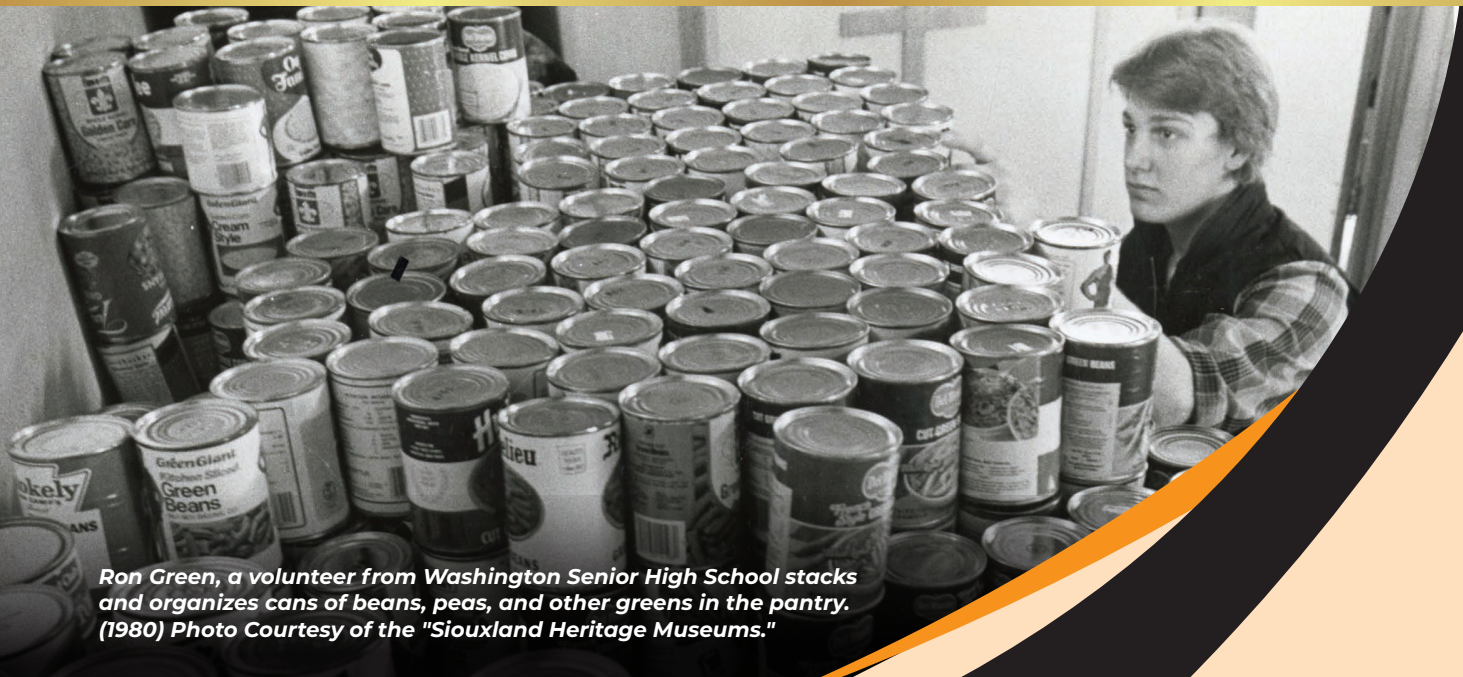


# AROUND THE TABLE

News and Notes on Solving Hunger in South Dakota



Ron Green, a volunteer from Washington Senior High School stacks and organizes cans of beans, peas, and other greens in the pantry. (1980) Photo Courtesy of the "Siouxland Heritage Museums."

## AROUND THE TABLE WITH LORI DYKSTRA, CEO

## Here's How We're Going to Solve Hunger Together This Summer — And Beyond!

Dear Friend,

For the last 50 years, Feeding South Dakota has been working alongside caring people like you to solve hunger across this wonderful, wide-open space we call home. For me, this milestone is more than proof of the progress we've made together — it's fuel for the road ahead.

