



ISSAQUAH

Food & Clothing Bank

S I N C E 1 9 7 1

Spring-Summer 2024

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From the Director

by Stephanie Norton-Bredl, Executive Director



As we step into June, our team is revving up for a bustling summer, hosting our Summer Lunch program for families with youth in our community.

This year, we're once again embracing the "Eat the Rainbow" theme, showcasing a new color at each event. Our program ensures that families have access to healthy breakfast and lunch options while school nutrition programs are on break during the summer months. The kids bring such lively energy to

our facility, and our staff and volunteers love embracing the rainbow theme by dressing in the color of the day and providing corresponding recipes and activities.

We're also thrilled about our annual Illuminating Hope fundraising campaign to support our youth programs like Summer Lunch, Lunch for the Break, and Power Packs, which help bridge nutrition gaps for

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Let's Celebrate!

Thank you to everyone who has supported our Lunch for the Break, Power Packs, and Summer Lunch programs, and to those who have donated through the Illuminating Hope fundraiser!

The fireworks celebration will be over South Lake Sammamish on July 4 at 10:00 p.m. Vasa Park will offer free admission all day (9:00 a.m. – 11:00 p.m.), live music, food & drinks, and lifeguards on duty.

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From the Director (cont'd)

families during school breaks and weekends. Our generous event hosts at Kritsonis Lindor Dalrymple are matching donations of \$500 or more up to \$20,000, and putting on a free fireworks celebration over South Lake Sammamish on the 4th of July.

If you would like more information or to get involved in any of these events, visit our website or scan the QR code on page 5.

Summer evokes childhood memories of running around and enjoying peanut butter and jelly sandwiches outdoors. We take pride in partnering with all of you to ensure that the kids in our community can savor

nutritious meals throughout the summer, creating happy memories along the way.

Wishing you all a summer filled with fun adventures and quality time spent with your loved ones!

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

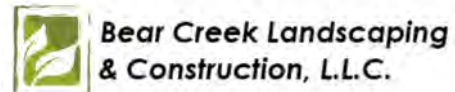
Let's Celebrate! (cont'd)

This annual fundraising campaign supports our youth programs that fill a vital gap when at least 2,340 Issaquah School District students lose access to free and reduced-price lunches during school breaks and weekends.

The fundraising campaign and fireworks celebration would not be possible without our dedicated partners at the Kritsonis Lindor Dalrymple Real Estate Group and the generous event sponsors (listed at right). We are so grateful to the KLD Real Estate Group for matching donations of \$500+ up to a total of \$20,000!

If you haven't participated yet, we'd love your help reaching our \$95,000 goal to fund these vital programs for youth in our community!

It's not too late to give! Visit issaquahfoodbank.org/illuminating-hope



**NORTHWEST
INBOARDS**



Vasa Park

Families Thank You for Lunch for the Break!

We asked local families who participated in our Lunch for the Break program this school year to share their thoughts with us.

"As a single mother with a teenager and a younger child at home, the food bank is helping me supplement my groceries at home and **truly makes a difference** for me feeding my kids nowadays."

"Every week, I have to decide whether to drive my car or buy food. I walk a lot around Issaquah and usually grocery shop with my backpack. **I have been able to keep my child in this school district** because of your programs."

"Food bank programs mean everything to me. They're not just about food; they're about hope, dignity, and a sense of community. When times are tough, they're there to make sure I don't go hungry. They're like a safety net, **allowing me to focus on other parts of my life without constantly worrying** about where my next meal will come from."

"(It) has helped me keep food in the kitchen when my income is very limited. **I didn't have the extra stress** of 'are we going to make it to payday.'"

"(The food bank) helped us greatly reduce grocery store



expenses. **I especially like the large bag of fresh fruits and vegetables** you gave us."

