

Summer Meal Programs Help Feed Kids

Over the summer, 36,000 kids in Alaska lose access to the free and reduced-price meals they receive during the school year. Food Bank of Alaska, through the US Department of Agriculture Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), helps to fill this gap by serving nutritious meals to kids at almost 50 sites across the state, most of which are rural.

Recently we had the opportunity to visit the summer meal program in Golovin, a small and tight-knit community on the Iditarod Trail near Nome. The SFSP program there is run by the Chinik Tribe. The fact that every day a different community member acts as a program volunteer speaks to how much the program is valued. Says Maggie Moses, grandmother to Darren and Kylirose, "When one person in our community is struggling, we are all struggling."

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The summer meal program is an important resource in communities like Golovin. Right now, Congress is reviewing this program - along with other child nutrition programs, such as school lunch, afterschool meals, and WIC - as part of Child Nutrition Reauthorization. These programs provide funding to ensure that low-income children have access to healthy and nutritious foods where they live, play, and learn.

Food Bank of Alaska and the Alaska Food Coalition, along with Senator Murkowski and Congressman Young, have been working hard to secure a strong Child Nutrition Reauthorization. If you would like to join this campaign and others in support of anti-hunger policies, email cdurr@foodbankofalaska.org.

Photo (top): Brandon Moses enjoys his lunch shipped to Golovin and 46 other sites by Food Bank of Alaska as part of our Summer Food Services program.



FOOD BANK of ALASKA

SEPTEMBER 2015 • POTLATCH NEWSLETTER



Executive Director Mike Miller helps distribute food at a Mobile Food Pantry in Mt. View.

"I'm proud to report another record year for FBA. With your help, we distributed more than 6.8 million pounds of food in FY15 just ended June 30, a six percent increase over FY14."

Our Feeding America Membership Adds Leverage to Your Donation

Ever wondered what the Feeding America logo on our publications has to do with feeding hungry Alaskans? Well, more than you might think. Our membership in this organization gives us leverage to distribute four meals for every \$1 of your support.



Here's how. **First**, Feeding America opens the door to national food industry retailers such as Walmart, Safeway, Sam's Clubs and Kroger; wholesalers like Sysco; and manufacturers such as Nestle and ConAgra, who agree to donate their surplus to Feeding America member food banks. Feeding America assures these donors that Food Bank of Alaska and its other members will handle their donations responsibly, ethically and safely. Feeding America holds us to high standards of food safety, financial accountability and a host of other industry best practices. We must pass an audit every 18-24 months.

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How important is that to hungry Alaskans? Seventy percent of the food we distributed in FY15 was donated, with 2.9 million pounds of this coming from national partners.

Second, Feeding America connects us with a nationwide network of 200 other food banks and additional sources for both donated food and bulk purchase at low cost. Along with discounted and donated freight from our Alaska transportation partners, this allows us to stretch your donation to provide more food at below wholesale prices at times of year when donated food isn't enough.

Third, as a Feeding America member we can participate in valuable programs like the 2014 Hunger in America study. We can take advantage of professional development and grant opportunities and join with other Feeding America member food banks to amplify our voice for policy changes to end hunger.

I'm proud to report another record year for Food Bank of Alaska. With your help, we distributed more than 6.8 million pounds of food in FY15 just ended June 30, a six percent increase over FY14. In our unique role in Alaska's food donation network - acquiring and distributing food that would otherwise be wasted - our Feeding America relationship multiplies our success ending hunger in Alaska.

P.S. Food Bank of Alaska helps communities recover from disaster

Fires across Alaska this summer prompted us to respond as we have done in the past when people need help recovering and restarting their lives after disasters. Whether it is extra food and funding to the Willow Food Pantry or flying moose meat to Galena, your generous support makes it possible for us to help communities that have been knocked down to pick themselves up and move forward again.

Michael Miller, Executive Director



Food Bank of Alaska Calendar of Events

September - Hunger Action Month

See 5 Fun Events and 5 Easy Actions for Hunger Action Month elsewhere in this issue

September 11

United Way of Anchorage Day of Caring Food Drive

September 12

Feeding Our Neighbors Food Drive, 12 - 2 pm, Shiloh Baptist Church

September 17

Tour of Food Bank of Alaska, 5:30-6:30 pm. Join us for an insider's look at our warehouse and programs. RSVP ssheard@foodbankofalaska.org or 222-3114

November 8

Jazz Fighting Hunger, Anchorage Museum

November 21

Valley Thanksgiving Blessing

November 23

Thanksgiving Blessing Project, Anchorage

Would you like to leave a gift to Food Bank of Alaska in your will?

You can leave a legacy of feeding hungry Alaskans in your will. Just ask your will preparer to direct the gift to Food Bank of Alaska, a nonprofit organization located at 2121 Spar Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99501, Federal Tax ID # 92-0073175. For more information: Director of Development Karla Jutzi, 222-3112.

