Ensuring an Uninterrupted Food Supply

Feed My People plans disaster response

It all started with a simple question, “Would we be ready?” As the only food bank in west central Wisconsin, Feed My People has a unique responsibility to ensure the supply of food to those in need every day of the year, but what about in the event of a community crisis, such as a weather-related disaster?

The Safety and Preparedness Committee began meeting three years ago to develop a specific plan of action so that Feed My People could quickly mobilize its resources in an emergency response, as well as to assess prevention. Led by Doug Carlson, a retired analyst from Cray Inc., and joined by William Henning, Environmental Health and Safety Consultant and Kitt Duplessie, retired Health and Safety Manager, Cray Inc., this dedicated group of volunteers worked closely with Feed My People board and staff to assess everything from internal threats, such as facility contamination or a security breach, to external events such as a tornado or a fire.

“Because of Feed My People’s mission, we need to protect its delivery capability for a safe, secure, and uninterrupted food supply,” shared Doug Carlson, “When an organization is growing rapidly, safety and security can fall off the radar. Thankfully, Emily [Moore] (FMP Executive Director) was eager to not only protect the warehouse in such an event, but to be a leader in protecting the community.”

In addition to developing and implementing a detailed business continuity plan, tabletop exercises have been held to actively practice disaster response. For example, what would be the exact step-by-step response from

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Uninterrupted Food Supply (continued)

Feed My People if a tornado causing extensive damage occurred in Brunswick, a small community south of Eau Claire? It was determined that a mobile distribution of food out of a truck could be assembled within hours directly onsite. Additionally, FMP outlined its potential role and response for providing food assistance during the weeks and months following such an event. By identifying response steps ahead of time, protocol can be designed way before an event occurs so that in the moment, actionable steps can be immediately applied.

Obviously, such an organized response requires community collaboration. Several key organizations contributed to this planning endeavor including Disaster Ready Chippewa Valley, Eau Claire County Emergency Management, the Red Cross, Second Harvest Heartland of St. Paul, and Silver Springs. Even offsite warehouse options were identified so operations could be shifted with little to no interruption to the food supply should the facility need time to get re-established.

“Feeding people is a basic first step, not only for daily living, but also immediately after a disaster occurs. Nothing moves forward without food. I am so thankful for the work conducted by the Safety & Preparedness Committee to examine all of our processes and to strengthen our delivery response so food can get to where it’s needed most,” said Emily Moore.

In conjunction with the recent building expansion, extra examination was made in view of safety and security planning. Because of this, the newly planned spaces include additional features such as separate loading and unloading docks, an enlarged repack area and new building security.

Note from the Director

It was a remarkable summer at Feed My People. In late May we broke ground at our current location to more than double our facility and improve its function.

While the warehouse staff continued to work onsite, the noise of drills, bulldozers and hammers became part of the daily routine. The office staff meanwhile moved to a temporary space just across the parking lot. It has been fascinating to observe the week-by-week progress as the foundation was laid; walls erected, and inside spaces transformed. It is hard to believe the expansion is nearly complete!

Through it all, our programs continue to grow. This summer we welcomed three new partner programs, served more people than ever through our Pop-Up Pantry program and established a popular healthy meal kit program. We are looking forward to settling into our new space and making use of all it has to offer. Together, we are making a difference today while we prepare for future needs of those who are hungry in our communities. I am deeply grateful for your continued support.

Emily Moore
Feed My People’s Executive Director

“I brought the plums to my grandkids, now they get to make jam with their mom.”
- Senior, Parkview Elementary Pop-Up Food Pantry, Chippewa Falls

“[The Pop-Up Food Pantry] helped me feed my kids and that makes [it] perfect. Made the difference of going without.”
- Mom, Parkview Elementary Pop-Up Food Pantry, Chippewa Falls
Community Perspective: It’s More Than Just Food

Supporting families through the ups and downs of life

Before we started our food pantry at Valley Vineyard, I had heard about food insecurity and knew there was a need for families to have help receiving food. What I didn’t know was the scope of the issue. I didn’t know that so many families in our area are affected, both young and old. Every week we have new families who walk through our doors.

One little girl is very proud of her pink grocery bag that she brings each time she comes. She very carefully picks which foods go in her bag, always choosing a fruit and a vegetable. We have a tendency to add a few items to her bag - usually fun treats. Her smile says it all!

We see many families who have multiple generations living under one roof. One is a family of 12 to 18, depending on how many family members are living under the roof at that time. The grandmother is always positive, spends time encouraging other guests as they wait their turns and offers advice to younger moms. She is an encouragement to all of us.

