



OZARKS Food Harvest

The Food Bank

Harvest *time*

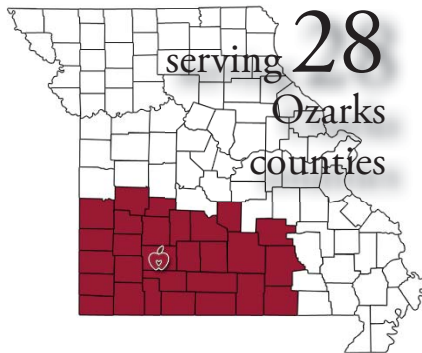


A member of

Your Community Food Bank Newsletter

Fall Edition—September 2010

Learn about The Food Bank's Network of more than 300 charities at ozarksfoodharvest.org



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Polk County Pantry is Feeding Families Hunger Action Month Member Spotlight

An elderly gentleman sits with his arms folded and studies a handful of volunteers busily working together, filling makeshift boxes and donated brown paper bags with assorted food items. He keenly watches the volunteers work on each side of a long, heavy wooden table, as though he's given his time before.

"This one needs baby food," one volunteer says to another. "She has a 22-month-old." The volunteer searches the Polk County Pantry shelves full of food items from Ozarks Food Harvest, making his selections, double-checking the expiration dates, and quickly adds Gerber Graduates to client number twenty-eight's food supply for the month.

"It's like a well-oiled machine here," the volunteer says as he loads the boxes and sacks into shopping carts that appear to have undergone a make-over in the past—the metal baskets are missing their front ends.

"This way boxes can simply slide on and off instead of having to reach in and lift out the boxes," the volunteer says as the wheels turn and roll from the 6,000-square-foot pantry to a confined parking lot, where he meets a woman who hands him a laminated note card with "28" written in black permanent marker. Their cards match.

The woman exchanges few words, and instead, lets her expressions tell her story.

Back inside, the senior continues observing the hustle and bustle of the eager volunteers, leans over and tells Rick Lewis, the director of the Polk

County Pantry at Salvation Army—Bolivar—a volunteer position—"We didn't have a crew like you have now. You even have forklifts!" he proclaimed.

The man is Doug Williams, one of the original volunteers who worked with Lewis to establish the Polk County Pantry at the Salvation Army in Bolivar almost 14 years ago.

"None of the old timers are still with you because you wore them all out," Williams shares with a smirk. He studies boxes strategically arranged on a pallet, and says sarcastically, "When we put it together, that would have been about 97 boxes to actually pick up!"

Lewis added that the Salvation Army pantry volunteers used to drive to Springfield to pick up food from Ozarks Food Harvest. "We used to put it all in the back of one pickup truck. Now it takes a 53-footer from Ozarks Food Harvest."

"If Ozarks Food Harvest didn't exist, we wouldn't be here. The bulk of the food here comes from

Ozarks Food Harvest," Lewis said. *(Continues on page two.)*



Feeding Families this season—

Continue reading more about the Polk County Pantry on page 2 or find this feature and more online at ozarksfoodharvest.org.

Polk County member agency serves more in need

Continued from pg.1—

The Food Bank delivers food to the Salvation Army’s Polk County Pantry in Bolivar— a Bolivar Area Ministerial Alliance partner—on the third Tuesday each month. Shipments range from ten pallets to 18.

The pantry’s load has increased significantly, thanks to Ozarks Food Harvest’s recent expansion of CSFP, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program. The Polk County Pantry now receives 195 CSFP boxes to distribute to area seniors in need.

On the first Wednesday and first Friday of the month, the pantry serves between 80 and 100 families in four hours on each day. In total, the pantry is reaching 400 families monthly— on average, single to three-person households; however, several client families range from households of ten to 15.

Frances turned 31-years-old just four days before Ozarks Food Harvest’s visit to the agency, and is the head of a household of ten in the small village of Aldrich, Missouri, roughly 14 miles from Bolivar.

“We just keep on going until the stamps run out,” she mutters. “I know other people need it worse than I do,” she humbly says as she looks at her youngest, a 3-year-old wearing Tinker Bell footie pajamas.

“I’ve donated an entire truck bed

full of food and clothes years ago. And now I’m here for a different reason.” Frances just lost her job she held at a convenience store. “I probably wouldn’t make it without this.”

Lewis said his pantry has always served the “working poor”—those with jobs, struggling to make ends meet. Tracker Marine used to be one of the largest employers in the area and closed a couple of years ago. “We’re still feeling the effects,” Lewis said.