Cover Photo: Watermelon is a special treat for kids in the Golovin Summer Food Service Program. Photo by Cara Durr.

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Pick. Click. Give.

Did You Know?
You can still add a donation from your 2015 PFD through August 31 at pfd.alaska.gov.

Our Mission
Food Bank of Alaska is dedicated to eliminating hunger in Alaska by obtaining and providing food to partner agencies feeding hungry people and through anti-hunger leadership. We believe that no one deserves to be hungry.



Thank You
Generous support for Potlatch is provided by First National Bank Alaska.

www.FOODBANKOFALASKA.ORG



Food industry donors share with their neighbors

No food should be wasted, especially when people are hungry. Our food industry donors agree and donated just shy of 5 million pounds in FY15 just ended. Recent donations of 7,300 pounds of salmon from 10th & M Seafood and a load of watermelons from Charlie's Produce were especially popular with our food pantry partners.



Cart of fruit are weighed on the way out of our warehouse. A Human Services Community Matching Grant through the Muni of Anchorage allowed us to purchase 362,000 pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables in FY15 to distribute through our Mobile Food Pantry, partner agencies and holiday events.

Tell Us Your Story

Food Bank of Alaska wants to hear why you care about feeding Alaskans, whether you are a volunteer, donor, advocate or someone who has experienced hunger firsthand. Your story is a powerful tool in the cause to end hunger!

Not sure what to write about? Tell us a story about your experience with any of these:

- ▶ Getting emergency food help
- ▶ Growing up worried about having enough to eat
- ▶ A memorable experience you had as a Food Bank of Alaska advocate or volunteer
- ▶ Losing your job in this tough economy or having trouble making ends meet
- ▶ Having to choose between food and rent, medical bills, or other expenses
- ▶ A time when food assistance helped you get back on your feet
- ▶ What motivates you to donate to Food Bank of Alaska
- ▶ Difficulty finding food or other services where you live

To share your story, please contact Cara Durr, Senior Manager of Public Engagement, at 907-222-3113 or cdurr@foodbankofalaska.org.



Totem Ocean Gives Back Because "It's the Right Thing to Do"

Totem Ocean Trailer Express (Totem Ocean) believes that giving back to the community by sharing with your neighbors is part of what it means to be Alaskan. The company exemplified this by moving nearly 1,000,000 pounds of food in the last year from the Lower 48 for Food Bank of Alaska. Without this generous in-kind shipping donation, we would not be able to provide four meals for every \$1 you donate. It allows us to stay within our budget with summer meals for kids and keep down costs to partners for our cooperative food purchase program.

Leigha Ducharme, Totem Ocean Community Relations Manager and HR Lead, attributes the strong and growing relationship with FBA to our commitment to feeding hungry people statewide. "Food Bank of Alaska reaches many communities across the state," she says. "Therefore, through our continued partnership with you, we are able to touch these communities as well."

▶ Photo (right): Community Relations Manager Leigha Ducharme (left) and Vice President Grace Greene of Totem Ocean Trailer Express present a donation to Food Bank of Alaska Executive Director Michael Miller earlier this year.



September is Hunger Action Month

Join your voice with others to fight hunger

5 Fun Events

- ▶ **No Lunch Lunch – September 3**
Skip lunch so that others don't have to. Pack a lunch and donate the money you would have spent eating out to help fight hunger.
- ▶ **Bear Tooth One Course Discourse – September 11**
- ▶ **Alaska Botanical Garden Harvest Festival – September 12**
Enjoy a fall harvest festival and farmer's market, chef demonstrations, live music and family fun! Bring a donation of food and receive \$2 off admission. Fresh produce is encouraged.
- ▶ **Pints for a Cause – September 17**
Drink beer, do good! Resolution Brewing Company, 3024 Mountain View Drive, is donating a portion of all sales between 5-8 pm to Food Bank of Alaska. Bring your friends!
- ▶ **Dine Out Against Hunger – September 24**
Enjoy an evening out on the town and help support Food Bank of Alaska. Simply dine at one of the participating restaurants (to be listed on our Facebook page) who will donate 10% of the day's proceeds to fight hunger.

