



ISSAQUAH

SINCE 1971
Food & Clothing Bank

Fall-Winter 2021

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Executive Report

by Cori Walters, Executive Director

With 1,215 new people walking through our doors since this time two years ago, the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank is extra grateful for all the support we have received this year. This 39% increase in individuals accessing our in-person shopping has impacted our operations in ways we could never have imagined pre-pandemic. We have had to do more with fewer people, adopt big sys-

tematic changes quickly, say "no thank you" to things we do not have the capacity to manage, and say, "yes" to innovative ideas. Supply chains have impacted grocery stores and those challenges have trickled down to food banks, forcing us to purchase more fresh food than ever before. Because of YOU, our supportive network of donors and volunteers, we CAN live up to our values of serving



everyone who walks through our door, while still providing impeccable customer service and offering healthy food choices! We have felt your compassion every day, not just during the pandemic years, but throughout our entire 50 year history. We appreciate you!

Year-End Campaign

by Bonnie DeCaro-Monahan, Development Director

As we come to the end of our 50th anniversary year, we couldn't be more grateful to be part of such a responsive and generous community. Your partnership has been crucial to mom's like "M.D." who shared that ***"it is very hard to stay positive when you***

cannot feed your child properly."

Thanks to you, vital resources of food, clothing, and case management services are still easily accessible.

If you have not yet given a financial gift, please make your compassion count by giving



today at issaquahfoodbank.org.

Thank you!

When the Unthinkable Happens

by Bonnie DeCaro-Monahan, Development Director



Robin and her dog.

You don't have to be a parent to get a sense of the deep impact that a tragedy to your child would have on your life. For Robin Abel, this reality rocked her world when her daughter was nearly decapitated in an auto accident. 24-year old Maria was a bright, beautiful UW graduate who was driving home from work when a large piece of furniture from the back of a truck came careening through her windshield. "I think we all don't realize that in just a brief instant our life can change and that's what happened to us," shared Robin, finding difficulty expressing her sadness for her daughter.

After countless surgeries and astronomical medical

bills totaling over a million dollars, Maria is now blind in addition to other permanent effects from the horrific experience. It took four years to get to court and Robin made it her mission to make sure the public is educated on load securement. Robin shared "It was too late to help Maria, but it wasn't too late for somebody else and that's really what it's all about. I never know whose life I saved or what injury has not happened because of what I do but I just have to believe that it's very powerful and that lives have been saved and that's what keeps me going."

Robin explained "...the reason I do this is that I don't want them (those who hear her story) to understand what it's like. It's so hard...and truthfully, without the food bank I couldn't have continued to Washington DC to change national legislation, I couldn't have started my Secure Your Load Day across the country. I now have 49 states, and you guys at the food bank have been my cheerleaders, you know, I come in, say 'I got another state' and Norb, one of the volunteers would say 'Good going! Get the rest!' and so, truthfully, it's been a full circle of giving for me."

Robin didn't access the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank right away. "I struggled for many years because I was too proud to be honest with you. It was so easy to ask for help for my daughter, but I couldn't do it for myself. It was hard because I had always been so independent and successful." Robin's experience allayed her fears, she added "When I went in there, they kept asking me, 'what more can we do for you? Is there anything more you need?' And I've said this over and over, when I go there every two weeks, it's like Christmas. Everyone's happy to see you, they're kind to you!" shared Robin.

Having had her eyes opened to the many reasons that can cause someone to need to utilize a food bank, Robin explained "...each of us, you know, as we go along in life, you can never predict what can happen and in just a split second or moment, everything can be gone. And there are so many like me that need help. You never know what goes on behind closed doors. You just don't. And there are people there for various reasons, but without you guys, a lot of us

Continued from Page 2

just wouldn't make it. And you make us feel good about the fact that you're there to help and not judge us for being there."

As we often hear from those we serve, Robin expressed deep gratitude for everyone who helps make these resources accessible, sharing "So I couldn't say enough about

how great you guys are and all the people that contribute. I mean, you may contribute a few dollars, you may contribute a lot, but all of that makes it possible for the rest of us to make it work in our lives and for me, I'm able to save lives by you guys helping me and that's, that's full circle."



Mark Your Calendars!



HOLIDAY CLOSURES

Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

Friday, December 24th
Saturday, December 25th
CLOSED

New Year's Eve & Day

Friday, December 31st
Saturday, January 1st
CLOSED

Holiday Gift (Card) Barn

Thank you to all of our donors and partners who helped make this holiday season special for so many children and families!

