



ISSAQUAH

Food & Clothing Bank

S I N C E 1 9 7 1

Fall-Winter 2024

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From the Director

by Stephanie Norton-Bredl, Executive Director



As we approach the holiday season, I want to take a moment to reflect on the year we've had at the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank, and to share some important updates about the growing need in our community. This time of year is always one of hope and reflection, but it also brings to light the challenges faced by many of our neighbors.

The cost of living continues to rise, and many families are feeling the pressure. Our food distribution numbers have steadily increased

throughout the year, and the demand for our services shows

no signs of slowing down. More and more families are turning to us for help, whether they are facing job loss, housing insecurity, or rising costs for basic necessities. In the last few months alone, we've seen a significant increase in the number of people we serve, particularly those who are experiencing the effects of economic hardship.

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Year-End Giving

There are approximately 9,000 people receiving these resources thanks to our amazing donors and volunteers!

Your generosity means a senior living on a fixed income having enough food. It means children not having to feel the full effect of food insecurity. It means help navigating complex systems for people in crisis. It means nutritious food that truly sustains and improves health. It means feeling valued by a loving community. From those we serve, our Board, and

the entire staff team, thank you for all who give generously to ensure that these resources remain accessible. You are changing the trajectory of people's lives!

Haven't made your year-end gift yet?

Please consider giving today!

Thank you!



From the Director (cont'd)

We know that the holiday season can be an especially difficult time for those facing financial strain, but it also reminds us of the power of community and compassion. The Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank is proud to be a vital resource for those in need, and none of this would be possible without your incredible support. From food donations to financial contributions and volunteer hours, your generosity is helping us provide more than just food and clothing—it's providing hope, dignity, and a sense of belonging to our neighbors.

As we look to the holidays, we remain committed to meeting the growing need in our

community. Our goal is to ensure that every individual and family in the area has access to the food and clothing they need, especially during these colder months. We are deeply grateful for the ongoing support of our community—whether you're a long-time donor or a first-time volunteer, your contributions make an enormous difference.

This season, we encourage you to join us in spreading joy and compassion. Whether by

donating, volunteering, donating to Turkey Trot, or simply sharing our mission with others, there are countless ways to make a meaningful impact.

Your support is what makes this work possible, and together, we can continue to make a tangible difference in the lives of those who need it most. On behalf of everyone at the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank, I wish you and your loved ones a joyful, peaceful holiday season.

I look forward to opportunities to connect with you. Please reach out if you'd like to learn more about our work, take a tour, or get involved through volunteerism: stephanie@issaquahfoodbank.org

Recipe for Hope Appreciation

Thank you to everyone who gave of their time, talents, and resources for Recipe for Hope 2024: our table hosts, matching pool heroes, donors, volunteers, speakers, event team, and event sponsors! Together, you helped raise nearly \$350,000 to provide critical resources for the thousands of families facing instability in our region.

We had over 330 guests come out to The Golf Club at Newcastle to share in a very special program with our amazing guest speakers, Brandon and Zach, former Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank recipients. *Mark your calendars now for Recipe for Hope 2025 on October 14, 2025!*



Schools Praise Power Packs!

Our Power Packs program currently serves all 26 schools in the Issaquah School District to get weekend food bags into the hands of children who need them. On Fridays, these students receive a weekend pack of kid-friendly breakfast, lunch, and snack foods that will fit in their backpack.



Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank
POWER PACKS

We asked local school teachers, counselors, and administrators to tell us how Power Packs impact their students' lives. Their replies paint a picture of deep and genuine gratitude.

"I love to see the excitement on our students faces when they notice their backpacks are heavy on Fridays. **The students lovingly call it 'heavy backpack day.'**"

There are some students that get excited every Friday because they know they are going to have food that they can eat over the weekend. **They love that the food is easy enough for them to prepare.**"

"Some our kids (and families) truly look forward to 'heavy backpack day' and get very excited when it's time to take their Power Packs home! **I think this means more than they can express, honestly, and I appreciate that (the Issaquah School District and Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank) do this for their students and families so much!**"

"Power Packs ensure that my students have meals and snacks for the weekend. I often see these foods coming to school as lunches and snacks, **allowing these students to bring food from home like their peers** are able to do."

"Many families at Sunset are holding on by a thread in terms of finance. Even a small donation of food helps them get by. In

addition, many of these students are food-insecure, so knowing that they have **access to this program helps them learn;** a hungry student can't learn."

