

Rhineland Area Food Bank
Annual Report for 2023
Prepared December, 2023

Since the inception of the Rhineland Area Food Bank in June of 1997, it had been located in the South Wing of the Altona Bergthaler Church. Beginning early in 2022, we moved to a new location, provided for us by Sun Valley Coop. It is on one level, making it more accessible to clients with physical disabilities, as well as by our aging volunteer base. There is ample parking, and room for 10 clients at a time to be inside the building as they wait to be served.

We continue to encourage the wearing of masks and social distancing on behalf of our clients and volunteers. Our core of volunteers is ready to serve clients every Monday from 10 till 11 in the morning, and from 7 pm to 8 pm in the evening. We appreciate their dedication, as well as the dedication of the volunteers who unpack the groceries and stock the shelves. Additional volunteers are encouraged.

There were 2472 client visits in the past year, almost 700 more than the previous year, which was 400 more than the year before. This was an average of 244 visits per month as compared to 160 monthly visits in the previous year. Because the grocery costs continue to climb, the average cost per client has also increased considerably. Fall food drives coordinated by The Elks, FCC, and various youth groups and schools in the community, with vegetables and dry beans being donated by local producers, have helped keep our shelves filled. Those donations have also kept the cost spent per client down. The response as usual, in terms of cash donations, time volunteered, and food items provided, has been overwhelming and we are incredibly grateful.

We continue to focus on providing essential and healthy foods, such as basic canned meats, fish, fruit, vegetables, beans, and soups, as well as peanut butter, non-sugared cereals and oatmeal, pasta, pasta sauces, rice, and powdered juices. Health Department regulations prohibit us from distributing stale-dated, opened, or homemade items. 'Extras', baby food, or items needing refrigeration are not encouraged. We have two freezers in which to store bread and extra items, and have one industrial freezer in which to store meat.

I would like to thank the Board for their work this past year. The Board for the 2023-2024 year is as follows: Angelika Stoesz, Chair; Alvin Ginter, Treasurer; Sharon Friesen, Secretary; Members-at-large: Laurie Enns, Jeff Peters, Lori Dueck, Timothy James, Cornelius Goertzen and Bill Penner. Hilda Klassen continues to coordinate the volunteer schedules and organize the files. The Food Bank phone number is 431 733-9146 where a caller can leave a message.

We encourage all interested parties to attend the 2024 Annual Meeting which will be advertised at a later date.

Respectfully submitted by

Sharon Friesen, Secretary for the Rhineland Area Food Bank