This year, parents received \$50 in gift cards for each of their children so that they can safely shop online for gifts and pick exactly what their children want and need. **With your support, 1200 children received gifts this year through Holiday Gift Barn!** Thank you for generous hearts for children in our community!



Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank

HOLIDAY GIFT BARN

Champion Spotlight: Mike Hatada

by Bonnie DeCaro-Monahan, Development Director



Left to right—Mike, Cori, Lissette, and Erin

If you've volunteered in the food or clothing bank in the last 6 years, then there's a good chance that you've met Mike Hatada, former Operations Manager. We don't normally highlight staff members in our Champion

Spotlight, but we want to honor all that Mike contributed to our mission as he moves on to new endeavors.

Since October 2015, Mike has led our growing food bank operations through vast changes and improvements. He has built his team from one to four staff members, expanding our Grocery Rescue program from .75 to 1.5 million pounds of food a year (*pre-pandemic*), relocating our inventory and managing a 2,500 square foot offsite warehouse, successfully flipping operations for emergency services during the pandemic, and facilitating an important shift to prioritizing healthier, fresh

food selections for those we serve, just to hit a few of the highlights!

We are grateful to have served alongside such a dedicated, hard-working, passionate team member and we hope you will join us in wishing him the best as he continues his fight against food insecurity, overseeing operations of six different Hopelink food banks!

Notes for Mike can be e-mailed to him at mike@issaquahfoodbank.org or sent via the mail and we will make sure he receives them all!

We'll miss you Mike!

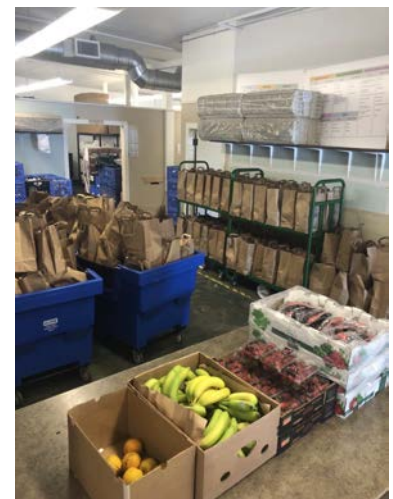
Winter Lunch for the Break

Winter Lunch for the Break is here! Lunch for the Break provides students living in the Issaquah School District with a week's worth of breakfast, lunch, and snack foods to help families who need food assistance while their children are home and unable to get free or reduced lunches at school.

This year, families will shop inside the food bank and be able to pick from a wide variety of fresh produce, deli, dairy,

and other kid-friendly staples such as pasta, rice, and cereal.

Lunch for the Break is a recurring program that happens every scheduled school break. We would love your financial support to help us purchase fresh produce and snacks for each student. Learn more about how to get involved with Lunch for the Break on our website at <https://bit.ly/issaquah-lftb>.



Living Unsheltered

by Rebecca Rice, Community & Social Services Manager

Late fall and winter is a hard time for many of us in the Pacific Northwest. Our beautiful, long, sunny days have changed into dark, wet, and cold nights.

It seems fitting that, at the end of a hard year, the fall of 2021 is the wettest on record. Seattle received more than 19 inches of rain September 1-November 30 ([National Weather Service](#)), and I can tell you as I write this in December, that number is going up! As temperatures drop, the wet becomes even more of a concern for people sleeping outside.

Thanks to our outreach program to people who are unsheltered, we have seen many more people who are experiencing homelessness accessing services at the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank. We see people come in soaking wet, with no dry clothes to change into. For people who have to be able to move from place to place, foot issues due to constantly being wet become a huge problem. Getting warm and staying warm is another problem, leading people to use propane stoves in their tents out of desperation. Accessing services, such as our food bank or the hot meal program in downtown Issaquah, be-

comes even more challenging when it gets dark at 4:30 p.m. and a person needs to navigate through the woods back to their campsite. 221 people who were living unsheltered have passed away in Seattle since last winter. These deaths are caused by many reasons including COVID-19, record-breaking heat, record-breaking rain, and the ongoing drug epidemic. 221 is likely an undercount, as people who die in the hospital or other facility are not included in this count ([Seattle Times](#)).

There is no quick solution to the ingrained, systemic problem of people living outdoors. For the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank, our priority in the winter months is to take care of people's immediate needs whenever possible. This includes having a supply of clean, dry clothing including socks, thermals, pants, shirts, and jackets. We also help people get IDs, food stamps, and other basic resources to gain access to food and shelter services. When those basic, emergent needs are met, we can move onto bigger hurdles, such as housing and employment.

