



ISSAQUAH

Food & Clothing Bank

Fall-Winter 2020

Year-End Giving

by Bonnie DeCaro-Monahan, Development Director

Uncertain times require us to adapt, respond, and prepare to meet the long-term increase in need, and that's exactly what we've done in 2020, thanks to the support of our generous community and amazing volunteers.

Historical data from the 2008 recession warns that the harsh economic impact of the pandemic

can be expected to increase the demand for food bank resources for up to 3 years before numbers start to recede.

We know that to keep our community healthy and resilient, we need to understand that this is a marathon rather than a sprint. We are working hard to plan for the future, with those we serve as our highest priority.

If you are fortunate



enough to be able to participate in year-end giving, we would appreciate being a part of those plans. This is a community effort and we know we can do this together! Please give online today.

Thank you!

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Executive Report

by Cori Walters, Executive Director

2020...Wow, what a year of great challenges and need, yet filled with so much generosity and love for our neighbors. The Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank overcame many hurdles this year, which was only possible because of your support.

Our donors and volunteers showed up more than ever to help us meet the changing needs in our community.

Our volunteers and clients stood by our side as we revamped our distribution model multiple times. Our donors supported us in record numbers so that we could purchase the food, toiletries, and emergency supplies we needed while our in-kind contributions decreased by nearly 60%.

This level of support allowed the IFCB to



thrive during a worldwide pandemic. The Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank staff team thanks and appreciates all the virtual hugs. We are looking forward to 2021 and the opportunity to reconnect with our regular volunteer crews and to be able see our supporters face-to-face!

Brooke's Story

by Claire Lee

Brooke is a single mother to three beautiful daughters – Celeste (14), Pearl (12), and Brooklyn (5) – as well as an adorable 1-year-old dog, Athena. She found herself struggling to make ends meet and needing help with basic resources after a job loss. Having to support herself and her family on a single salary, with no close friends or family nearby, made it even more difficult. After losing his social security benefits from a serious physical injury, her children's father was unable to provide child support. In 2019, Brooke learned about the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank through the YWCA and has been using the food bank and other IFCB programs and services ever since.

Before accessing our services, Brooke would only shop clearance items and wasn't able to afford healthy, nutritious foods such as meat and fresh produce for her children. She says that having reliable access to the food provided by the food bank provides comfort and *"a safe feeling knowing we will always have enough food. (...) We are now able to not struggle as much with the cost of food and pet food. We also have access to fresh produce."* Other programs Brooke has appreciated are Holiday Gift Barn, Tools4School, and Summer Lunch. She says, *"Saving the money we would have used for these items allows us a budget to build our home into a comfortable space for everyone and allows us to spend on clothing needs and bills that*

we would not have been able to pay or afford otherwise."

With the support of the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank, Brooke has been able to think ahead and work on saving towards a trip to see family whom she hasn't been able to visit in six years. To the wonderful supporters of the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank, Brooke would like to share, *"You guys and ladies are awesome people with hearts of gold! Please keep supporting the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank for families like mine that struggle with everyday life and expenses. Having access to fresh produce, etc. and to have a place like the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank makes life much easier and enjoyable. We couldn't thank your kind hearts enough. Thank you a million times."*



Mark Your Calendars!

Holiday Closures

Christmas Eve & Christmas Day
December 24th CLOSED at Noon
December 25th CLOSED

New Years Day
Friday, January 1st
CLOSED

Donation Drop-Offs

Please visit our website to see our Emergency Needs and Winter Gear Needs lists and updated donation dates and times at <http://bit.ly/IFCB-ENL>.

We are only able to accept items off our needs lists which can be dropped off at our warehouse: 930 7th Ave NW, Issaquah, WA 98027 on select dates and times. Thank you!



Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank

HOLIDAY GIFT BARN

Due to COVID-19 and public health concerns, Holiday Gift Barn looked a little different this year! Instead of having our big shopping event at Pickering Barn, we pivoted to provide gift cards to families instead, allowing them to shop for their kids while staying safe. We had wonderful support from our donor and volunteer teams - we were able to serve 1,375 children at our official event Nov. 30-Dec. 3, and will continue to mail out and provide cards to families until Christmas. If you'd still like to contribute gift cards, please contact Erin at Erin@issaquahfoodbank.org.

Holiday Gift (Card) Barn

by Erin Longchari

Turkey Trot 2020

We want to extend a big THANK YOU to everyone who participated in Turkey Trot this year! We are so grateful to see so many families and individuals run or walk in support of the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank, especially with all of the changes and adjustments to the event this year.



We had seven different courses that were open to "trot" from Thanksgiving day through the following Sunday to make sure that people could remain socially distanced and safe while participating in this fun Thanksgiving tradition. We're excited to share that we had 1,860+ trotters and were able to raise \$42,000 through Turkey Trot this year! Thank you for being a part of such an amazing community event, helping to raise awareness and support.

(Left) Costume contest winners: Reese and Koda H.

Champion Spotlight: Wally Prestbo

by Bonnie DeCaro-Monahan

Twenty-five years ago, Wally Prestbo made a decision that would positively impact thousands of people...he said yes. In 1995, a fellow church member was on the Board of the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank and mentioned to Wally that there was a need for a volunteer driver to pick-up food from local grocery stores. "I had a pick-up (truck) and I thought 'that would be a cool thing to do'", shared Wally. He had recently taken an early retirement from his career in pharmaceutical sales and was ready for a new way to give back to the community.

