

# Volunteer Newsletter

Your quarterly source for volunteer news and updates.



May 2026



## Impact by the Numbers for FY26 Q1 - Q3:

Hours:

**50,325**

Number  
of Volunteers:

**24,978**

Pounds:

**10,177,308**

## Our mission: to end hunger in South Dakota.

As the state's largest hunger-relief organization, Feeding South Dakota is providing food in all 66 counties of in the state and fighting hunger in rural communities, metro areas and Native American Reservations through its programs and agency partners.

# Buffalo Strong: A Rancher's Story

## *Closing the rural food access gap*

Despite producing much of our country's food supply, many rural communities experience very limited access to fresh, affordable foods. Grocery stores are sometimes non-existent. People living there are said to be in a "food desert."

With a *cowboy-can-do attitude*, Zane is a self-employed rancher. Fittingly, he raises buffalo in Buffalo, S.D. This small town of just 346 people lies some 70 miles northwest of Belle Fourche. Zane jokes, "And east of us is the town of Bison. There is only one spot in the world that has a road sign that says *Buffalo and Bison*."

Zane runs an 80-head buffalo herd — enough to get him through the year, along with occasional side jobs. Like the beef cattle market, buffalo markets can vary from year to year.

The livestock business can be demanding, requiring care for farm animals seven days a week.

"Right now, it's tough. Small-town grocery stores have to make a profit to make it work."

To help him fill in the gaps when business is slow, Zane visits Feeding South Dakota's monthly mobile food distribution at Buffalo's Old Gym on US Hwy 85 — a year-round offering generously supported by donor gifts.

"This helps my pocketbook immensely — this saves me food-wise," Zane says. "Some of the stuff I get, I share with a neighbor who has kids. None of it gets thrown away around here. Last month, we got a boatload of grapes; they were everywhere!"

With conversations that often drift from the ranch to the community, Zane is a reminder that when neighbors look out for one another, everyone is stronger.



***This helps my pocketbook immensely — this saves me food-wise.***

— Zane



## Coordinator Corner | Alyssa Albrecht

### *Eastern Volunteer Coordinator*

One of the best parts of my role is getting to meet volunteers and hear their stories, though there's never quite as much time as I would like. Thanks to our recent bike raffle, I had the chance to get to know one volunteer a little better:

### **Cari Olson.**

Cari's compassion and empathy for people deepened during her time as a teacher, where she worked with many students who relied on the Feeding South Dakota BackPack Program. When she noticed some children avoiding certain foods, like canned soup and vegetables, she discovered they didn't know how to prepare the food. So, Cari took action! Using crockpots in the classroom, she and her education assistant taught students how to make soups and jazz up vegetables to show students how to make enjoyable meals. That experience inspired her to make volunteering at Feeding South Dakota part of her regular summer routine.

Cari enjoys the variety of projects at Feeding South Dakota and meeting the people "who signed up for the same time slot to collaboratively work to accomplish a goal." Her favorite project? Sorting food donations. She said that though most of the food is safe to distribute, sometimes it's like "an opposite-treasure hunt when you find that box of lime jello that expired in 2008!"

Now, as the winner of the bicycle raffle, Cari is looking forward to riding her new bike first to her parents' house, and then exploring the trails in the Black Hills with her husband. If Cari could ride her bike with any celebrity (past or present), she would choose her favorite character in any movie - Val Kilmer. BUT "he has to be in Doc Holliday's voice," she said. Cari shared that if she had a theme song that played every time she rode her bike, it would be John Lennon's Watching the Wheels, which she says has the "perfect summer recharge message."

Whether she's in the classroom, at the food bank, or out on the trail like Pee-Wee, Cari embodies compassion in action and a genuine commitment to making a difference in South Dakota.



# Prime Time Gala

Join the South Dakota Cattlemen's Foundation for its 13<sup>th</sup> annual Prime Time Gala, Saturday, June 20 in Sioux Falls at the Sioux Falls Convention Center.

This event brings together an evening of food and music while raising critical funds for Feeding South Dakota. Over the years, the Gala has raised more than \$3 million—helping provide nearly 1.7 million pounds of beef to South Dakotans facing hunger across the state.

To get gala table seats, concert tickets, and enter the raffle for a chance to win a 2026 Chevrolet Silverado 2500 Duramax Crew Cab 4WD LT, head over to: [bit.ly/4vHeZ4Q](https://bit.ly/4vHeZ4Q).



A portion of proceeds from every concert ticket will benefit Feeding South Dakota.

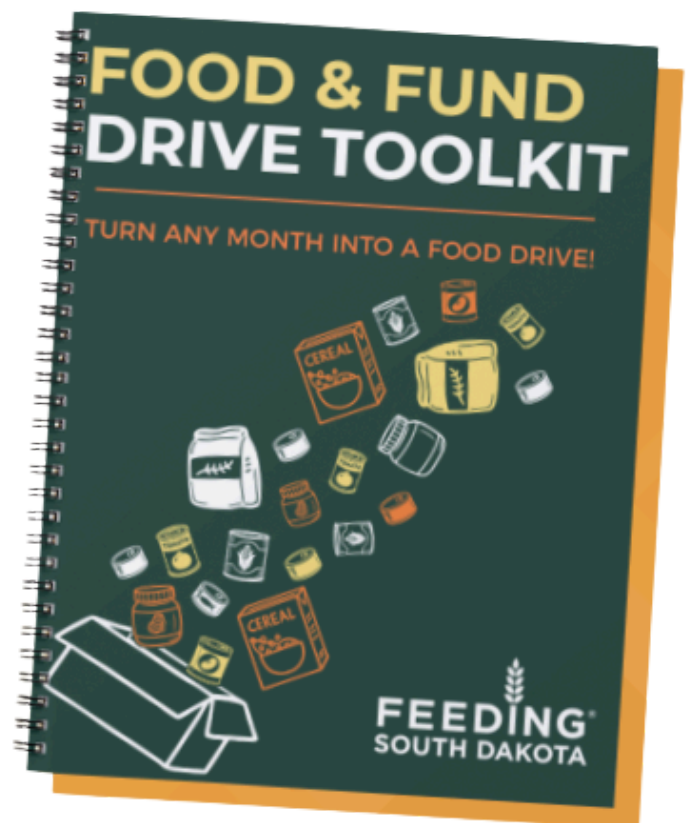
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## Food & Fund Drive Toolkit