Providing food is our first priority, but we also are there just to be supportive. We celebrate births, walk through the ups and downs of life, such as getting a new job or losing a job, and even support folks through the death of a loved one. None of this would be possible if it were not for our partnership with Feed My People, which allows us to provide food to our growing lists of guests while keeping our budget in check.

Three years ago our church and therefore our pantry burned down. The fire was on a Tuesday, which was a pantry day. We lost everything. Obviously, we thought we were going to have to shut down the pantry, at least temporarily. Our volunteers contacted Feed My People, who in turn, brought a truck of food up to our parking lot. Community members provided tables and some more food donations. Within a couple of hours of a massive fire, we had a mobile food pantry set up in the parking lot of our church.

- Trish Houle, Valley Vineyard Food Pantry Coordinator

“Three years ago our church and therefore our pantry burned down. Within a couple of hours of a massive fire, we had a mobile food pantry from Feed My People set up in the parking lot of our church.”

We Love Our Volunteers

From repacking bulk product to driving our trucks, volunteers keep Feed My People running! We’re excited to start welcoming volunteers back into our newly expanded warehouse this fall. We now have a brand new volunteer community room, a clean room to repack bulk foods, warehouse space specifically for our Weekend Kids’ Meal program and much more!

We welcome individuals and groups of all abilities and ages to come experience volunteering at the food bank. We welcome those who would like to come once or twice, or those who would like to make a regular commitment. Give us a call to get started on your volunteer journey.

Contact Nick (Feed My People Volunteer Coordinator)
(715) 835-9415 x 101 | nick@fmpfoodbank.org

Upcoming Volunteer Events

Open Volunteer Night *NEW DAY*
We are changing things up! Open Volunteer Night is now the second Tuesday of each month beginning in October. Shifts are from 4:00 - 5:30 p.m. and 5:30 - 7 p.m. Please RSVP.

Bring your Kids to Volunteer
October 1st 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
We are reserving the food bank for some pretty cool kids, yours! Full of kid friendly projects, we are excited to welcome kids (with their parents) of all ages to come and give back to your community. Please RSVP.

Produce Palooza
October 23rd 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
We are expecting a huge shipment of produce and need help getting it all sorted and packed up. Can you help be a produce hero? Please RSVP.

Feed My People partners with over 200 hunger-relief programs in 14 west central Wisconsin counties.
Feeding Healthy Futures
Serving Our Youth at All Ages and in All Seasons

“Now I don’t have to go without food today.” This is the statement that hit Erin, the Chippewa Area Mentor Program coordinator, like a ton of bricks. The new Friends Café, started in 2018 by the mentoring program, is filling a critical need for students.

The Friends Café gives students at the Chippewa Falls Middle School a place to talk, take a break from the day, play a game and now, through their partnership with Feed My People (FMP), they are able to offer food to struggling students.

After just a few short months, Erin told us how thankful staff members at the school are that they now can offer this resource to students who are hungry. They will continue to spread the word throughout the school so every student will be able to focus on learning, not where their next meal will come from.

This is just one example of FMP’s newest programs dedicated to ending childhood hunger. One of the longest running is the Weekend Kids’ Meal Program, which helps kids in Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls not have to experience the anxiety of wondering whether they will eat this weekend.

This healthy program has touched the lives of 2,000 students annually in the Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls school districts alone. Known as a school year staple, these meal bags containing fresh fruit, vegetables, protein items and snacks are also available over breaks including the summer.
Children who experience food insecurity face detrimental consequences. They’re less likely to do well in school and are at risk of falling behind physically, mentally and emotionally creating lifelong barriers to a healthy life. With your help, Feed My People remains committed to implementing innovative solutions to address childhood hunger. Connecting food to our youngest learners, children and youth of all ages is, and always will be, a top priority.

Stepping Up to Fill the Summer Gap

Hunger doesn’t take a break over the summer and neither do we.

For a hardworking family already struggling during the school year, summers are extra difficult because school meals are no longer available. “Thank you,” said one mother of three young boys when she found out about Pop-Ups, “This will be a real lifesaver.”

