

Fall 2022

AROUND THE TABLE

News and Notes on Solving Hunger in South Dakota

FEEDING
SOUTH DAKOTA

MEMBER OF
FEEDING
AMERICA



As Food Costs Rise, Your Generosity Brings Hope

How One Family is Able to Keep Going

Jessica's been coming to Feeding South Dakota's monthly mobile distribution in Wagner since the beginning of 2022.

Usually she arrives at 8:45 a.m., well ahead of the 9:30 a.m. start time, and still finds herself toward the back of the line of cars that wrap around the National Guard Armory and down the highway.

In the months since her first pick-up the cost to feed her family has skyrocketed making this distribution program even more essential.

"We went to the grocery store yesterday and it was \$77; and I only got three bags of groceries," Jessica said.

So, this time, Jessica made sure to be in line by 8:15 a.m.

She can't afford to take any chances — not since her grandfather passed away. She resigned from her job at the public school to look after her grandmother once she began showing signs of Alzheimer's disease.

"It helps tremendously. We use everything we get. It feeds us all," Jessica said after volunteers loaded her van with nutritional foods like produce and milk.

Because of you, people like Jessica can rest easy knowing that rising prices won't mean cutting back on the healthy food their family needs.

This is what the result of your generosity looks like — good food making it into the hands of the people who'd otherwise go hungry. Together, we are making our vision of a hunger-free South Dakota a reality. Thank you for your partnership.

"We went to the grocery store yesterday, and it was \$77, and I only got three bags of groceries."

— Jessica



Vision & Values

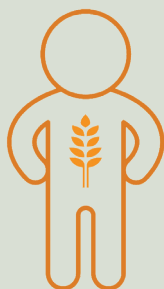
Vision

Our vision is a state where no one person's health, well-being, or potential is hindered by the availability of nutritious food.

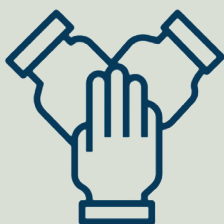
Our Core Values



✓ Serve with Compassion



✓ Work with Purpose



✓ Connect with Intention

AROUND THE TABLE

WITH LORI
DYKSTRA, CEO

Thank You Feeding South Dakota Family



Dear Friend,

While I'd like to begin by celebrating all the good we've done together this year — of which there is plenty — I'm afraid I can't do that.

You'll see for yourself why on these pages.

You'll see how inflation and record-high prices have caused the demand for food to spike over the past year. You'll hear directly from our neighbors how vital the food from Feeding South Dakota has become, and you'll read about how difficult it's been to bring that food to the people who need it most.

It's obvious to say that I never could've imagined the challenges our community would face in the months after joining Feeding South Dakota. What really needs to be said is that **I can't imagine taking on hunger with a more compassionate and dedicated family of supporters, volunteers, partners, and community leaders.**

What you'll also find in these pages is hope. You'll find hope in the stories of South Dakotans doing and giving what they can to help their neighbors and making their community a better place.

It takes a village to solve hunger. And just like the causes of hunger, the solutions to hunger are not singular. They lie with each one of us and come to life when we *all* give to something greater than ourselves.

The solution is you. It's volunteers like Lori at the Wagner Mobile Distribution. It's our Feeding South Dakota Team. It's a statewide collaboration of neighbors helping neighbors put food on the table — once and for all.

Our mission is for South Dakotans, powered by South Dakotans and I'm so grateful to be partnering with you in this lifesaving, world-changing work.

Thank you for all you do. **One person, one act of compassion at a time; together, we will end hunger across our great state.**

Lori Dykstra



Employee Spotlight: Cullan Winter

Food Sourcing Coordinator



All year long, South Dakotans have watched helplessly as prices in the grocery aisle rise at a relentless, record-breaking pace. It's taken a heavy toll on so many and pushed the need for food assistance higher every month.

Enter Cullan Winter.

Cullan is Feeding South Dakota's Food Sourcing Coordinator and since last September, it's been his job to find and purchase food to put into the hands of thousands of South Dakotans facing hunger every day.

It's a demanding job, but one Cullan is more than capable to take on, even if it's not the job he originally sought from Feeding South Dakota.

"So, I applied for a different position," he said with a laugh. "But I'm frugal and health-minded, so it actually worked out pretty well. I was pretty tickled by the position actually [...] I wanted to do something that made a more direct impact."

To say Cullan has made a direct impact would be an understatement.

In the year since Cullan joined the team, food has not only become more valuable to those served by Feeding South Dakota but also — as Cullan puts it — more difficult for food banks to acquire.



Food manufacturers began producing less food, leading to a decrease in large food donations and making food banks like Feeding South Dakota more dependent on purchasing food.

"Everyone who's gotten groceries in the last six months knows that the grocery costs have gone up. The same with us," Cullan explained. "The Backpack Program items that I've bought over the last six months are up about 30 percent on average."

"This makes every dollar even more precious."

— Cullan

"Every day my goal is just to make the best use of donor dollars and grant funds to try to stretch that as far as we can."

To maximize efficiency and ensure no dollar goes to waste, Cullan and the Food Sourcing Team have made advances in data integration and adhere to more data-driven decision making.

The results speak for themselves. In just the first quarter of this fiscal year, the team has sourced 3.6 million pounds of food. For reference, Feeding South Dakota distributed 12.9 million pounds of food in all of their 2022 Fiscal Year.

Beyond all the logistical and data-driven solutions to fighting hunger, Cullan says seeing first-hand the impact of his work quickly puts it all into perspective. He encourages anyone to volunteer at their community's next distribution event.

"Once you see the impact that those dollars have, then you'll have a better understanding and you'll feel really good about donating your time, donating your dollars, donating your talents, whatever they may be," Cullan said.



Volunteer Spotlight: Lori

Wagner Mobile Distribution

It's a late June morning in Wagner, and outside the National Guard Armory, there's a line of more than 100 cars stretching down the highway leading out of town.

In a few moments, the line will begin to crawl forward, and volunteers will load 170 boxes of dry food, produce, and milk into the cars of their friends and neighbors. It'll be their community's largest mobile food distribution to date.

Meanwhile, Lori, the woman responsible for it all, is flitting from vehicle to vehicle greeting each familiar face along the way. A few times, she approaches a rolled-down window to ask for an update about the driver's family or ask about a neighbor she hasn't seen today.

The retired teacher organized Wagner's first mobile food distribution with Feeding South Dakota during the height of COVID-19 as a way to stay connected to her community and attuned to her neighbors' needs.



At the front of the line, the influence of Lori's attentiveness and passion for her community is clearly felt. Volunteers greet each car with the same brand of familiar and gentle sincerity. By the time the food has been loaded, a smile has appeared on the faces of guests and volunteers alike.

As the need for food grows in her community, Lori says she's thankful to be able to provide her friends and neighbors with the support they need to get through.

"If there is anything that I could tell the donors ... they're doing really good work. They're making such a difference," she said. "Families call me, 'Are they still coming this month? Is it still the same time?' It's making a huge difference for people."

"When I was at the school, I got to see a lot of people, and talk with a lot of people, and check in on people. This is a good way for me to check on families and see if there are some people that I need to check back with and see how they're doing or if they need something."

— Lori



CONTACT US

info@FeedingSouthDakota.org

FeedingSouthDakota.org

605-335-0364