"Our elementary school saw a significant increase in students with food insecurity this year, and we are grateful for the support this program provides.

Our students in need were significantly more likely to arrive to school on time and ready to learn and participate as a result of the Power Packs program. Thank you for supporting the success of our students!"

"Very appreciated by my students; although in high school, they are 'sneakier' about picking them up."

"Many students at our school show so much excitement when they receive their Power Packs for the week. Some students even open their bags on the way out the door to have a quick snack. Other students are more discrete with their bags, but when they have seen them in storage throughout the school, **they ask, 'Am I getting another bag this week?' and smile when the answer is yes.**"

"Power Packs have been instrumental to our behavior program students in meeting their basic needs. The rooms have become safe spaces for students to come, and having items from Power Packs have been tremendous help. **When students' basic needs are met, they are more likely to re-engage, stay on task, and, in turn, stay in class.** We are immensely thankful to the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank."

We could not make Power Packs happen without our dedicated volunteers and donors. Thank you for your faithful support!

The Biggest Turkey Trot Ever!

Our 15th annual Issaquah Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving Day was one of the best yet! Thank you to the 4,800 participants, their cheering sections, our amazing Event Team and volunteers, our event sponsors, and to everyone who is giving financially to help us reach our donation goal of \$90,000.

This year, we were honored to have Jen Mueller, sports broadcast journalist and dedicated Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank volunteer,

temporarily hang up her running shoes long enough to join us as emcee for the event. The energy was contagious as families returned for their annual pre-holiday dinner festivity and new families joined us to start a new tradition. We saw more creative and fun costumes than ever, with three Costume Contest winners!

An Event Team of five staff members and six volunteers plan and execute the event with the help of over 150

volunteers in the days around the race. We are always looking for help planning and executing our events, so let us know if you'd like to learn more about becoming part of one of our Event Teams by e-mailing us at: development@issaquahfoodbank.org.

Check out the Turkey Trot website for the event video, pictures, and more:
bit.ly/Issaquah-Turkey-Trot
We hope you'll plan to join us on Thanksgiving Day 2025!



Dedicated Supporters Keep On Trottin'

Sue Byron and Jean-Luc Bouthemy are long-time supporters and donors. This piece is adapted from an article by the City of Issaquah.

Issaquah's Turkey Trot has become a Thanksgiving tradition over 15 years and thousands of participants. Local family Sue Byron, Jean-Luc Bouthemy, and Charlie Bouthemy have participated in every Turkey Trot 5K since the race began in 2010.

"We wanted to support the food bank – we don't want any children to be hungry – and loved the opportunity to support the YMCA and the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank," Sue said. (Sue and Jean-Luc enabled the Y to be an event sponsor this year.)

The family's participation started when Charlie's preschool teacher asked students to bring a nonperishable food item to school in a bag so the teacher could guess the item. After the game, the class donated food items to the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank. "We loved that our son was exposed to the value of thinking of others," Sue said.

Once they learned the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank put on a 5K, the family decided it would be a great way to honor Thanksgiving and to help others. They ran

in the inaugural 5K in 2010, along with several hundred participants. The event has grown ever since, with this year's event welcoming more than 4,800 participants. While the event has grown, the community spirit has grown with it. "It has changed over the years, but in a positive way. It's celebratory and feels like a festival," Sue said. She also enjoys the opportunity to experience downtown Issaquah on foot. "When you're not rushing around in a car, you can take it all in," Sue said.

Having participated in every Trot, Sue and Jean-Luc often encounter people they know from past races or different parts of their lives. "It's fun to run into people," Sue said, "and wonderful to see families doing it together."

While Jean-Luc and Charlie are runners, Sue walks the route. "I keep the keys – that way they can't leave without me," she said with a laugh, adding "slow and steady wins the race." Jean-Luc and Charlie, meanwhile, circle back to meet her. Jean-Luc doesn't mind running a longer route and said it "feels like I've earned my pie."

Some trotters go all-out in terms of costumes, but Sue, Jean-Luc, and Charlie stick to the event t-shirt, which they have collected every year



since the event began offering them. The family also layers up for the weather and has run the race in rain, sleet, and snow.