This summer we set-up mobile distribution events at Longfellow Elementary, Banbury Place, L.E. Phillips Senior Center and Parkview Elementary School in Chippewa Falls. Some of our hunger-relief partners have also stepped up in creative ways to help ease the burden of summer hunger. Bill and Elaine Bailey started a backpack program in the Minong School district in 2016, but it never felt right when summer came around when the meals had to stop. They decided to do something. This past summer, families from the backpack program eagerly signed up to pick up individualized meal boxes twice a month from the COMFORTS food pantry, another local hunger-relief organization. Elaine calls every family to pick out their choices from the menu put together by Bill.

These 100 pound “family boxes” are filled with meal essentials and for the first time, kids aren’t wondering where their next meal is coming from. “This just made our summer. Our fridge is full. We have food!” shared one excited parent. It has been so successful, that the program will continue into the 2019-2020 school year alongside the backpack program.

Because of the hard work and determination of people like Bill and Elaine, changing the culture surrounding the impact of hungry summers is possible.

“We have struggled this last year. Without this program we may not have ate.”

- Parent of child receiving Weekend Kids’ Meals, Prairie Ridge Elementary School, Eau Claire

“So many people kept asking us what happened to the kids (who were part of the backpack food program) over the summer. We decided to do something. Today we have kids telling us they’ve never eaten like this in the summer before.”

- Bill and Elaine Bailey, Directors of Helping Hands Backpack and Family Box Program in Minong, WI
In the 1980’s, I was a school secretary at an elementary school in the Chippewa Falls School District. I handed out the lunch tickets to the students and saw how many needed the free and reduced lunches. There was one family in particular that opened my eyes to hunger in our community. There were two boys and their mother and they didn’t have enough food. The school didn’t have a breakfast program then and the boys and other students were hungry. After seeing that I came home from school that day and told Don we needed to do something.

Initially, it was a group of us who raised funds to supply hamburger, eggs, and whatever else was needed for the Chippewa Falls Salvation Army Food Pantry. Feed My People reached out to help us. Around that same time the Chippewa Area Food Pantry decided to start hosting a monthly mobile pantry. Feed My People would drive a truck to Chippewa Falls and we would distribute the food to over 100 families. Our leadership team was small but on distribution day 20 to 30 volunteers would show up to help. We were like a family. We would not only distribute food but we shared friendship and camaraderie with our guests and each other.

We see the map and all the different communities where FMP delivers food. The need is there – it hasn’t gone away. If you collect one dollar FMP can buy more food with it than we can. Food insecurity is still here – you may not see it in your circle but the need remains.
+25th Anniversary at RCU
+All God’s children
+Animal Shelter Workers
+Arnie
+20th Anniversary at RCU
+Birchwood Food Pantry
+Bloomer pantry
+Bonnie Johnson
+Cody and Natalie for Weekend Kids’ Meals
+Connie Beck’s Birthday
+Donald Ruth
+Donna and Pete Raleigh’s 50th Wedding Anniversary
+Edna Schemenauer
+Emilie Anderson
+Emily Moore
+Everett’s 90th Birthday & 70th Wedding Anniversary
+Feed My People Food Bank
+First Congregational Church
+Fran and Faye Hilgart
+Howard & Marlene Eytcheson
+Howard W. Olson
+Just Dance
+Kathy Williams
+Kerri Nelson
+Laura Peter
+Lois Smetana
+Love and Compassion
+Margaret Baumgardner
+Mary Lee Szymoniak
+Mike and Bonnie Isaacson’s 40th anniversary
+Mom - Deloris Paulson’s birthday
+Muriel and James Magadance
+My wife Karen, who taught many young people how to prepare nutritious meals (3)
+Neil Havind
+Nic and Kiersten Ehlers
+On the occasion of snow!
+Our family and our son and daughter’s graduation
+Our mail carrier and trash and recycling collectors
+Paul and Judy Rosenau
+Ramadan 2019 (2)
+Roger Kohls
+Shannon Joshi
+Sharon Volger
+Stephen C. Perkiser (2)
+Susie Haugley
+Suzanne Becker (3)
+Terri Landherr
+The Craig Family
+The Dennis Frame Family
+The Eau Claire Kivas
+The good folks at the DNR
+Eau Claire Service Center
+The Patrick Stanton Family
+Tom and Sue Gustum’s 31st anniversary
+Tom Kastel
+Travis Cynor
+Whitehall Backpack Program
+Wonderful Staff and Volunteers
Donate today through October 31st and select “The Building Expansion” online at fmpfoodbank.org/donate.

Gifts of every size toward the building project will help us establish the new warehouse space and feed even more people. Dedicated pallet spaces will be named in honor of donors who pledge $5000 or more to be paid by December 2023.

Find the enclosed envelope inside for more details.