

Feed What Matters

Holiday 2024 North Country Food Bank Newsletter

www.northcountryfoodbank.org



In This Issue

**From the
Director's Desk**

PAGE 2

**Join Us for a Month of
Giving in November!**

PAGE 3

Stories from the Road

PAGE 4

**Healthy & Nutritious
Produce Distribution**

PAGE 4





North Country Food Bank is working to end hunger across communities through leadership and collaboration.

Supporting this community since 1983.

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From the Director's Desk



The end of the year is once again upon us, and what better way to close out the year than to say thank you! Throughout the past year, your support has helped our neighbors across northwest and west central Minnesota by allowing us to provide much-needed nourishing and sustaining food. Seeing people's smiling faces, hearing their words of gratitude when they receive food, and knowing that they no longer have to worry about where their next meal will come from is what fuels our mission — and your generosity is what makes it possible!

Thanks to your generosity, your gifts of time and money, and your continued support, we have been able to distribute more than seven million pounds of food this year, the equivalent of nearly six million meals!

We have all been affected in some way by the difficulties of the current economic climate and can only imagine how tough these times are for the tens of thousands of our neighbors struggling with hunger every day — especially during the holiday season. Currently, there is no end in sight to the skyrocketing need we have experienced this past year. So, we hope you will stick with us to help support even more neighbors struggling with hunger every day.

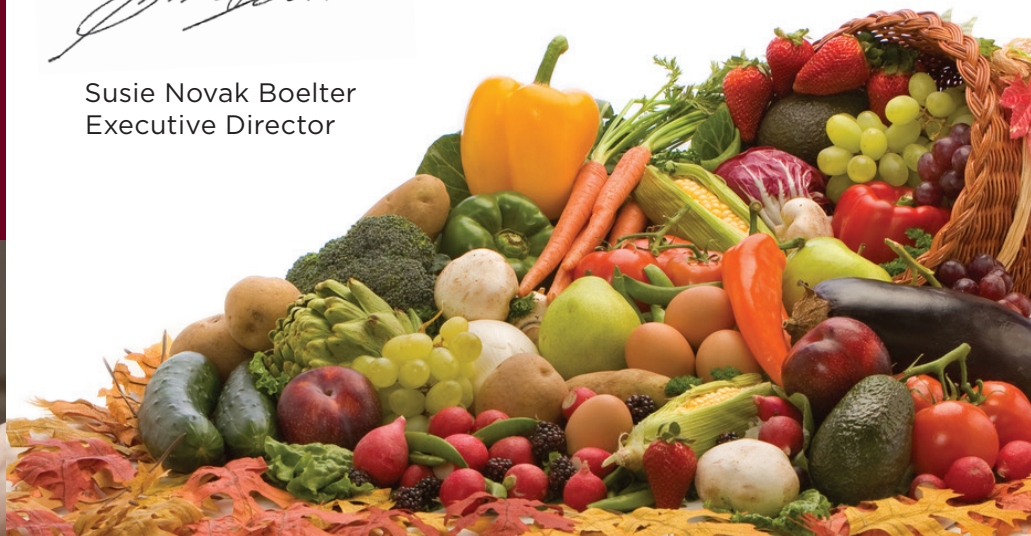
If you've already made an end-of-the-year gift, we sincerely thank you! If you're looking for ways to further support North Country and the neighbors we serve, please visit our website or contact us for more information. If a financial gift isn't feasible this year, join us as a volunteer! We make it as easy and fun as possible to donate your time as an individual, group, or family.

It is through your support that we are able to work determinedly to make sure nobody goes to bed hungry! Every dollar counts. Every person we help matters. And every person who helps makes a difference!

Happy Holidays from all of us at North Country Food Bank!

With sincere gratitude,

Susie Novak Boelter
Executive Director



Remember North Country Food Bank

Please let us know if you've included North Country Food Bank in your will and estate plans. We would like to add you to our Legacy Society. To learn more about our Legacy Society, contact scott@northcountryfoodbank.org.



Join Us for a Month of Giving in November!



North Country Food Bank is participating in Give to the Max 2024! Early giving will start November 1st, and our campaign will go through December 3rd, which is known globally as Giving Tuesday. This is a fantastic opportunity to stretch your donation even further with matching funds.

Give to the Max Day is November 21st and is a statewide fundraising campaign started by GiveMN in 2009. It is one of the biggest giving events of the year in the state of Minnesota. **Giving Tuesday** is a global day of generosity and has grown exponentially since it began. **North Country is combining these two very special days to raise awareness about our mission and simply make November a month of giving.**

There is a Match to Help Your Donation Stretch Further!

