

Fall 2025

# AROUND<sup>THE</sup>TABLE

News and Notes on Solving Hunger in South Dakota



*A worker at the Food Service Center stocking the pantry shelves. (1988)  
Photo Courtesy of the "Siouxland Heritage Museums."*



## Dignity, Hope, And Reassurance: The Holiday Gifts You Share

or make ends meet during the colder months.

Thanks to your generosity, we're able to change that by providing food for holiday meals to those who need it most.

This year, 6,000 Thanksgiving Meals will be given away in communities across the state with food provided by Feeding South Dakota—financially supported by a generous match donation.

Our December holiday boxes, distributed through our Mobile Food Distribution Program, will provide pork loin to more than 12,000 families thanks to an annual donation from a food partner.

This newsletter will introduce you to two recipients at last year's Thanksgiving Meal Giveaway. Through their stories, you'll understand why the work we do is more than a meal...it's dignity, hope, and reassurance.

This season, as we prepare to gather around the table, I invite you to join fellow donors saying **YES** to our Thanksgiving Matching Gift Challenge. Your kindness ensures that no table is empty, and no one is forgotten. For that, we couldn't be more grateful.

With Thanksgiving...

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Lori Dykstra'.

Lori Dykstra, CEO

As we approach the holiday season, I'm reminded of the power of something we often take for granted: a shared meal.

For many of us, this time is marked by the comforting traditions of gathering around the table with loved ones, sharing favorite recipes, and giving thanks. But for thousands facing hunger, the holidays can be a time of deep uncertainty—about how they'll keep food on the table,





# Thanksgiving Meal Giveaway:

A Holiday Tradition Made Possible by Your Generosity

Scott and Sistine are good friends who showed up early for the 2024 Rapid City Thanksgiving Giveaway at the Central State Fairgrounds—not just to receive food, but to lend a hand. Scott has been coming to the giveaway for nearly seven years, and it's become a meaningful tradition for him.

This annual event is an additional distribution in the month of November. It is made possible by the vital contributions of time and money by dedicated volunteers and generous donors.

The evening before last year's event, Scott and Sistine arrived to help guide cars into a line and keep things organized. The first guests began arriving around midnight for the distribution's 7:15 a.m. start.

"I appreciate the stuff you guys do, and I enjoy helping out,"

Scott said. The continuous gratitude expressed by those receiving a Thanksgiving meal is heartwarming for all. Some awaiting their turn offer to carry and load groceries for others. Staff and volunteers eagerly solve any number of urgent issues that arise for neighbors in their cars. Adding gas to an empty fuel tank, jumping a dead battery, providing some friendship or a small treat to kids who've grown restless from the long wait—these are just a few examples of how our community unites to serve each other.

Scott agrees. When asked what the event means to him, he answered: "Being thankful for what life is about—we bring a lot of people together."

Not only does the Thanksgiving Giveaway bring people together, but it also helps

stretch tight budgets or simply helps families fill the table during the holiday season.

Scott invited Sistine to join him this year, knowing that times had gotten tough for her. She and her husband were paying nearly \$900 in rent—until it jumped to over \$1,000. While their rent is based on income and her husband now works for the housing complex, it's still hard to manage.

"I have no turkey at home; rent went up already—it's tough," Sistine shared.

Even while facing financial strain, Scott and Sistine continue to give back in their own way, reminding us that gratitude, resilience, and community are at the heart of this season—and at the heart of the Thanksgiving Meal Giveaway.

# Giving Thanks, Giving Back:

Couple Makes Thanksgiving a Little Brighter for South Dakotans

*The Greg and Pam Sands Foundation is offering to match donations to Feeding South Dakota between now and November 28, 2025.*

Thanks to Greg and Pam Sands, matching sponsors for the annual Thanksgiving Meal Giveaway, your gift this season will go twice as far to ensure that families across South Dakota can gather around the table with a warm meal and a sense of hope.

For Greg Sands, founder of Sands Wall Systems, giving back isn't just about business success—it's personal. In the 1980s, Greg was imprisoned for cocaine possession and distribution. After serving his sentence, he was given a second chance at the Glory House in Sioux Falls.

That second chance led Greg to a new path. He met his wife, Pam, at an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. She was working as a hairdresser, and he was starting out in drywall. Together, they built a family, a thriving business, and a deep commitment to their community.

Greg and Pam generously support numerous charities that address addiction, mental health, and hunger. Feeding South Dakota is one of them.

Greg recounts an early lesson in compassion he never forgot. When he was growing up, a child broke into the Sands' home and stole barbecue ribs his mother had made. Everyone was



disappointed to miss out on that meal, but his mom simply said, "They needed the food worse than we did."

Feeding America estimates that 108,850 children and adults across our state don't have regular access to the food they need to thrive. This season, Feeding South Dakota is distributing 6,000 meals at giveaways across the state, including rural communities.

## So don't wait.

Scan the code below, go online, call us, or mail your donation today! Your contribution will go twice as far to address food insecurity among our neighbors. With every \$1 providing 6 healthy meals, a donation of just \$25 will be enough to nourish one child from November 15 through New Year's Day. A gift of \$60 can feed a family of four for an entire month.

Please put Feeding South Dakota on your list of worthy charities to support this season. Thank you!

Check out this special podcast announcing our  
**THANKSGIVING MATCHING GIFT CHALLENGE!**  
Scan the QR code to keep listening! →





# FEEDING AND FOSTERING THE FUTURE

We met Lucas Dunlap at the Sioux Falls Thanksgiving Meal Giveaway last November. Like many hardworking families, Lucas and his wife are doing their best to provide for their children, but sometimes the paycheck just doesn't stretch far enough. They have utilized Feeding South Dakota programs "here and there" to help fill in the gaps when needed. "We do struggle, but we get by," he says.

What makes Lucas' story remarkable is the way he and his wife give back to others, even while facing challenges of their own. For the past three years,

Lucas and his wife have been fostering children. Recently, they adopted their first daughter out of foster care. "As soon as we get her situated, we will start fostering again," says Lucas, showing that even in their own struggles, they remain focused on serving others.

When Lucas and his family came to the Thanksgiving Meal Giveaway, they weren't just receiving food—they were receiving reassurance, dignity, and a reminder that they are not alone. Last year, Thanksgiving meals were given away in 42 communities by Feeding South Dakota and our



community partners across the state. Behind each of those meals was a story like Lucas'—a parent trying to provide for their children, a family opening their home to others, a neighbor facing unexpected hardship.

"This has helped us a lot, and a lot of other families too," Lucas explains.

## Shared Values = **EQUALS** = Stronger Partners

Feeding South Dakota is the state's largest hunger-relief organization. Our mission is to end hunger through programs and community partnerships across all 66 counties of our state. As a generous supporter, you are helping realize the vision of a stronger South Dakota, one where no one person's health, well-being, or potential is hindered by the availability of nutritious food.

**THANK YOU** for being a special partner in our work and for sharing in these core values that guide our efforts:



### **To Serve with Compassion:**

ensuring that every person's dignity is preserved by respecting differences, displaying empathy, and showing no judgment.



### **To Work with Purpose:**

taking ownership in our mission, working consistently as a team to operate with integrity.



### **To Connect with Intention:**

growing through a culture of transparency, being receptive to others, and practicing humility.