mobiles

Mobile pantries are a means to distribute a wide variety of fresh and shelf-stable foods to a very specific audience, such as seniors in an independent living facility. Mobiles are sometimes combined with health screenings or actual medical care conducted by a healthcare partner.



It's so important for organizations like ours with separate specialties to help the community. When we partner, our impact grows exponentially.

Josh Campbell, Programs Director, Genesis Community Health, Healthcare partner



Screen and Intervene

Through patient screening, healthcare partners are able to identify those in need and refer them to a nearby food pantry or feeding site for help.



PEOPLE WHO RECEIVE HELP FROM FOOD BANKS OFTEN HAVE SIGNIFICANT HEALTH CONCERNES:



47% HAVE "FAIR" OR "POOR" HEALTH.



33% OF HOUSEHOLDS HAVE AT LEAST ONE MEMBER WITH DIABETES.



58% OF HOUSEHOLDS HAVE ONE MEMBER WITH HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE



50% HAVE UNPAID MEDICAL BILLS



66% HAVE HAD TO CHOOSE BETWEEN BUYING FOOD AND PAYING FOR MEDICINE

COOKING MATTERS FOR THE HEART



In many ways, Linda and Floyd are like any couple that's been married for almost five decades. They met after Floyd returned from the war in Vietnam. They live in Linda's childhood home, a house that's two miles from where Floyd grew up. They enjoy time with their kids and grandkids in their small Nampa neighborhood. However, a recent health scare forced Linda and Floyd to reassess their lifestyle choices and change their dietary habits.

A year ago in February, Floyd had open heart surgery. Because of his heart's condition, Floyd needed three stints. Unfortunately, two of his main arteries were closed so the doctors could only open one. Ironically, on the holiday that celebrates hearts, he was in the hospital mending his own. "He was in the hospital on Valentine's Day," Linda said with a smile. "He likes to do it that way."

Floyd's rehab facility was St. Luke's, an important healthcare partner of The Idaho Foodbank. St. Luke's provides various health services for many food-insecure Idahoans, an important aspect of The Idaho Foodbank's hunger-to-health initiative. It was at St. Luke's in Meridian where Linda saw an advertisement for a Cooking Matters class offered by The Idaho Foodbank.

To this point in his life, Floyd's diet

consisted of mainly steak and potatoes. However, seeing a need to better protect his heart, Floyd agreed to join the cooking class with Linda. She noticed positive results from the class right away. "There were dishes that he would have never tried before but he found out they're not so bad," she said. "The class changed his attitude."

Although it can be easy to recognize the need for a low-sodium, heart-healthy diet, actually acquiring the taste for nutritious foods can be difficult. For Floyd, the most important aspect of the class was how it recalibrated his taste buds. "It changed my whole outlook," he said. "I learned how to eat something besides red meat or biscuits and gravy. It's completely changed my way of looking at diet and food."

For those seeking a healthier diet, finding nutritious substitutions for less healthy foods is key. In the Cooking Matters class, Floyd and Linda learned about trading bread for lettuce and swapping French fries for sweet potato fries. In fact, the turkey burger and sweet potato fry recipe that they learned to make in class is now a weekly staple in their home.

On March 27th, Linda and Floyd celebrated their 48th wedding anniversary, a feat that was in doubt just one year ago. Fortunately the year was kind to Floyd



“

If he didn't start eating healthier, I don't think I would have him here today. The class changed Floyd's life.

Husband and wife graduates of Cooking Matters for cardiac patients

”

and recently his doctor gave him a clean bill of health. From open-heart surgery to making freshly prepared, nutritious meals each night, what's made the difference for Floyd's diet? Both Linda and Floyd will agree that The Idaho Foodbank's Cooking Matters class played an important role. "If he didn't start eating healthier, I don't think I would have him here today," Linda said. "The class changed Floyd's life."

Staying Healthy While Overcoming Hunger

Every three months, The Idaho Foodbank delivers a mobile pantry in the Farmway Village community just outside of Caldwell. The community includes many agricultural laborers and their families.

One of the residents is Clara, a single parent with two girls ages 15 and 18. Last year, Clara suffered a major knee injury. After surgery, Clara's doctor said she could expect a full recovery. That hasn't been the case. Soreness and knee pain have kept Clara out of the fields, a place she's worked for the past 20 years. "It's really hard because I can't work," she said. "But I have to find strength to keep going forward in life."

The Foodbank's mobile pantries are sometimes paired with mobile health clinics. One partner in this effort is St. Alphonsus. At these mobiles, St. Al's employees are on hand to check blood pressure, screen for diabetes and



provide basic services. St. Al's Mobile Outreach Coordinator Maria Lee has seen the need in many Idaho communities. "We want to address the social determinants of health that keep people from living healthier lives," she said. "Do they have access to healthy food? That is such a huge factor."

Clara used St. Al's mobile resources in the past and discovered she may have



diabetes. Soon she will return to the doctor to get a proper diagnosis. In the meantime, she is trying healthier options for her family. "Since I haven't been able to work, this food means a lot," she said. "In these times it's a lot of help." 🍎

To find Mobile Pantry locations and schedules visit: idahofoodbank.org/locations

Using Healthcare to Help Solve Hunger

The Idaho Foodbank strives to not only feed the hungry, but also to ensure predictable access to the nutrient-dense foods they need for their health and well-being. That's why The Idaho Foodbank partners with organizations like Genesis Community Health to strengthen individuals and families and foster healthy communities across the state.

Founded in 2001, Genesis is a faith-based clinic that provides free medical, dental and mental health care to uninsured individuals under 200% of the federal poverty line. The clinic sees more than 1,000 patients each year.

Recognizing the link between hunger and health, Genesis Community Health workers screen their patients for food insecurity. One of the first

questions they ask is, "Have you worried about getting food this month?" If a patient is identified as food insecure, Genesis refers them to a local food pantry supported by the Foodbank. A follow-up process helps determine if the individual is getting the food support they need or if there are any barriers that need to be overcome.

Genesis also hosted Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters, a food preparation and nutrition program provided by the Foodbank. Diabetes-centered, the class taught students about the importance of healthy eating. Josh Campbell, Programs Director at Genesis, sees the benefit of the class. "Giving people food is one thing but it's great to give them tools to eat healthy and let them do it together."



Genesis Community Health and The Idaho Foodbank understand the value of community collaboration. "It's so important for organizations like ours with separate specialties to help the community," Josh said. "When we partner we can exponentially grow and impact what we do." 🍎

To learn more about Genesis Community Health visit: <https://genesiscommunityhealth.com/>



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Monthly giving provides predictable support for the services and programs that make a real difference in people's lives. If you are a first-time donor or already give a couple of times a year, please consider becoming a monthly hunger-relief champion. Call Gift Processing for more information: (208) 577-2678.

Donate today!



**Join us for these events and drives benefitting
The Idaho Foodbank:**

May 3	Idaho Gives	Statewide
May 12	Stamp Out Hunger	Statewide
June 4	Picnic in the Park	Boise
June TBD	Cereal Drive	Lewiston
July 15	Summer Empty Bowls	Boise
September 12	A Chefs' Affaire	Boise

For current information on events and promotions
in your community, visit: idahofoodbank.org