**Right now, our focus is set on children facing hunger.** When school is out, thousands of kids lose access to vital school meals. Without the structure of the school day, it's harder for families to access food assistance programs. **Thankfully, you're helping provide a solution.**

With your help, kids can receive nutritious food every week through our **Summer Backpack program.**

Additionally, your support provides food through over 105 monthly mobile distributions this summer to ensure families have access to nutritious food while school is out.

Because behind every child facing hunger is a family facing hunger. While providing food today is critical, lasting hunger relief starts when families have the food and support they need to break the cycle of hunger for good.



Lori Dykstra has been the CEO of Feeding South Dakota since August 2021.

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## When College Kids Go Hungry

How your support is fueling South Dakota's brightest minds.

Stasia began college at South Dakota State University on a scholarship for a major in nursing. All seemed to be just fine in her world ... until a diagnosis turned everything upside down.

She discovered that she had an allergy to dairy products, which meant completely rethinking how she ate, how she shopped and how she lived. This lifestyle change inspired her to switch majors and become a registered dietitian with the hope of helping others with food allergies.

The shift in majors resulted in the loss of her scholarship. Taking on student loans meant she had much less money to spend, and, thus, much less for grocery shopping.

But thanks to friends like you, Stasia was able to supplement her food supply through a mobile distribution from a Feeding South Dakota partner. Your support helps college students access the fuel they need to focus. Without it, their studies — and their overall health — can suffer.

"College hunger is real," Stasia says. "It takes a toll on you."

It took a toll mentally, too, because Stasia was embarrassed to admit she needed help. She kept it hidden from family and friends. "My parents worked really hard so we always had what we needed growing up," she says. "So I didn't want them to know about my struggles."

Stasia has moved past that now. As a professional dietitian who counsels others, she urges everyone struggling with food access — including college students — to seek help.

"It's not a sign of weakness," she says. "The resources are there, and they want to help you."

**Thanks to your support, Feeding South Dakota has resources all over the state, including college campuses.**



**“College hunger is real. It takes a toll on you.”**

— Stasia

## “We Believe in the Mission and Feel the Value”

Jim Mielke is a retired farmer. His wife, Melody, is a retired nurse. The main thing their careers had in common was food — Jim's work produced it, and Melody's vocation focused on health and good nutrition.

So it made sense that when Jim and Melody started considering their planned giving options, they thought of Feeding South Dakota. "We believe in the mission and feel the value," they said, "and we are proud to have an opportunity to be a part of it."

Jim and Melody chose to make a legacy gift to Feeding South Dakota through an IRA disbursement and an Endowment Fund with the South Dakota Community Foundation. Through planned giving they have elevated their impact on fighting hunger by providing stable funding for the mission's future.



Our team would be proud to assist you in finding a gift option that meets your philanthropic goals. It's a great way to provide for your loved ones while also ensuring Feeding South Dakota has the support needed to meet the challenges of food insecurity — once and for all.

**To learn more about planned giving options, see the insert with this newsletter.**





## Program Spotlight: How You Keep Kids from Going Hungry on Weekends



“But I focus on what the kids need. If they are hungry, we need to help fill that void for them.”

Kim is all smiles, standing in front of a colorful school bulletin board festooned with flowers, hearts, peace signs, and phrases like “Have a Good Day” and “Good Vibes Only.”

Kim is the Backpack Program coordinator for the Montrose School District, and thanks to caring friends like you, more kids can experience good vibes and good days. Why? Because the program gives children food and snacks to take home over the weekend when access to school meals isn't available.

Every Friday morning, Kim distributes the Backpack units into about 180 students' lockers. Each unit may include cereal, granola bars, mac and cheese, canned soup, shelf-stable milk or juice, fruit cups, and snacks.

“I really like that Feeding South Dakota added juice-box-sized milk, and they add mini cereal in so that they can make a bowl of cereal,” says Kim. “Kids look forward to that stuff.”

