

# Feeding HOPE

Together we can solve hunger

Winter 2020

## Food is hope for Mackenzie's family

**"Toward the end of the month, our fridge is empty. We do what we can to make it last." — MACKENZIE**

Mackenzie is a single mom raising her son Zachary, who lives with severe autism. Keeping enough food in the fridge has always been a struggle, but then she lost her job as a line cook after a three-month battle with pneumonia — just as Zachary needed surgery.

*Read their full story and how friends like you helped, on page 2.*

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MEMBER OF  
**FEEDING  
AMERICA**

**Great Plains  
Food Bank**



**CEO CORNER**  
By Steve Sellent

As we move into 2020, our vision to provide more meals to neighbors facing hunger in North Dakota and Clay County, Minn., has never been more clear. I want to

pause to thank you for everything you've helped us accomplish. Because of you, last year the Great Plains Food Bank reached our goal of distributing food for an additional 450,000 meals. **Thank you.**

Your support has been critical to our success, which includes:

- Adding more school sites to our School Pantry Program
- A significant expansion of our Mobile Food Pantry and Pop-up Perishable Food Program to reach 30 additional communities
- Continuing to increase the amount of fresh produce we distribute, and so much more.

In the coming year, your generosity will be crucial to achieving other vital goals in the fight to end hunger. Thanks to our generous supporters like you, we will soon be opening a new regional service center in Bismarck. Our goal is to be open by the summer of 2020 to help us improve our services to the 28 central and western North Dakota counties.

In addition to expanding several programs in the coming year, we're also stepping up our efforts to partner with hospitals and clinics to screen for food insecurity during medical visits. We know that hunger and health often go hand in hand, and we want to be a part of the solution on both fronts.

Beyond our future goals, your support helps us address the urgent needs of struggling neighbors in the cold months of winter. In this issue, you can hear from some of those neighbors who have been impacted by your generosity.

We simply could not do the work we do without you. Thank you for providing nutritious meals and bringing hope to the neighbors who need it most.

Your partner in hunger relief,

*Steve Sellent*  
Steve Sellent, CEO



## The last two weeks of the month are really tough

Cindy is a mother of four grown children whose life took an unexpected turn. "I had a job, I raised four children," she says. "I was working as a nurse and got hurt on the job."

Now Cindy lives on a fixed income with her husband, who is disabled, and they struggle to make ends meet when the bills pile up. "We get \$1,300 a month, and out of that \$1,300, we have to pay our rent and utilities," she says. "Then we have to pay our car payment and our insurance."

**"If something surprising comes up, we really have a tough time."**

—CINDY

The couple's budget doesn't leave room for any unplanned expenses. "The transmission went out in our truck. We were without a vehicle for three months so that we could save up to buy the transmission."

Thankfully, when times get tough, Cindy and her husband can turn to the Great Plains Food Bank Mobile Food Pantry — even in North Dakota's cold winter months. "I'm going to cry because it is a blessing," she says. "Right now, groceries are getting slim and then this truck came in from the (Great Plains Food Bank), and I'm blessed."

**Thank you for all you do to help families like Cindy who fall on hard times during the winter and throughout the year. We couldn't do this good work without you.**

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## You're helping moms like Mackenzie feed their kids this winter

Mackenzie's son Zachary suffers severe autism and health issues — and she's raising him with love. As a single mom, providing the food they both need to stay healthy and thrive has been a struggle.

"Zachary is my everything. It's been just me and him since I got divorced, and I don't get child support," Mackenzie says. "I do the best I can."

Thankfully, her parents are a couple of farmers living outside of Fargo, and they try to help as much as possible. This includes occasionally bringing Mackenzie to the Emergency Food Pantry in Fargo — a partner agency of the Great Plains Food Bank — where they donate extra eggs from their farm.

**"It's hard to be a single mom with a special needs kid. He's my everything."**

—MACKENZIE

### An empty fridge turns to hope

Mackenzie wants you to know how grateful she is, and that she doesn't take advantage of the help you enable. "Toward the end of the month, it becomes a little hard. But we do everything we can to make it last," she says. "We try not to use the food (pantry) that much unless our fridge is empty."

