



TOGETHER, WE CAN SOLVE HUNGER.

For additional stories, program information, or to show your support, visit: idahofoodbank.org



Rated a four-star charity for nine consecutive years.

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FOOD for Thought

Helping our Idaho neighbors since 1984.

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The Idaho Foodbank Celebrates Volunteer Month

April is National Volunteer Month and also when The Idaho Foodbank recognizes our volunteers' many contributions. In 2018, over 24,000 volunteers donated 56,000 hours of service across the state – the equivalent of 28 full-time jobs!

We would like to highlight volunteer activities at The Idaho Foodbank's three locations:

North Central Branch

The Idaho Foodbank North Central branch may have a small staff but—thanks to volunteers—no one would know it! Volunteers work across the organization, including five women who manage the front desk.

These ladies are the first to greet guests making donations, volunteering or seeking food assistance. They are known to offer a warm hug or lend a patient ear.

The Lewiston ladies volunteer an average of three days a week for several hours during each shift. Volunteers often say they receive more from The Idaho Foodbank than they could ever imagine—and the ladies who run the front desk agree.

"I will never forget the happy face of a little girl gobbling a plate of apples and cookies in our breakroom. I knew we helped generate that smile," said Barb.



Pictured here are a few of the Lewiston ladies: Barb, Helen and Vivian.

Southwest Idaho

The "Wednesday Wonders" have volunteered every week at The Idaho Foodbank for over seven years. The "Wonders" met while volunteering individually at The Foodbank.

"There's a core group that comes together and we go to lunch before we work at The Foodbank," Dianne said. "The group has helped me form lifelong friendships."

The "Wonders" have volunteered for nearly every Foodbank production task at the Boise facility,

stuffing backpacks for school children, filling boxes for seniors and staffing Foodbank events. Their commitment inspires others, and Foodbank staff welcome them each week!



The "Wednesday Wonders," shown here Debbie, Carolyn, Dianne and Betty. Not pictured are Heather and John.

Eastern Idaho Branch

Cristina has worked with the Cooking Matters program for four years at the Eastern branch. Cooking Matters is a six-week cooking program that helps students make lasting changes to their eating habits. Each course is taught by a volunteer chef and nutrition educator who address eating healthier, meal preparation and grocery shopping.

Cristina estimates she has logged more than 150 hours during the last two years. As a volunteer, she helps prepare food, assists in teaching the class and handles cleanup.

Class sizes are small and facilitate conversation among students. Through their success, young people learn valuable skills that build their confidence in the kitchen.

"I love volunteering with this program and connecting with people," Cristina said. "I'm passionate about sharing my knowledge and helping break down some of the barriers to good nutrition." 🍏



Students enjoy a Cooking Matters class in Blackfoot, Idaho.



Dear Friends,

As a native Idahoan I can truly say I love our state and, more importantly, the community-minded and kind people who live here.

In the last few years, Idaho has been among the fastest growing states in the nation. I'm pretty sure I'm not alone in wanting to safeguard all that makes Idaho great as we look forward to the opportunities ahead.

While growth and recognition can certainly be viewed as positives, a growing population can bring challenges for organizations such as ours. In many communities, a growing population has placed strain on the housing capacity, driving housing costs up for individuals and families. As a result, more people

may face food insecurity, requiring them to seek help from The Idaho Foodbank and our statewide network of hunger relief partners.

The Idaho Foodbank is the state's largest hunger relief organization and distributor of free food assistance. To meet the needs of food insecure Idahoans, we use both short- and long-term strategic planning processes. The Foodbank leadership team and board of directors analyze historical data, population forecasts and other relevant information to estimate the level of service that will be needed in the coming decade.

We have worked on hypothetical scenarios including events such as an economic downturn or a natural disaster to estimate the number of people who would look to The Foodbank for assistance. Our strategic planning helps us identify long-term opportunities and requirements for our organization. Population growth, for example, requires that we keep pace as an organization and expand our food capacity in the communities and regions where it is needed at the time.

This level of planning also prepares us to adjust to unexpected short-term scenarios. During the recent government shutdown and food stamp (SNAP) gap for instance, we were able to help an increased number of Idahoans who experienced a lag in food stamps as well as furloughed federal employees who were working without pay.

We know there will continue to be challenges in our state. Intentional and thoughtful planning, along with continued support from generous individuals, businesses and organizations will ensure we are prepared to meet the changing needs of new and existing residents who call Idaho home.