5 Easy Actions

- ▶ **Go Orange for Hunger, September 3**
Wear orange on Hunger Action Day to raise awareness and start conversations about ending hunger.
- ▶ **Participate in #Spoonember**
Balance a spoon on your nose and take a 'spoon selfie.' Share it on social media with #Spoonember to show your support. Tag your friends and encourage them to do the same!
- ▶ **Become a hunger advocate**
Join us in building a powerful movement to eliminate hunger. Visit our website to learn more and to sign up to receive advocacy action alerts.
- ▶ **Stay informed**
Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter to keep up-to-date on the latest in the fight against hunger.
- ▶ **Tell us your story!**



Your Food Drive Cans Added Up to 250,000 Meals Last Year

Food drives come in all shapes and sizes. This award-winning Great Pacific Octopus by Enterprise Engineering at Canstruction earlier this year was one fun way to give food. Look for upcoming community food drives - United Way of Anchorage Day of Caring, Alaska Feeding Our Neighbors and Safeway Every Bag Counts. **You can organize a food drive of your own by contacting amcdaniel@foodbankofalaska.org, 222-3115.**

Sharing Your Harvest Adds Healthy Food to Menus of Struggling Families

We welcome surplus from your garden harvest as part of our **Plant a Row for the Hungry Food Drive** (see www.alaskamillandfeed.com). Just bring it to Food Bank of Alaska, 2121 Spar Avenue, and we will get it on the next Mobile Food Pantry going out to an Anchorage neighborhood in need. People love the fresh vegetables!

▶ Photo (below): Aaron Richins delivers 30 beautiful heads of lettuce from his garden for Food Bank of Alaska to distribute to hungry people.



Program Worth \$174 Million of Food for Hungry Alaskans

Can you guess which program makes such a difference? The answer is SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program of the US Department of Agriculture, formerly known as Food Stamps.

87,486 Alaskans receive some help from SNAP. Megan is one. She says, "If I didn't have SNAP, I wouldn't be able to pick out much of the healthy food that I now eat. And I'm able to teach my daughter to eat healthy. She loves fruits and vegetables." SNAP gives families the chance to choose at grocery stores what they can't find in the limited selection of donated items at a food pantry.



Despite SNAP's potential to help Alaskans like Megan, we rank 46th in the US in the rate of SNAP participation. Over one-quarter of Alaskans who could qualify for SNAP don't claim their benefits. That is why Food Bank of Alaska conducts SNAP outreach, education and application assistance. Our grant-funded SNAP outreach program recently won a new innovation grant through Feeding America to more effectively help Alaska families to enroll in SNAP.

SNAP is designed to supplement nutrition for families, and, despite some provocative news stories, people don't "live large" on benefits. The average SNAP benefit per person in Alaska is \$166. Struggling families often have the most difficulty at the end of the month because benefits don't stretch all the way to the final week. Only 19% of families interviewed in the recent Hunger Study in Alaska reported that SNAP lasts four weeks.

Food Bank of Alaska and our network of 300 partners could never close a \$174 million gap if SNAP were to disappear. Alone, neither government nor charities and churches can ensure that every child, family and senior in Alaska has enough to eat. But working hand-in-hand, community commitment and government support can bring us closer to our vision of a hunger-free Alaska.

▶ Photo: Thanks to SNAP benefits, Megan Fry can afford healthy fruits and vegetables and can teach her daughter about healthy eating.

Food is the Most Important Gift You Can Give

Both John Letourneau and Donna Goldsmith learned about the importance of giving from their families. They agree that nothing in life is more basic than food and shelter, and that is why supporting Food Bank of Alaska matters to them. "We are keenly aware of how lucky we are," says Donna. "It happens so easily that people can fall off the edge through no mistake of their own. It's our desire - and our obligation - to share."



When practicing law Donna became aware that, for too many people, access to food was a daily crisis. Should they buy a bus pass to get to work or buy groceries, a phone to stay safe from domestic violence or dinner for the kids? John also appreciates the efficiency added by FBA's role as logistics specialist - handling surplus food pickup from industry donors, warehousing, and distribution to partners feeding hungry people. It makes sense, especially given Alaska's unique logistical challenges.

John and Donna recently became sustaining donors, adding an automatic gift every month. "It's easy to have the intention, but get busy and forget to give, so becoming a sustaining donor helps," says John. Donna adds that it is also good to have that monthly reminder and awareness on your statement that others in our community are in need.

The couple appreciates the importance of food in their lives and wants everyone to share in having enough. Says Donna, "A meal is the most important gift you can give to family and friends."

If you would like to become a sustaining donor, call Annual Giving Manager Sue Sheard, 222-3114, or set up a monthly or quarterly gift online through our **Donate Now** page at foodbankofalaska.org.



Volunteers - the power behind annual Blessing and GIFT events -Thousands of volunteers throughout Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley fuel the annual Thanksgiving Blessing and Anchorage Holiday GIFT community food distributions. Last year volunteers helped to distribute groceries for a **holiday meal to 14,000 families** through these events. Check foodbankofalaska.org and our Facebook page in October for information about how to volunteer for 2015 Blessing and GIFT.

▶ Photo (left): Volunteers at Valley Blessing at Wasilla Bible Church are ready to help the next family to their car.