This means that all Give to the Max donations made to North Country will be matched up to a total of \$25,000. This gives us the potential to raise \$50,000, or about 200,000 additional meals to help feed our friends, families and neighbors in need! If you would like to help us take full



advantage of this generous matching gift, you can donate through GiveMN.org by searching for “North Country Food Bank.” Donations can also be made to us via mail. **If you choose to donate via check, just make sure you write “Give to the Max 2024” on the memo line.**

Please consider making a donation during the month of November to help us reach even more friends and neighbors struggling with hunger! If you have any questions about how to participate, please contact Scott Johnson at scott@northcountryfoodbank.org or 218-399-7367.

People are Hungry! We're Here to Help!

North Country's business model is simple — use surplus food product from the food industry to feed hungry neighbors. Its regional impact is profound — serving 21 counties in northwest and west central Minnesota and part of Grand Forks, North Dakota. **North Country distributes food to over 220 charitable programs, including soup kitchens, food shelves, homeless shelters, low-income individuals in need of supplemental assistance, senior community centers, after-school programs, domestic abuse programs, and addiction treatment centers.**

During the most recent year, North Country distributed more than seven million pounds of food — the equivalent of nearly six million meals. “At North Country, we work every day to extend the reach of our services,” said Susie Novak Boelter, Executive Director. “We are focused on providing food for the towns and cities in our service area, while still reaching even the smallest communities in the most rural area — especially in these extremely challenging

economic times. People often don't realize that their local agencies get between 70% and 90% of all the food they distribute from North Country,” said Boelter.

North Country works hard every day to secure enough nutritious food for the more than 40,000 people struggling with hunger in northwest and west central Minnesota. In order to maintain a steady supply of healthy food all year round, North Country depends on supporters like you. Please visit www.northcountryfoodbank.org to learn how you can help!





Stories from the Road

The face of hunger is not what you would expect. It is your young neighbors with young children struggling to make ends meet. It's a senior who has lived in your community her whole life who is now on a fixed budget in these difficult economic times.

We sometimes wish you could see the face of hunger through our eyes here at North Country.

It may change your perspective and would most definitely melt your heart. The staff and volunteers at North Country are so fortunate to witness the immense kindness, appreciation, gratefulness and generosity of those who live in our communities on a regular basis.

North Country typically conducts 4-5 mobile food distributions each month in different communities across the region. During each of these mobile distributions, long lines tend to form with people who are struggling to put food on the table. Everyone at these distributions needs help or is trying to help someone else. They all have compelling stories that touch the hearts of all those involved.

I Brought the Coffee!

A local resident who planned to attend a mobile distribution called North Country in advance and volunteered to help organize the line prior to the distribution. He came early and brought a thermos full of coffee. While visiting with people in line, he shared his coffee with community members waiting for food. He mentioned that he had some great conversations, and offered to help next time we were in town. He said volunteering gave him the opportunity to meet people he didn't know. He said, "I am a big believer in giving back, and am happy to help however I can." He added, "Plus, it gave me the opportunity to get some much-needed food, meet new friends, and have some great conversations. It really helps put some perspective on how people in the community are struggling right now."

Helping the Neighbors in Their Time of Need

A volunteer at a recent mobile distribution was monitoring the line when a middle-aged woman waiting in one of the cars waved her over. She introduced herself as Debbie, and said she had a question. Debbie wondered if it might be possible to pick up some food for her elderly neighbors. She said the couple was really struggling of late. The husband had recently had a heart attack, and since the wife did not drive, they were not able to get out and about. Debbie said she checks in on them from time to time, because they do not have any family nearby. The worker assured her she could get food for her neighbors and thanked her for being willing to help. Debbie reached out of her window and grasped the volunteer's hand between hers and said, "You have no idea what a blessing this will be to them. I won't forget this or how you helped us."

Healthy & Nutritious Produce Distribution

At North Country Food Bank, it is our mission to help neighbors in need. It is our belief that this brings out the best in everyone. With the support of communities across northwest and west central Minnesota — our dedicated donors and volunteers — and our more than 220 agency partners, we are actively working to address hunger and health concerns across the region.

North Country's commitment to address hunger has led to exponential increases in recent years — increases in the both the amount of food being distributed and the quality of the food.

As a result, North Country is on pace to distribute nearly one million pounds of nutritious vegetables and fruits this year. This is exciting and encouraging! Not only is North Country distributing **more food**, but we are also distributing **more healthy and nutritious food**. There is a strong connection between health and hunger. North Country is working to create more awareness about this connection and to find ways to get more healthy and nutritious food into the hands of people who need it most.



Over 40,000 of our neighbors face hunger. A \$1 donation provides 4 meals for a neighbor in need.



CONTACT US

North Country Food Bank, Inc.
1011 11th Avenue NE
East Grand Forks, MN 56721

Phone 218.399.7356
Toll Free 1.877.281.3272
Fax 218.281.7374

To learn more or to make a donation to North Country Food Bank, visit www.northcountryfoodbank.org.

