

Steele County Food Shelf
 155 Oakdale Street, Suite A
 Owatonna, MN 55060

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The Food Shelf Update

Spring / Summer 2011

Understanding Food Insecurity

Cabinet size and counter space are top priorities for many home buyers. People want enough room to store their dishes, pots, pans, and, of course, food. Carrying arm loads of grocery bags into the kitchen and having difficulty finding space for food in a cupboard or fridge is a common experience for many fortunate Steele County residents. But, in the many local households deemed food insecure, it's a foreign situation.

A food secure household is defined by the United States Department of Agriculture as "having access by all members at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life." Food family members have access to should be nutritionally adequate and safe. "Access" means the ability to acquire food in socially acceptable ways—in other words, without resorting to scavenging, stealing, emergency food supplies, or other strategies.

There are several stages of food insecurity, ranging from secure to famine. Food insecurity can also be defined as chronic or temporary. Chronic food insecurity does not necessarily mean famine, but rather the consistent threat of hunger and malnourishment. Chronic food insecurity is most common in impoverished countries, while temporary food insecurity is often seen in America and other developed countries.

Many of the households that fall somewhere on the spectrum of food insecurity contain working parents and children. For these families, cupboard space is low on their list of concerns. Their meals are planned, their grocery budgets are firm, and their fear of hunger is ever present. Imagine having to deny your children snacks or skipping meals throughout the week to make ends meet. These are the decisions Steele County's food insecure families make every day.

You cannot know who around you hasn't eaten breakfast or skipped dinner the night before. You cannot know who has an empty cupboard or fridge. Food insecurity isn't worn on the outside, but it leaves its mark on the men, women, children, and seniors who deal with the threat of hunger every day. The Steele County Food Shelf aims to lift their burden and educate the community on causes and impact of food insecurity.

We encourage you to visit the Department of Agriculture website at www.usda.gov to learn more about food insecurity in America. Then, take a moment to open your cupboards and be thankful you are food secure.

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Office Hours

Monday, Wednesday
9:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Saturday
8:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.



Supported by
United Way

Introducing Online Donation



The Steele County Food Shelf now accepts donations online via PayPal. Visit our website at: www.steelecountyfoodshelf.org to view this new online feature.

"In every community there is work to be done. In every nation there are wounds to heal. In every heart there is the power to do it." - MARIANNE WILLIAMSON

This newsletter is produced by donated work.

When Working Full-Time Isn't Enough

Laura works 40 hours a week at a local grocery store. She's been employed for more than four years and became eligible for benefits, including medical coverage, two years ago. Despite having a steady job and company-sponsored benefits, Laura and her four school-age children visit the Food Shelf once a month to help make ends meet.

"The whole time I've been going to the Food Shelf, I've been employed full-time," Laura said. "A lot of different types of people use the Food Shelf and a lot of people are in situations similar to mine."

Laura's family depends on the bread, produce, dairy, potatoes, vegetables, and meat they receive each month. Childcare and housing expenses consume the bulk of Laura's paycheck, leaving little each month for food and household items. "The Food Shelf is a blessing," she said. "Stormy and Alonso are always welcoming and treat clients with respect."

Like Laura, many Food Shelf clients are hard-working people struggling to provide their families with consistent meals. "People shouldn't feel ashamed to use the Food Shelf," Laura said. "They have a great variety of food and you shouldn't be afraid to ask for help."

YSL Students Volunteer at the Food Shelf

Students participating in the Owatonna Senior High School's Youth Service Leadership program donated their time to the Food Shelf as volunteers. Students helped stock shelves, receive shipments of food, and assist on the Food Shelf floor.



Stormy Trom, YSL student Abdirahman Abdulle and Alonso Hernandez

Stamping Out Hunger

The National Association of Letter Carriers held their annual "Stamp Out Hunger" food drive on Saturday, May 14. Wet weather conditions didn't stop Steele County's letter carriers from collecting 2,819 pounds of food and \$150 in cash donations. Thanks to everyone who participated in this drive!