"I am a single mom of two special needs teenage boys with hearty appetites, but also very selective eating habits due to their autism. Because of my boys' various diagnoses I am unable to work and I'm a full-time caregiver. I'm grateful to receive state assistance with EBT. However, that \$600 doesn't come close to lasting the full month, and I'm left with two hungry teens and no options. (The food bank) has been **instrumental in getting us through the times when our EBT card isn't enough**. They also help out immensely during school breaks with that extra boost in groceries. During one of my trips they had adult diapers that someone was kind enough to donate, and that was a huge help for my older son! The staff and volunteers are **always very kind and I never feel like I'm being judged or looked down upon**. There

have been several times when I'm not sure what we would have done without the help of (the food bank). It's not like I can explain to my kids that we need to have smaller portions to get through the next week or two. My kids don't understand that, all

they know is they're hungry. I'm so thankful for those in the community who step up and donate to help families like mine."

"I am a single parent living paycheck to paycheck. I make too much to qualify for many social benefits but am still struggling to pay bills and provide everything my kids need. **The (food bank) helps us stay afloat.**"

"Such a big help. Thanks to IFCB **I can make sure my daughter and family have not only food but needed items like diapers and wipes** too."

"We are so appreciative of everyone at (the food bank). **We are able to eat healthy & make ends meet** because of your help."

"We appreciate and thank all those who make the food program possible."

Our volunteers and donors make a true difference in the lives of our neighbors. Thank you for all you do!

You Are Helping Our Youth Programs Grow!

By Michelle Whalen, Programs Supervisor

All our programs have been growing over the past few years, and our youth programs are no exception. Our volunteers, donors, and local schools are helping these most vulnerable neighbors at a time of unprecedented need.

Power Packs

We've added two new elements to our Power Pack program this year: an allergy-friendly, gluten- and nut-free option, and fresh fruit every other week. Both are available to all schools in the Issaquah School District.

It has been a record-breaking year. We averaged 1,220 Power Packs per month last school year, while this year **we are on track to provide about 1,700 Power Packs monthly** — around 16,000 for the school year.

Our biggest distribution ever was the week of May 15, when about 531 students received a Power Pack in just one week! Of those students,



410 also received a piece of fresh fruit. By comparison, the average number of students receiving Power Packs during the 2018-2019 school year was 598 **per month**.

Lunch for the Break

For the 2023-2024 school year, Lunch for the Break provided 641 grocery shopping trips for local families during one- to two-week school breaks in December, February, and April — **a 22% increase from the previous school year!** Those families included 854 children who received kid-friendly food items, including an extra-large bag of produce overflowing with fresh fruit, and frozen meats like chicken nuggets, ground beef, and bacon.



Thank you so much to all of the school staff, volunteers, and donors who help feed Issaquah School District students over the breaks and weekends this school year!

Volunteer Receives Humanitarian Award

The Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank was delighted to present Christi Schumann with the Eastside Humanitarian Award at the Greater Issaquah Chamber of Commerce's 44th Annual Community Awards event on May 21.

Nicole Oman, our Client Services Manager, was on hand to present the award to Christi for her long-time support of the food bank and especially her Client Services work.

"You encapsulate what it means to be a humanitarian," Nicole said during the presenta-



tion. "You are a truly amazing partner with me in the very supportive social service work we do together. Thank you for how you lead, train, support, and mentor our Client Services team volunteers."

"The staff of the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank would like to recognize you for the compassion,

patience, and care that you embody with all of our Eastside neighbors," Nicole concluded.

The entire staff congratulates Christi for her well-deserved recognition and her many years of support for her community.

Can't keep up with Seattle-area rising food prices? You're not alone

By Victor Whitman, Special to The Seattle Times (excerpted with the author's permission)

After four years of high food inflation, many Seattle residents are struggling to afford groceries. In a city where the well-offs have their pick of the best foods and produce at organic and specialty stores, food costs are among the highest in the country. At the other end, people living close to the poverty line are cutting back on meals, buying cheaper processed food or going to food banks. In between, many are feeling the squeeze at varying degrees.

As of October, Seattle metro area households spent a mean \$289 per week on food prepared at home, which was above the \$270 national mean, according to the U.S. Census Bureau pulse survey. Seattle residents had the sixth-highest weekly food spend among 15 surveyed major metros.

In 2022, prices in the Seattle area for food prepared at home rose more than 12% from the previous year, and increased at a higher rate than the normal 2% range in 2020 (3.6%), 2021 (4.6%) and last year (3.1%), according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index.