In addition to providing food boxes to those in need across Polk County, the Salvation Army pantry has a kitchen—Shepherd’s Place—at a separate location in Bolivar. Between 200 and 250 hot meals are served by

volunteers every Thursday evening.

Kitchen volunteers also take on the responsibility of delivering 60 meals to what Lewis called “shut-ins,” who have been referred to by agencies such as the Office on Aging.

Other programs are offered by the Ozarks Food Harvest member agency, including a “Life After Meth” program and an abuse program. Next to the pantry, the Ministerial Alliance houses a thrift store, which raises enough funds to cover the pantry’s monthly overhead. Lewis says budgeting classes and cooking classes are also planned one to two times annually.

“One woman came in and was a bit different than all the other clients; she genuinely wanted to learn how to cook. She said, ‘I want to know everything. The only thing I know how to make is macaroni and cheese. That’s the only thing my mother ever taught me how to make.’”

“The volunteer from the extension office who taught the class agreed to let the woman help her prepare the meal for the class, and in exchange, she allowed the client to bring the leftovers home to her family.”

“The woman’s husband was so mad when he got home because he thought she had spent their hard earned money on take-out,” Lewis said. “He did not believe that his wife prepared the meal. She came back, upset, and shared her husband’s reaction, so I gave her more food to prepare and the directions. I told her to prepare the meal while he was home to show him that she could do it.”



(Above) Director Rick Lewis shows the latest shipment from Ozarks Food Harvest. (Below) Long-time volunteers work together to pack a pantry box for a local family.



“She came back and said, ‘My husband didn’t know he married a chef!’ “She was just beaming,” Lewis said with a lit up face.

“They are happy we do a little extra for them. That’s what it’s all about.”

How your dollars help—



“We far exceeded our goal because the money will be used right here in Polk County,” said Rick Lewis, director of the Polk County Pantry. “People went to their wallets and said ‘here we go!’”

The Salvation Army food pantry in Bolivar was also one of the OFH member agencies to receive a grant from the Million Dollar Hunger Challenge program of Ozarks Food Harvest, Walmart and the Community Foundation of the Ozarks. The Bolivar pantry and kitchen will use the more than \$10,000 in funding for food items for distribution.

The OFH member pantry was also the recipient of a walk-in cooler and freezer—a donation secured by OFH from Kmart. Grant funding from The Food Bank will allow for repairs and hook-up.

“At first we turned it down because it wasn’t going to fit in our warehouse, even though we began leasing a larger location in February,” Lewis said. “Our landlord agreed to open the building next door and knock out the wall in between so we could accept the much needed freezer.”





**PUT HUNGER TO REST.
DONATE \$1.**

'Check Out Hunger' in your grocer's check-out line this Nov & Dec

You'll be surprised at the power \$1 holds at The Food Bank. By adding just \$1 to your grocery bill during the upcoming holiday season, you're helping to provide \$10 worth of food and services across 28 Ozarks counties. Look for the graphic* (at left) and scan card in your local hometown grocer's check-out aisle and help Ozarks Food Harvest put hunger to rest.

More and more clients are families struggling to make ends meet—many with young children. These parents need healthy food items so their children can receive the nutrients they require for proper growth and development.

(*COH 2010 concept/design by Coby Neil Creative)

McDonald's Cans for Coffee is back!

Free coffee at McDonald's returns in November when you donate a canned food item for Ozarks Food Harvest!



Simply bring your donation to any of the region's McDonald's and receive one small McCafe® coffee at no cost.



This is the third McDonald's of the Ozarks food drive, collecting more than 35,000 lbs. of food donations so far. Would you please help your hungry neighbors this fall?

Participating 'Check Out Hunger' grocers—

AKiN'S | Country Mart | Dillons | Harter House | Murfin's Market | Price Cutter Ramey | Smillie's Market | Smitty's | Summer Fresh Supermarket | Woods

Your community food bank receives several awards for hunger relief efforts

It's an exciting time in Development here at The Food Bank!

If you haven't heard the news—Ozarks Food Harvest received the most votes from Walmart and Sam's Club associates during the Walmart Foundation Associate Choice Program, which means \$100,000 was awarded to your community food bank (see photo at right). Ozarks Food Harvest was one of only five finalists in the entire state Walmart associates could cast a vote for. We are thrilled to have been chosen as the charity of choice.



month the recipients of the first-ever TEFAP Infrastructure Grants. Only 39 emergency feeding organizations distributing TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) in 25 states received grants—totaling nearly \$6 million to aid with improvements to and expansion of their existing food distribution infrastructure.