Mackenzie especially appreciates the healthy options your support provides. "Thank you from the bottom of my heart because it's more than what I can say in words what it does for our family," she says. "Sometimes it's embarrassing to ask for help," she says. "But we appreciate it more than words can even express."

The good news is that things will soon be looking up for Mackenzie as she recently got a new job that she will soon be starting. "We're on the edge of making things better," she says.

**Thank you for helping keep Mackenzie and Zachary from falling through the cracks during hard times, and for being there for other families who still need our support.**



## Volunteer Spotlight From little babies to seniors, they need the food



At the Great Plains Food Bank, our volunteers are crucial to our work to end hunger across North Dakota and western Minnesota. Deb is one of over 5,000 volunteers who make a tremendous difference for others in need.

Deb works at the Society of St. Vincent DePaul in Rugby and regularly volunteers at distributions for our Senior Food Box Program each time it stops in her area. She helps to organize the distribution so that seniors can quickly get the food they need to make it through the long winter months.

"The need is very much here in the community," Deb says. "Jobs are scarce here in Rugby."

Despite the poverty she sees daily in her volunteer work, she is hopeful because of the compassionate support she sees from friends of the Great Plains Food Bank like you. "Thank you so much," she says. "I can see it makes these people's lives easier. They can rest a little easier knowing that they're going to have food for their families in the days to come. It's a comfort to them."

**To volunteer or learn more, please visit [greatplainsfoodbank.org/get-involved/volunteer/](http://greatplainsfoodbank.org/get-involved/volunteer/) to sign up.**

## Thank you for bringing hope to hungry neighbors

North Dakota's cold winter months are hard on our neighbors who already struggle to put food on the table. Along with our Mobile Food Pantry, BackPack Program and Pop-up Perishable Food Program, our network of more than 200 food pantries, shelters and soup kitchens located throughout the state help to ensure hungry children, seniors and families can put food on the table.

You can help by donating today. For every dollar donated, we can provide three meals to hungry neighbors throughout North Dakota and western Minnesota — from Fargo to Bismarck to New Town.

It's easy to give online at [greatplainsfoodbank.org](http://greatplainsfoodbank.org) or return the enclosed reply slip. Thank you for helping struggling neighbors stay healthy and hunger-free this winter.



## Upcoming Events

### February 13 – Giving Hearts Day

Join us for our single largest giving day of the year. Donations of \$10 or more made to the Great Plains Food Bank on this day will have twice the impact.

### April – Volunteer Appreciation Month

Throughout the month of April, we are recognizing the critical work done by our volunteers. Thank you for volunteering!

### Rural Food Distribution

The Great Plains Food Bank is always looking for volunteers to help with our Mobile Food Pantry and Pop-up Perishable Food Program distributions. Find a list of communities at [greatplainsfoodbank.org](http://greatplainsfoodbank.org).

### May 9 – Stamp out Hunger Drive

The National Association of Letter Carriers invites you to leave food donations by your mailbox for the annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive on May 9.



Please visit [greatplainsfoodbank.org](http://greatplainsfoodbank.org) to learn more about these events.

## You can help us feed more kids than ever this Giving Hearts Day



Every dollar you donate can provide six meals to children in need this Giving Hearts Day.

Each year across the state of North Dakota, more than 97,000 individuals turn to the Great Plains Food Bank for needed food assistance. Sadly, 36 percent of those are children. That's why we need your help on February 13 for Giving Hearts Day. Our single largest giving day of the year, gifts of \$10 or more to the Great Plains Food Bank **will be matched to double your impact**. For one day this February 13, each dollar you donate can provide six meals to children in need.

To help us this Giving Hearts Day, checks must be made to the Great Plains Food Bank, must be dated February 13 and must be received on or before Giving Hearts Day. You can also make a donation online that day or can be scheduled early by visiting [givingheartsday.org](http://givingheartsday.org).

Mail checks directly to the Great Plains Food Bank at 1720 3rd Avenue North, Fargo, N.D., 58102.