Jill McCluskey, an economics professor at Washington State University, sees several reasons for spiking grocery prices in the U.S. Among them is extreme heat, which has reduced crops of fruits and vegetables. Droughts also weakened the alfalfa crop, which drove up the cost of feed and ultimately the price of beef. An avian flu pandemic increased chicken and egg prices.

Labor costs on farms, at packing facilities, for transportation and in

grocery stores have also increased significantly, McCluskey said.

Seattle's higher-than-average wages have inflated food costs as well, she added. In 2022, the median income for households in Seattle was \$115,400, compared with the national median income of \$74,750, according to the most

"I could see things stabilizing, but I think this might be our new normal."

recent available data from the Census Bureau's Annual Community Survey.

Competition is limited in the grocery business nationwide and in Washington. The nation's largest food retailers have been gobbling market share in mergers and by opening megastores and warehouses around the country. The 20 largest food retailers accounted for 64% of food sales as of 2019, which was double the market share in 1990, USDA reported last year.

Walmart is the nation's largest food retailer, but Kroger (owner of Fred Meyer, QFC and several other store brands), Albertsons (owner of Safeway and Haggen) and Costco are dominant players in the Seattle area. Kroger's plans to buy Albertsons have already

drawn state and federal blowback over its potential effects on competition, food prices and workers' conditions. Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson has filed an antitrust lawsuit to block it.

The merger, if it goes through, will have a big impact on Washington. Kroger and Albertsons own more than half of the grocery stores in the state, and account for more than 50% of the sales. Last month, a King County judge allowed the case to proceed.

In February, the Federal Trade Commission and attorney generals in eight other states and the District of Columbia sued in federal court to block the merger.

"The grocery store industry and many food brands are pretty consolidated," McCluskey said. "This concentration has allowed them to keep their prices pretty high."

Grocery prices aren't likely to fall in the aggregate, McCluskey said, though certain items might get cheaper, such as eggs and chicken once the avian flu pandemic recedes.

"I could see things stabilizing, but I think this might be our new normal," McCluskey said.

Get the full story and links for all articles in this issue:



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, WA 98027) on these specific days/times:

- Thursday, July 18 1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
- Monday, July 22 1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
- Thursday, August 1 1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
- Saturday, August 10 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- Thursday, August 15 1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
- Thursday, August 29 1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Issaquah-Sammamish Food Project

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:



Summer Lunch Volunteers

Summer Lunch is on, and there are plenty of opportunities for volunteers age 18 and older, especially for evening hours! **Sign up from our Volunteer web page or scan the QR code:**



Matching Makes Your Generosity Go Further!

Did you know that matching donations from employers are a significant source of revenue that helps to maximize the efforts of our donors and volunteers?

Many employers will match donations or volunteers hours, some up to 300% of the original donation! Check with your employer and make your generosity go further!



Volunteer Brunch!

By Tiffaney Jones, Volunteer Coordinator

In March, we took the opportunity to thank all our volunteers by hosting an appreciation brunch. Thank you to everyone that came out and celebrated with the staff and fellow volunteers!

It was so nice to see everyone and show our gratitude and appreciation — it really does take a village to do what we do here. Each one of you is helping to build a safer and stronger community and promote civic engagement through your selfless contributions, countless hours, and unparalleled services. The staff and community salute you!

As the Volunteer Coordinator, I consider myself lucky to have such a dedicated and compassionate group to help us tackle food insecurity and provide resources in the community!

If you haven't volunteered yet, give us a try! We have opportunities for a variety of different skills and schedules, including roles on our Board and Board committees.

Find out more at
issaquahfoodbank.org/volunteer



ISSAQUAH
Food & Clothing Bank
SINCE 1971

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Issaquah, WA 98027

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issaquahfoodbank.org

Our Mission

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

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

Coming Soon!

Recipe for
HOPE

Recipe for Hope
Tuesday, October 1
Breakfast & Lunch

Hear stories and learn more to truly "see" those we serve.



Issaquah Turkey Trot
Thanksgiving Day,
November 28

Join 4,000+ community members to rally support for food security!

Visit our website for sponsorship opportunities!