Last month, The Food Bank learned of a separate funding opportunity: Governor Nixon announced \$24.7 million in assistance to Missouri food banks, pantries and programs that support low-income children and seniors.

The six Missouri food banks will use approximately half the funding to serve more than 1,700 hunger relief agencies and food pantries statewide. Ozarks Food Harvest is to receive approximately \$1.1 million as reimbursement for past expenditures for non-federal programs over the past three years.

Last, but certainly not least, the USDA announced this

We are one of only 16 Feeding America® food banks to have been awarded this grant. Ozarks Food Harvest will receive \$100,401 to purchase a back-up generator and other warehouse equipment to allow for expansion.

If you have any questions regarding the allocation of these awards, please call me at (417) 865-3411. Thank you for your continued support.

Denise Gibson
Development Director



Thank You Hunger Action Month supporters

A generous thank you to supporters like you for participating in this year's Hunger Action Month, 30 ways in 30 days. The Feeding America food bank to collect the most online "pledges" during Sept. will be awarded a truckload full of food!



Harvest Soup Cook-off a huge success!

Thank you to all Harvest On Wheels and Greater Springfield Farmers' Market volunteers for hosting the inaugural soup cook-off for Ozarks Food Harvest! Special thanks to the following participating restaurants and market vendors for their donations:

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Big Easy Grill | Burton's Farm |
| Bistro Market* | Flintrock Bison Ranch* |
| Farmers Gastropub | Jones Farm |
| Frisco Crossing | Lakeside Gardens |
| Mille's Cafe | Magpie's Food Services |
| Nakato | Raised Rite Farm |
| Nearly Famous Deli | Sunshine Valley Farm |

(* denotes winners)



In Missouri, poverty grows at triple the national rate

The latest statistics from the Census Bureau are in, and Missouri rates in the bottom third of states when it comes to the numbers of people living in poverty.

This is no surprise at Ozarks Food Harvest, where our member agencies continue to see up to double the numbers of families in their lines.

As you know, a devastating national recession has pushed the number of those in our country living in poverty to levels not seen in decades; nationally, families saw their median real income fall by an average of 1.8 percent. The decline was sharpest in the Midwest, where real median household income fell by 2.1 percent, according to the report.

Unfortunately, evidence suggests Missouri's economic meltdown will continue even after the national economy picks up steam again.

Many of the families our Network serves never imagined that a sudden descent into unemployment and poverty would be in their future. Sadly, it is.

I'd like to share with you what those you are helping us feed have to say. Thank you for your continued fight against hunger, especially during our nation's Hunger Action Month. Working together, we can Transform Hunger into Hope!

I recently borrowed groceries to feed us from a neighbor. I traded a chainsaw that I had for 50.00 of goods. I try to get "throwaways" from McDonald's when I get to work. It has been very hard these past several months.

After Paying Bills There just is not enough money left.

I'm on disability & trying to raise a 17 year old. I have alot of difficulty buying clothes & food. I've been on dialysis for 3 1/2 years & its very hard!



Bart Brown
President/CEO

Behind the barrels



...is a volunteer hosting a food drive for Ozarks Food Harvest.

Would you please consider holding a Food Drive for your community food bank?

Visit ozarksfoodharvest.org/fooddrive.html to register your company or organization's food drive this fall or holiday season.

Ozarks Food Harvest staff

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Eddie Hicks, Warehouse Associate
Richard Kelly, Transportation Associate
John Lopez, Warehouse Associate
Stephen Roberts, Transportation Associate
Linda Smith, Inventory Coordinator
Adam Stoddard, Volunteer Supervisor
Brian Wilson, Warehouse Associate

Thank You for your Donation!

YES, I would like to help Ozarks Food Harvest Transform Hunger into Hope™

FullName(s) _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
E-mail _____

I would like my gift of:

\$25 \$35 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____

to support:

Feeding Children General Food Distribution
 Feeding Families Purchased Food Program
 Feeding Seniors Unrestricted

To give by credit card please provide:

Mastercard Visa Discover

Account# _____ Exp. Date _____
Signature _____
Phone number(s) _____

Please use this form to make your tax-deductible gift, or simply provide your information directly on the enclosed envelope and send to Ozarks Food Harvest, P.O. Box 5746, Springfield, MO 65801-5746.