REPORT OF REGIONAL GRANT USE/MISSION

St. Paul's Lakewood Food Distribution Ministry

Brief History

St. Paul's Lakewood has prioritized distribution of food to those in need for the past 6-7 years. In the beginning, food was provided by members of the parish and we served approximately 20 families twice a month. Over time, we partnered with Benefits in Action (BIA), a small non-profit and grew to providing food to 40-60 families twice a month. When we applied for the regional grant, we were purchasing food from Food Bank of the Rockies and utilizing a strong cadre of volunteers to acquire, organize, pack up, and distribute the food to approximately 50-60 families twice a month.

Costs

The projected cost from the Food Bank in 2026 was $17,000. We had some donations and two months of open plate donations estimated at about $1,600. Our grant request was for $8,500, half the projected cost of our Food Distribution Ministry. We were awarded a grant in the amount of $8,500.

Food Bank of the Rockies

Originally, we were trying to keep our food bill with the Food Bank of the Rockies down to $600-800 twice a month ($1200-$1600/month). Currently, we are trying to keep it to $1,000 twice a month ($2000/ month).

U-Haul Rental

We have added the cost of getting a U-Haul trailer to pick up food. It costs $130 per day of us. This makes picking up the food much easier. Before, we had been using a pickup truck and two SUVs to get the food. With the U-Haul, we can get 4 pallets of food in the back of the truck. As our volunteers are in their 60s and 70s, this is very helpful and time-

saving. We are also buying more food and heavier, denser food, so we do need the U-Haul rental.

Additional Expenses
We have also purchased a wagon for hauling food back and forth between vehicles and packaging/storage facilities and a refrigerator. We are in need of an additional freezer.

Outcome/Progress of Mission Initiative
When we applied for the regional grant, we were serving approximately 50-60 families twice a month and hoped to continue serving those families without interruption. The number of families we serve has slowly increased to around 70 families. This last Wednesday we gave out food to 83 families. We actually ran out of the food boxes and bags we had assembled from food we got from Food Bank of the Rockies and had to dip into our food pantry bags which we keep on hand for families who show up at our door during the week.

As we increased the number of families served, we were not able to manage with our former system of using a pickup truck and two SUVs to get the food. Whereas we could fit a pallet of food in the back of the pickup truck, then take apart another pallet or two and add to the pickup and use the two SUVs to hold food, with the U-Haul we can get 4 pallets into the back of the trailer.

Movement Toward Self-Sufficiency
St. Paul's has always considered the food distribution program a crucial part of our community ministry. We are committed to maintaining it to serve families who have significant needs for food and nutrition.

We continue to designate two months of our open plate donations to the food distribution program. We receive private donations from individuals and families who support the program.

In addition, we had a fundraiser for the food program in February. It was an “empty bowl fundraiser,” meaning for $25 the participant received a bowl (supplied by local potters) and all the soup they could eat. The people in the church supplied the home-made soup and Washington Heights art studio in Lakewood (our Food Distribution Coordinator is a potter there) supplied the bowls. We raised over $2000. We gave $1000 to the Food Bank of the Rockies where we get most of our food that we hand out. We are Food Relief Partners with the Food Bank of the Rockies.

Summary

- We are currently serving between 70-80 families twice a month and the numbers of families in need are increasing.
- We are spending between $1500-2160 per month for food and our expenses are increasing. Food bank costs have been increasing over what was estimated at this time last year.
- We are also spending $260 /month for a U-Haul rental. This additional expense has helped save our volunteers body-wise and saved time.
- One month of food distribution currently costs = $1760-2420.

The **GOOD NEWS!** The regional grant enabled us to cover 4.8 months of food distribution! That’s roughly the equivalent of 336 families receiving the food and nutrition they need.





Packing our meat & dairy bags



The lady in pink is a friend from our neighborhood



Packing produce in the kitchen

Chip and our friend Barb are packing non-perishables into a box. We give everyone a box with non-perishable food, a produce bag & a meat & dairy bag.