FoodShare Month Donations Exceed Goal!

Steele County's businesses, residents, and volunteers pulled together to help the Food Shelf exceed its March FoodShare Month goal of \$100,000. Community members donated \$100,601.86 and 31,632 pounds of food during the 31-day, statewide campaign to restock Minnesota's food shelves. Thanks to all who organized activities, collected food, attended a Hometown Sampler concert, sent in a cash donation, and helped the Steele County Food Shelf serve the growing hunger-related needs of our community.

Hometown Sampler Concerts Enjoy Record-Setting Year

The 2011 Hometown Sampler Concert series was a success for so many reasons. Record attendance, great music, and more than \$23,000 and 900 pounds of food collected for the Steele County Food Shelf. A special thanks to The Gogs, The Bad Tangerines, Scott Rogness and Friends, Hot n' Bothered, emcees John Havelka and Dave Otto, along with our generous corporate sponsors Federated Insurance, US Bank, KOWZ Radio Station, Owatonna Granite and Monument, and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. We hope to see you all next year!



Hot n' Bothered performing at the 2011 Hometown Sampler Concert

Food For Thought by Sherry Kubista

"Got milk?" "Milk, it does a body good." Can you picture the milk mustaches on the smiling endorsers? We've all seen ads heralding the benefits of dairy consumption. Commercials showing happy, sassy cows standing in green pastures give us the sense that all is well in dairy land. It seems idyllic, it seems wholesome, but not all is as it seems.

I was raised on a small dairy farm in the 1960s. My father owned 30 milk cows and a small number of steer for meat production. We had a milking parlor and a sleeping barn cows used during bad weather. The cows ate hay and silage indoors or they grazed in pastures outdoors. It was common to see 20 to 40 cows out to pasture near every county building site. Because of these small dairy farms, there were creameries in nearly every town in the Midwest dairy belt. Then things changed.

In the late 60s, small dairy farmers began disappearing. Agribusiness emerged with more profitable ways to produce and market milk products. New methods of feeding and confining cows became the wave of the future and the small dairy farmer became history.

In my father's day, a milk cow lived 15-20 years. Today, wear and tear on their over-taxed bodies causes few cows to live beyond age 5. Why? Because cows are given hormones that force their bodies to produce two to three times more milk than they would naturally. Sadly, this is not good for the cows' health and leads to early death. So why were these new methods favored? Profit. More milk from fewer cows meant more money in the bank.

Modern dairy cows never leave the milking barn. They are shuffled from milk stall to sleeping stall and back again. Imagine living your whole life in one building. Sounds like prison, doesn't it? These cows never enjoy grazing in an open pasture or socializing in ways inherent to their species. After spending their lives in crowded buildings, they are often discarded as ground meat when no longer able to produce high quantities of milk.

Does high yield milk really "do a body good?" Many studies that examine the correlation between milk consumption and osteoporosis reveal that countries which consume the most dairy have the highest incidence of osteoporosis. Hormones and chemical residuals in milk are also linked to higher incidences of certain types of cancer, as well as the early onset of puberty.

To learn more about corporate farming, read "Diet for a New America" by John Robbins, heir to the Baskin Robbins ice cream dynasty. Another resource is the PBS program "Eating," which explains the relationship between epidemic diseases and our food supply.

Writer, publisher, political activist Norman Cousins once said, "Nothing is more powerful than an individual acting out of his conscious, thus helping to bring the collective conscious to life." Think about your contribution, does it make the world a better place? Our eating habits play a role in our health and the health of the world.

Till next time, eat well and live life to the fullest.

COUPON

COUPON RESOURCE

Looking for help with the grocery bill?

Visit krazycouponlady.com for the latest coupon deals.

Children and Poverty

A recent Kids Count report revealed that the number of Minnesota children living in poverty has jumped to 14 percent.

How are the children in Steele County doing?

Kids Count reports:

10.9% live in poverty

33.8% receive free or reduced priced lunches

Learn more at www.cdf-mn.org