When Sue's youngest sister and niece visited Issaquah one Thanksgiving, they joined the race and the tradition. Another memorable Trot was during the pandemic in 2020. "Everything was extremely safe," Sue said. The race provided seven separate routes and no official start time. "We were grateful to have something to do and also to expand the food bank resources," Sue said.

Sue and Jean-Luc always urge others to join for a good cause, community spirit, and "because it is so much fun!"

Donation Drives

More people are seeking our services, so your support collecting items from the Priority Needs List on our website is more important than ever. We have multiple ways you can do this:

Food & Toiletries Drives

Bring priority needs items (from the list at bit.ly/ifcb-donate-food) to our warehouse at AtWork (930 7th Ave NW, Issaquah) on these specific days/times:

- Thurs., Dec. 19 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.
- Mon., Jan. 6 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.
- Thurs., Jan. 16 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.
- Tues., Jan. 21 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.
- Thurs., Jan. 30 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.
- Mon., Feb. 3 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.
- Sat., Feb. 8 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- Thurs., Feb. 13 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.
- Tues., Feb. 18 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.
- Thurs., Feb. 27 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Issaquah-Sammamish Food Project

In October, this vital project contributed 16,700 pounds of food and toiletries! Start a bi-monthly collection in your neighborhood or join an existing one! Learn more at issaquahsammamishfoodproject.org.

Plan a Food or Toiletries Drive

Contact operations@issaquahfoodbank.org for details and to ensure we are able to accept your collected donations.

**Our Priority
Needs List:**



Volunteer Needs

We love our volunteers, and we need more of you to love! We are especially in need of

- Grocery Rescue drivers
- Groceries to Go drivers.
- Multilingual volunteers to help translate for our shoppers and visitors

Contact tiffaney@issaquahfoodbank.org to find out how you can help!

Leaving a Legacy

How do you want your legacy carried on? A planned gift to the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank is more than a donation — it's a commitment to a better future for your neighbors and your community. For more information about our Legacy Society and how to include us in your estate planning, contact Brooke Wiles at brooke@issaquahfoodbank.org.

Matching Makes Your Generosity Go Further!

Don't miss out on the opportunity to maximize your contributions! Many employers match donations and volunteer hours — some up to 300%!

Corporate matching is a significant source of revenue that helps to boost the efforts of our donors and volunteers. Check with your employer to learn more.

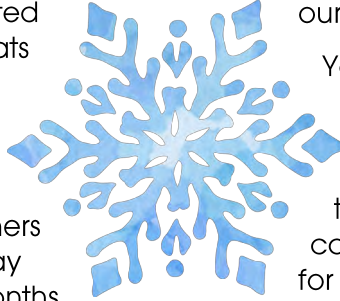


Warm Fuzzies

When the temperatures drop, it's hard to imagine weathering the cold without the proper gear. This is why we are so grateful to everyone who donated new and gently used winter coats for our 2024 **Winter Coat Event!**

With your help, 1,058 coats have been distributed through our event and community partners to help ensure our neighbors stay warm during the cold winter months.

Thank you for giving in this way!



Holiday Joy

Thank you to the hundreds of donors who gave financially, donated gift cards, and organized group drives for our annual **Holiday Gift program.**

Your compassion and generosity are making it possible for 1,400 children to have the joy of receiving that special gift that only their parents and caregivers know will be just right for them.

Watch for the full story (with pictures) in our Winter e-newsletter!

New Partnerships Program

We are thrilled to announce the launch of our official Partnerships Program! For all our current partners who hold drives and fundraisers for us, send us volunteers, or engage in other ways throughout the year, this means a more proactive approach and dedicated support from our Partnerships & Events Coordinator, Tricia Prewitt.

We are looking for businesses, churches, service organizations, and groups interested in learning more about how to match your philanthropic and community engagement goals and calendars to critical needs in our region. Contact triciap@issaquahfoodbank.org for details!



Building Our Team

Our **Development & Communications Coordinator** is retiring at the end of January, so we're looking for an awesome new team member to fill this vital role.

Are you or someone you know a great writer, enjoy social media, and love marketing?

Visit our website for the full job description!



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Holiday Closures



Happy Holidays
and a happy new year!

Christmas Week
Mon. 12/23 – Fri. 12/27

New Year's
Tues. 12/31 (close @ 4)
Wed. 1/1

Martin Luther King Day
Mon. 1/20

Our Mission

Unite our community in nourishing and nurturing individuals by removing barriers to healthy food, vital resources, and connections to essential services.