How can you help? Check out our [Amazon Wishlist](#) and have needed items shipped

directly to us! You can also purchase items from the wish list and deliver them to the food bank on **Fridays only** between 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.. Thank you for considering the needs of those who are living unsheltered.

Your compassion makes a difference!



Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank recipient, Patrick.

Turkey Trot 2021

Thank you to all our trotters who joined us for Turkey Trot this Thanksgiving weekend! It's always so exciting to see so many people gather for this fun, family-friendly event in support of the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank's mission.

This year, we had almost 1,300 participants run, walk, and trot along one (or more!) of the 6 courses set up around the Issaquah and Sammamish area.

Your participation helped raise \$58,000 in net proceeds towards providing food and other basic needs resources to our community members struggling with food-insecurity.

Thank you to all our volunteers, sponsors, and our Turkey Trot Committee members who helped make Turkey Trot possible. We wouldn't have been able to do this without your help and support!

We are so grateful for our amazing community for helping to raise support and awareness!



Welcome Brooke!



Brooke Wiles,
Donor Engagement
Officer

We are thrilled to welcome Brooke Wiles to the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank family. Brooke comes to us with a heartfelt passion for building relationships to help end food insecurity and she's driven to advance our mission and values. Brooke's new role will focus on getting to know you, our generous supporters and volunteers. Brooke will also play a critical part in engaging the community as we work together to fund our future facility expansion project. In the coming months, Brooke will reach out to connect with you to learn about your impressions and gather any feedback you have for us about your experience as a donor.

Fun facts about Brooke: Brooke enjoys spending time learning new culinary recipes, painting ceramics, and—during the beautiful summer months in the PNW—you will find Brooke swimming. Her husband affectionately calls her "lake girl."

Donation Drop-Offs

Thank you to those who have helped us by adhering to our Emergency Needs List and our specific donation drop-off dates and location on our website. By doing so, you have helped us make the most out of our limited capacity, provided food that our shoppers want and need, and helped us become more efficient with the way we use our volunteer and staff time and energy.

Please note the upcoming donation drop-off dates below and remember that **donations must be dropped off at our warehouse: AtWork (930 7th Ave NW, Issaquah, WA 98027).**

Upcoming donation drop-off dates:

- Tuesday, January 11th 1:00-3:00 p.m.
- Saturday, February 12th 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Interested in planning a food drive? Please email erin@issaquahfoodbank.org first to ensure we are able to accept your collected donations. You may receive a targeted wish list of items that differs from the Emergency Needs List on our website once you coordinate. Thank you for all you do to help fight food-insecurity!



Recipe for Hope Success

Recipe for
HOPE50
 50 Years of Community Compassion



You did it! Thank you to our compassionate community for helping us exceed our \$250,000 Recipe for Hope fundraising goal!

This year, we celebrated our 50th Anniversary with an engaging 30-minute live-stream. If you missed it, you can visit our event page to watch the recording - <https://bit.ly/recipe-for-hope-50th>.

Your combined giving of \$252,600 through this fundraiser will go directly towards fighting food-insecurity in East King County. Thank you to all those who tuned in and to our event sponsors for making this event possible! We are always blown away by the generosity of our community!

ISSAQUAH

Food & Clothing Bank

179 1st Avenue SE
Issaquah, WA 98027

425.392.4123
issaquahfoodbank.org

Our Mission

The Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank provides basic needs to our community members to promote self-sufficiency.

Non Profit Org.
US Postage Paid
Permit #652
Issaquah, WA

Power Packs

Our Power Packs program is in full swing and more popular than ever!

Power Packs is a weekend feeding program for children and students living in the Issaquah School District.

The goal of this program is to help fight childhood food-insecurity by reducing weekend hunger. **This year, we have reached the highest**

number of Power Packs being distributed, exceeding 1,000 packs per month in the Issaquah School District! Power Packs are provided by school counselors and include healthy breakfast, lunch, and snack foods in a discreet sling sack, helping students return to school healthy and ready to learn on Monday .

With the increased popularity in this program, we greatly appreciate your support. You can visit our website to learn more about Power Packs and to give towards this youth feeding program at <https://bit.ly/ifcb-pp>. Thank you for your compassion for children in our community!



Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank

POWER PACKS