Thank you for your continued support,

Karen Vauk

Karen Vauk, President and CEO

Fresh Produce Results from Northwest Partnership



The Northwest is a place of abundance when it comes to nutritious food production. Between Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, the region is home to some of the highest demand produce in the nation.

To ensure people facing hunger benefit from the region's bounty, The Idaho Foodbank helped found a collaborative partnership with three Feeding America member food banks: Second Harvest Inland Northwest Food Bank (eastern Washington), Food Lifeline (western Washington) and The Oregon Foodbank.



Our Feeding the Northwest partnership helps share healthy and nutritious produce to food banks across state lines, while lowering transportation costs.

The Potato State

Idaho leads the nation in potato production. **In fact, Idaho produce donors currently offer more product to the national hunger relief network than any other state.** We thank our donors for their generosity in helping Feeding the Northwest increase food bank access to fresh fruits and vegetables. 🍎

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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The Idaho Foodbank

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A Network Response

The government shutdown created a delay in Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program benefits (SNAP, food stamps) that left many Idahoans needing food. A Nampa partner agency and a client who needed help share how they responded.

The Idaho Foodbank Increased Distribution to Partner Agencies During Shutdown

Thousands of Idahoans found themselves short of food during the SNAP Gap resulting from the government shutdown. The Idaho Foodbank responded by increasing distribution, sending out trucks full of fresh produce and designing "hub drops" for partner agencies to pick up food.

"It's well documented that most households that receive SNAP benefits run out of food before the end of the month," said Karen Vauk, President and CEO of The Idaho Foodbank. "Many households redeem over half of their SNAP allotments within a week and three-quarters of their benefits by the end of the second week."

The Idaho Foodbank formed a task force to coordinate operations, donations and inventory. Food and funds donated by partners and community members supported larger orders and increased deliveries to help offset the higher level of food insecurity.

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

The Idaho Foodbank also reached out to federal offices across the state to help determine who needed help. Advocacy team members met with lawmakers to encourage them to help prevent a second government shutdown.

The Idaho Foodbank and its partners provided food assistance for SNAP recipients and furloughed federal employees who went without paychecks during the shutdown.

Vauk concluded, "When uncertain conditions like the government shutdown create hardship, it's more important than ever that we remind Idahoans that we're here to provide nutritious food to anyone who needs a hand up. And, our partner agencies and mobile pantries are just as committed to providing for those in need." 🍎

Resident Turned to Salvation Army

Elizabeth is on disability and lives with her fiancé in Nampa. She relies on SNAP to buy food.



In January, Elizabeth received her SNAP benefits on the sixth of the month and again on January 26. But she received no more SNAP assistance until March 6.

"Food is more expensive, and my food stamps don't buy as much as they did," Elizabeth said. "My fiancé was out of work, which made the situation worse."

Elizabeth began to run out of food in February and had no transportation or additional resources. A friend told her about The Salvation Army Nampa, located three blocks from her home.

"They made me feel welcome and gave me a box of nutritious food to help me stretch my supply," Elizabeth said. "Now, I go to the pantry regularly." 🍎

Salvation Army Received Help from Many



Volunteer Sherry prepares a food box at The Salvation Army Nampa.

The Salvation Army Nampa saw a 28 percent hike in the number of clients needing food this February compared to a year earlier.

"More people began coming to us in January when they received their SNAP benefits," said Estrella Rayo, Social Services Coordinator, The Salvation Army Nampa. "We were not surprised because The Idaho Foodbank told us the number of people needing help would likely increase."

The Salvation Army filled client orders with donations from retailers and extra food provided by The Idaho Foodbank, which established drop sites where partner agencies could pick up extra food – and especially fresh produce.

"We provided clients potatoes, bananas and oranges along with canned foods," Rayo said.

"We supplied clients one box of food a month but referred people to our lobby where they could pick up seasonal produce and bread"

Rayo applauded the volunteers who helped meet the increased demand.

"Everyone was on the go, packing boxes and carrying them to client cars," Rayo said. "We are grateful for all the help we received." 🍎

To learn more about the SNAP Gap, visit: idahofoodbank.org



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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: 208-577-2694.

Donate today!

Join us for these events and drives benefiting The Idaho Foodbank:

May 2	Idaho Gives	Statewide
May 11	Stamp Out Hunger	Boise /Pocatello
May 13	Feeding the 5000 Closing Celebration	Pocatello
June 3	Picnic in the Park Launch	Boise
July 21	Summer Empty Bowls (National Ice Cream Day)	Boise
Sept 3	Empty Bowls	Pocatello



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