Check out our Food & Fund Drive Toolkit to learn more about collecting food and monetary donations.

Here is the link and QR code to get the kit!

**Visit:** [bit.ly/4ao2kdg](https://bit.ly/4ao2kdg)  
or Scan the QR Code



# Cooking Up Change

*Bringing people together through food and community*

Meet Joelle, a senior student in Marion, who chose to do her senior project by creating a recipe book. But Joelle's recipe book isn't just any recipe book—it's filled with meals that create gathering places, traditions, and lasting memories. Most importantly, it's a collection of recipes that cook up change.

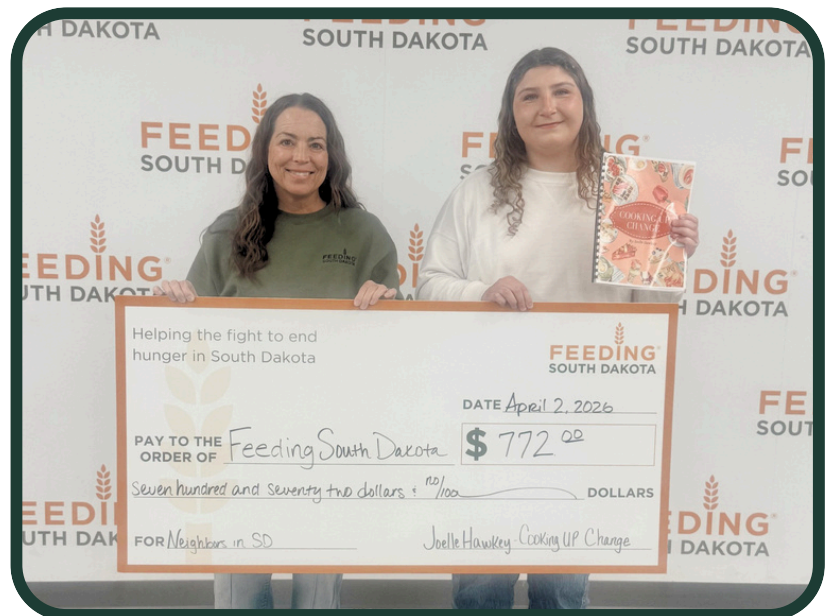
Without hesitation, Joelle chose to donate proceeds from every recipe book she sold to support Feeding South Dakota. As she writes in her cookbook, "No family should ever go without a warm meal; food should bring hope, not worry."

Through her cookbook sales, Joelle donated \$772 to Feeding South Dakota—helping provide 2,316 meals to neighbors facing hunger across the state.

Joelle's determination to raise awareness, create change, and give back is a powerful testament to how youth—and all of us—can make a difference in our communities.



**Thank you, Joelle, for your kindness and your heart for giving back to our neighbors!**



# Coming Up

**Prime Time Gala**  
Saturday, June 20

Feeding SD CLOSED

**Independence Day**  
Friday, July 3

Feeding SD CLOSED

**Memorial Day**  
Monday, May 25

Feeding SD CLOSED

**Juneteenth**  
Friday, June 19

Feeding SD CLOSED

**Labor Day**  
Monday, Sept 7

## 605 Meal Makers Challenge

All new monthly gifts to Feeding South Dakota will double all year-long in 2026 thanks to the generosity of Jim & Melody Mielke.

When donors invest through the 605 Meal Makers program, they help build a reliable foundation for Feeding South Dakota which helps ensure food reaches neighbors in all 66 counties through our mobile distributions, child hunger programs, and community partners.

To learn more about the 605 Meal Makers program scan the QR code or head over to our website at [feedingsouthdakota.org](https://feedingsouthdakota.org).



# FEEDING SOUTH DAKOTA PANTRY BITES



## No-Bake Cheesecake Cups

By Joelle Hawkey, author of *Cooking Up Change*








**Prep time:** 20 minutes

**Chill time:** 2 hours

**Yield:** 8 cups

**Calories per serving:** 380

### Ingredients

-  1 ½ cups graham cracker crumbs
-  ½ cup melted butter
-  8 oz cream cheese
-  ½ cup powdered sugar
-  1 tsp vanilla
-  1 cup whipped topping
-  Fruit topping of choice

### Instructions

-  Mix graham cracker crumbs and melted butter.
-  Press into bottoms of small cups.
-  Beat cream cheese, powdered sugar, and vanilla.
-  Fold in whipped topping.
-  Spoon mixture over crust.
-  Chill for at least 2 hours.
-  Top with fruit before serving.

### Helpful Tips

- Use clear cups for pretty layers.
- Chill overnight for the best texture.
- Add lemon zest for brightness.
- Keep refrigerated.

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