



Fairbanks Community Food Bank HARVEST



Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Spring 2025

DOING WELL BY DOING GOOD



Give a local grocer a hug and a big COMMUNITY THANK YOU!

We celebrate our local grocery stores, and the people who work in them, for their generous giving to the Fairbanks Community Food Bank. You are LOCAL HEROES for your sharing and caring in our community.

We are hearing a lot about the high costs of groceries these days. If you are wondering why groceries are so expensive, we will help you with some of our experiences. We recommend that you look through any grocery store's social media and you will enjoy seeing stories of how they give back to their/our community.



Corporate food giants such as Kroger and Walmart traditionally operate on slim margins, meaning their profits are a small fraction of revenue, so they try to drive revenue or take steps to save money any way they can.

- John Lowrey, an assistant professor in both the D'Amore-McKim School of Business and Bouve College of Health Sciences



Morgan Scherrer is an AmeriCorp Volunteer in 2024.

DOING WELL BY DOING GOOD ... (Continued)

» Here's how it works.

Some chains send still-edible, but otherwise unsaleable products, to their local food bank; those that do not donate keep the blemished product on shelves longer in search of a sale. Retail donations serve the local food bank's mission to help alleviate hunger, but may also have real implications for the retailer's inventory management practices.

Lowrey explains that retailers are somewhat constrained by the lack of available options



Roland Castillo volunteers at the Food Bank several days each week.



Volunteer Lisa Lockwood packs food boxes.

for their unsaleable food. One option is to mark down the product, a practice more commonly referred to as "dynamic pricing." For perishable categories like produce, dairy, bakery, and meat, as the food degrades in quality, a retail store may decide to mark it down in price to increase the chance of a sale. Yet this is not a perfect solution, as dynamic pricing and quality-grading perishable food is a very labor-intensive activity.

Any store associate tasked with culling and pricing bananas, for example, will struggle to answer the question, 'How do I price the banana with four brown spots relative to the one with eight or nine brown spots?'"

- John Lowrey



Tony Dickinson & Charlie Elwood are drivers who pick up food from our local grocery stores each day.



Student Zeb MacIntyre sorts food.



Volunteer Susan Reinemer sorts strawberries.

"Any store associate tasked with culling and pricing bananas, for example, will struggle to answer the question, 'How do I price the banana with four brown spots relative to the one with eight or nine brown spots?'" Lowrey says.

Marking down the product to sell at a lower price may still provide some revenue so long as the product actually sells. Otherwise, low-quality markdown items compete for the same shelf space

as high-quality, fresh items. As an alternative to marking down food, **a retailer can remove it from the shelf while it still looks good, donate it to the local food bank, and replace the newly available shelf space with higher-priced, fresher items.**



Sandra Widener

Removing low-quality, unsaleable products from the shelf early and handing them off to the local food bank also directly offsets waste removal costs, which can be high. Yet the benefit of food donations extends well beyond an opportunity to reduce the cost of waste.

The exciting news for our community is that the retail stores are effectively sustaining this whole secondary market for food, wherein **food banks recover, repurpose, and redistribute food to feed the hungry.** It is the retailer's food that is providing sustenance for an ever-growing population of food-insecure people, which confers a public health benefit.

More than 38 million people, including 12 million children, in the United States don't have enough to eat, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which oversees the country's food-stamp program.

Food banks form an important, yet overlooked, part of the food supply chain. Donating perishable food that is past its prime (it takes 7-10 days for perishable food to travel from the source to grocery shelves in Fairbanks, Alaska) and that allows big food chains to maintain better-looking items on the shelf — and that benefits everyone in the Fairbanks North Star Borough!

And it keeps good food out of the local landfills, too!



Mission Moments

All of these stories and other daily stories of courage and donor excitement come from our FACEBOOK page. Please go to www.fairbanksfoodbank.org and click on the FACEBOOK icon to see what we do every day.

Our Mission Statement

The Mission of the Fairbanks Community Food Bank is to collect local surplus food in the community and share it with local people who need it.

Board Members 2025

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- Anne Weaver, CEO
- Samantha Kirstein, Community Development Director
- Gail Ballou, Attorney

Contact Information

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The Difference Your Donation Makes

We will keep you fully informed about the difference your donation makes, and we ask you to consider 5% for the Fairbanks Community Food Bank as you prepare for the next generation in your estate planning. **Thank you.**



Some of us have been “working” in this local food bank for at least 3 generations (since 1982). It is very fun to watch our young volunteers “grow up” and eventually bring their own children here to be volunteers, too.

One story we've focused on here is the story of a student who attended Lathrop High School. She was in an economics class, and her teacher assigned a work project at a local nonprofit to give back to our community. This student chose to work at the Food Bank.

She arrived on time as we were sorting the daily perishable food and preparing it for the food boxes being called in that morning (we receive hundreds of pounds of local surplus perishable food each day). After her two hour shift, her teacher informed her that she could write a report or give an oral presentation to the class about her experiences. She chose to do an oral presentation, and invited Community Development Director Sam Kirstein to come and listen to the experiences she had. With JOY, Sam did attend that class. The teacher asked the student, “What did you do at the Food Bank on the day you volunteered?” Her response was, “I washed grapes.” Sam waited for the rest of the story, and there was no more story.

That is when Sam realized that the most important part of our local student’s volunteering is for all of us to understand that a family woke up one morning with no food in their house, called the food bank, and that afternoon, a food box was delivered to a site close to where they lived. This young student had met the needs of that local family with the grapes and other items she “washed” that day, and she had provided fresh food for them to enjoy, and the grapes were added to the other important non-perishable items in the food box.

Each person in that household was given 20 pounds of food, enough for 3 breakfasts, 3 lunches and 3 dinners. That is the very important message we all need to understand. Each of us CAN do something TODAY to help our neighbors.

Please come join us. Neighbors really do help neighbors in the Fairbanks North Star Borough.