Wally started by picking up food from Costco, QFC, and Fred Meyer every Monday and eventually added PCC when they opened their Issaquah location. Soon, he added Fridays when another driver left and he would do this every Monday and Friday for 21 years! He would be at Costco at 7:00 a.m. and get to the food bank before anyone else arrived sometimes, letting himself in with his own key and putting all the food away.

"I saw incredible changes in the food bank from the first day I went in there," shared Wally, talking about the dramatic changes that came about when the Board made the decision to hire an Executive Director in 2011. "The biggest change was when Cori came as Executive Director. It was monumental. The difference in so many things, what it ended up looking like, how it operated, how many more volunteers

you had...That probably extended my time for several years just because it was so much more enjoyable. It wasn't that it wasn't enjoyable at first, it was just a little more of a job." After 21 years and what probably totaled 9,000 trips to pick-up food at local stores, Wally has an amazing attitude about the experience. "It was terrific. I loved it. It was never a burden; I never not wanted to do it. Though I have to admit, in the wintertime, it wasn't a lot of fun in the rain." He added, "It was just a wonderful experience. I built a really good relationship with the people at the stores." Wally and his wife Marilyn also had the privilege of being close friends with Bob Gray, founder of the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank, since they first started attending Pine Lake Presbyterian Church where Bob Gray was the minister, approximately 26 years ago. "We just did so many things...His children and mine were the same age; we just had everything in common" shared Wally.

About 10-12 years into his tenure as a volunteer driver at the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank, Wally took on two prime plots at the Flatlands Pea Patch in Issaquah to get the children at his church involved with the planting, growing, and harvesting. Everything grown was donated directly to the food bank to provide fresh, locally grown produce for families in need. This was a natural offshoot for Wally who became a Master Gardener in 1995, the same year he started



volunteering at the food bank. "I knew I had to stay active physically and mentally. The two things I did was #1 the food bank and #2 I became a Master Gardener," added Wally.

Since "retiring" from his volunteer driver role at the food bank, Wally is still a very active ambassador for the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank in his community at Timber Ridge in Issaquah. He has long been involved with Timber Ridge food drives and many of the other things the community does to support the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank and now helps to collect paper grocery bags to recycle to local food banks.

How does he do it all? He has been very active all his life, enjoying athletics and outdoor activities. Even now, he swims and walks 3 days a week and is looking forward to using his season pass to Stevens Pass! "My goal was to be able to ski when I was 80." Wally just celebrated his 85th birthday this month, saying, "Now it's one year at a time. I'm lucky, I'm so lucky."

Wally shared some final

Champion Spotlight continued...

thoughts, adding, "Thank you for all that you do. It's very easy to talk up the food bank. It's one of my favorite places. Obviously I've got a lot of blood, sweat, and tears there and it's

important."

Wally, we consider ourselves privileged to be a part of something that you have helped to build. For all that you have poured into the

Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank, just know that thousands of lives have been made better because of it! We appreciate you!

Homeless Outreach Plans

by Rebecca Rice

The Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank and the City of Issaquah have teamed up for an exciting new program!

With funding from the City, we are hiring a brand-new position: Homeless Outreach and Prevention Coordinator. This position will conduct outreach with people who are homeless – both with people who are actually living outside, and those who are living in cars and doubled up with family and friends. They will be able to provide resources, support, and guidance as people work to meet their individual needs and goals. Our collaborative community will be a huge asset in helping people who are

experiencing homelessness get connected to the right resources and to provide support to our clients and the new coordinator.

There has never been a greater need for a position focused specifically on the issue of homelessness. With the COVID-19 pandemic, income has decreased dramatically for many people, and for people without access to a computer or internet (with libraries being closed), accessing vital services has become a huge barrier to getting needs met.

In the 2020 Annual Point-in-Time Count, **9% of the East King County population was homeless**. This counts both people

living outside and people in shelters, but does not count people living temporarily with family or friends, so it is always an undercount of the true issue facing our community. From 2019 to 2020, **there was a two percentage point increase in people living outside**, which is often our highest need population at the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank. Of the people who were asked during the survey, 94% said they would move into housing if it was available.

Please join us in welcoming **Mike Mathias**, our newest team member, as he helps more people access resources, housing, and stability!

Winter Warmth Event

With our clothing bank closed due to emergency operations, it's more important than ever to ensure that everyone has what they need to stay warm and dry this winter. Thanks to Eastside Fire & Rescue, we held our

first Winter Warmth Event in November which distributed nearly 500 winter gear items and we have more events planned. **Learn more on our website and help provide new and gently-used coats and winter gear items!**



ISSAQUAH

Food & Clothing Bank

179 1st Avenue SE
Issaquah, WA 98027

425.392.4123
issquahfoodbank.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 Plus!

Power Packs is a weekend nutrition program that was developed from an understanding that many families in the Issaquah School District rely on the free and reduced price lunch program to make sure their kids are being fed throughout the school week but sometimes struggle to provide healthy and nutritious snacks and meals over the weekend. **Now that children are distance-learning at home all day, every day, families face the additional stress of having to provide all their children's meals and snacks at home, keeping them fueled and ready to learn.**



Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank

POWER PACKS

With the support and partnership of Issaquah Schools Foundation, the Issaquah School District, and our generous donors, we've adjusted our Power Pack (Plus!) program to provide 5-7 days worth of kid-friendly breakfast, lunch, and snack foods, which will temporarily replace both our Power Packs and Lunch for the Break programs this 2020-21 school year. This has increased our spending towards Power Packs from \$22,757 (2019-20) to \$233,200 for the 2020-21 school year! Since kids are (likely) studying at home all year, we are focusing our efforts and funds on providing robust weekly food assistance to all K-12 children in our service area, each and every week! Thank you to all of our donors and partners that make this possible!

