

LOCALNEWS

Donations sought during FoodShare month

Matching grant helps The Salvation Army; Falls Hunger Coalition stock food shelves

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

As Beverly Mayfield moves items around in The Salvation Army’s emergency food pantry, there are several bare spaces on the shelves. By the end of the month, the envoy of the local organization hopes that won’t be the case.

March is Minnesota FoodShare month, the largest food drive in the state that helps to restock shelves of food pantries. Everything donated to the food shelves will be matched by Minnesota FoodShare’s March Campaign.

“The more food we collect and money we raise during the month of March will offer us more incentives from Minnesota Hunger Solutions,” Mayfield said.

Mayfield spoke highly of the International Falls community and how it shows its generosity when there is a need.

“We live in a loving community that is all about helping each other,” she said. “When we ask for help, people know there is a need and they come through... Even if some people themselves don’t have enough, they make sure others do.”

To increase donations, The Salvation Army is spearheading a few efforts around the community, Mayfield said. An auction of gently used items is set for 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. March 21 at the Bob Walls Memorial Union Hall. Anyone wishing to donate items to be auc-

Donate online

You can donate money to The Salvation Army online at SalvationArmyNorth.org/FoodShare.

tioned off can bring them on March 20 to The Salvation Army, 1301 Third Ave.

“We will have our doors open and people can bring their items in,” Mayfield said, adding drop-off arrangements can also be made by calling 218-283-3394.

Aside from the auction, Mayfield is also stirring up a friendly competition at Falls Elementary School. She said she encouraged students and staff to bring in food or money to see what class can generate the most donations.

“Whatever class collects the most, they will win a pizza or an ice cream party,” Mayfield said. “And the kids are taking this seriously. I had one mother tell me her son was very serious about feeding hungry people in Koochiching County.”

Mayfield added it is important and often times very rewarding to get young people involved. It shows them, she said, even though they are small, they can make a difference. “It means a lot to them to be able to help.”

Everything counts

Across town, the Falls Hunger Coalition is doing its part to collect food and money to increase what is shared during the month-



Beverly Mayfield, envoy at The Salvation Army, tends to shelves in the organization’s food pantry. Because March is Minnesota FoodShare month, Mayfield is hopeful efforts to collect food and money locally will help stock some of the pantry’s bare shelves.

long food drive. Nancy Anderson, director of the organization, said she is confident a goal of 60,000 combined pounds of food and dollars collected can be achieved.

“We are looking forward to meeting that goal,” she said.

Last month was a busy one for the hunger coalition and Anderson notes the need to feed people is out there.

“In February, we served 40 new clients,” she said.

“Between our voucher program and regular food visits, last month, we distrib-

uted 10,400 pounds of food. In January, it was 13,680 pounds... There is a need.”

Like Mayfield, Anderson said the organization would not be successful without the community.

“We are truly a community-run entity,” she said. “We have a very generous

community that not only supports this event, but supports us all year through.”

Ways to donate

In addition to attending The Salvation Army’s auction or sending food with students, there are other ways people can help their International Falls neighbors and thousands of others.

One option is to make an online donation. A news release from The Salvation Army notes this is the most effective way to do the most good. Because of the Army’s access to discounted products and programs, your dollar goes more than twice as far than if you purchase the items at the store yourself. Cash also gives more flexibility to purchase perishable items like fresh produce, meat and dairy products.


The second option is to organize a food or product drive and donate the items to your nearest Salvation Army. Here are a few suggestions:

- All types of food
- Paper products
- Personal hygiene products
- Cleaning products

No matter how people choose to help, contributions are helping individuals and families who find themselves needing a little extra support during times of hardship.

“We are so thankful of everyone who donates,” Mayfield said. “People are always there to support us and we are so appreciative.”

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