As a teacher, Kim understands that hunger affects a child's performance in the classroom. “When basic needs are met, kids are so much happier,” explains Kim. “The ones that participate in the program, you can tell they are happier.”

With 1 in 6 children in South Dakota being food insecure, programs like this are essential. Still, some families are hesitant to get Backpacks. “Sometimes it's a pride thing, and stigma is hard to get over,” explains Kim. “But I focus on what the kids need. If they are hungry, we need to help fill that void for them.”

Backpacks are individually portioned, nutritionally balanced, and kid-friendly. When tummies are full, kids are engaged and ready to learn!

**Because of generous friends like you, children can rely on the Backpacks for weekend food.**

## Volunteer Spotlight: A Lifelong Dedication to Service

A retired veteran, Danny simply can't imagine not being involved in serving. That's why you'll find him volunteering at the Feeding South Dakota mobile distribution in Emery.

After seeing an advertisement for volunteers, Danny put his boots on the ground and "enlisted." He saw a need and wanted to meet it, helping neighbors who were facing hunger.

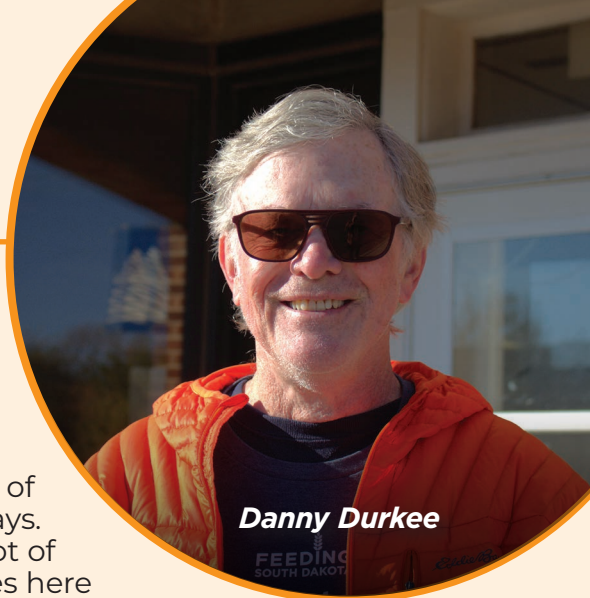
"The food that is distributed is worthy of the effort, not only statewide, but nationally," Danny says. "Lots of people aren't getting enough nutrition or food."

Danny served in Japan and Greece while in the U.S. Air Force, where he saw signs of hunger and hardship everywhere. "I saw how they lived," says Danny, who later served as a civil engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Here in South Dakota, Danny sees the pressing need for food distributions in rural communities, where more people are likely to face hunger. Higher rates of poverty in rural communities make it harder for people to afford food, and there may only be a single grocery store — miles or even hours away.

"When you get out in the rural areas, it's different; in many cases there is more of a need," he says. "You have a lot of young families here who need more help than people realize."

He's glad to be part of the solution.



Danny Durkee

“It makes me satisfied that people are getting help with Feeding South Dakota.”

**Together, you and Danny are putting nourishing food into the hands of people from all corners of this great state. Do you feel the call to volunteer? Learn more or sign up today at [feedingsouthdakota.org/volunteer](https://feedingsouthdakota.org/volunteer).**

## AROUND THE TABLE WITH LORI DYKSTRA, CEO

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**What does the next 50 years of hunger relief look like?** It's sustainable, community-led solutions that make food more accessible — especially in rural areas, where many families face long drives and limited food options.

That's why we've started measuring success in new ways, like tracking "hours of access" in smaller communities. Like Kadoka, for example. **With your support and strong local partnerships, food access in Kadoka has gone from two hours per month to 25 hours a week.**

This is the future of hunger relief. **More access. More partnerships. More localized solutions. More thriving families.** But we can't do it without you. Your generosity is the key to solving hunger — this summer and beyond. **Thank you for standing with us.** We're at the start of something special.

With gratitude,

Lori Dykstra, CEO

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