SIMPLY SAID
WE ARE MORE THAN A FOOD BANK
FALL 2019

Lynne Ayers, Executive Director, Stanwood Camano Food Bank Services

The Grocery Store Model comes to life!

Since working at the food bank over the last 7 years, I marvel at the positive changes that have been made during this time. We have outstanding volunteers, donors and staff who care deeply about the mission and vision of the food bank. They are committed to feeding families who need some extra support.

There is a daily sense of desperation, hopelessness, embarrassment, shame, anxiety, and sadness from our customers entering our doors for the first time. We are strangers they must entrust with their story. We have heard from many that it’s really hard to accept help even when you really need it. Taking that chance can make a huge difference in the lives of the families in our community.

There are a variety of reactions that come bubbling to the surface when someone is forced to walk through our doors – tears, frustration, and intense emotions that sometimes erupt in the form of anger. It’s heartbreaking but we have a duty to present a safe, welcoming, calm, and inviting food bank. We also have the privilege to properly assist our families who are struggling and restore their dignity and purpose. We must be able to sift through the feelings and find a space that allows for our families to take back some control of their lives.

The Grocery Store Model is a step in the right direction and it has come to life at the Stanwood Camano Food Bank. Since transitioning our food bank to resemble a local, neighborhood market, we’ve seen a transformation in our customer’s demeanor. People are standing taller, looking around, eyes are brighter, and there is LIFE in their faces. Animated conversations between customers, shoppers and volunteers are taking place on a daily basis – everyone is more engaged. Shoppers are talking to each other – giving recipe ideas, sharing bags, and laughing. The ability to choose what food items to take home is huge – there is power in the act of choice. Confidence is returning. Hope is reviving. Instead of us ‘serving’ people, customers are free to make choices that are best for their family. Our neighbors are gaining strength in body and mind. Whether this is a short pit stop or a lengthy journey, Stanwood Camano Food Bank Services will be here to help our families find positive solutions for as long as necessary.

Thanks for making this a reality - Lynne
www.stanwoodcamanofoodbank.org
Stanwood Camano Thrift Store – selling your stuff to put food on the table for our neighbors in need.

The Thrift Store has been breaking all sales records this year! All the proceeds go directly to the food bank for critical goods and services. They have a great group of volunteers and of course they have Caryl, Thrift Store Manager, who has been driving the sales and making sure there is fun and exciting merchandising of the items donated to the thrift store. Caryl has developed relationships with many local customers and when there is a sale she is calling them to tell them about it! The “Bag Sale” has been a great success. On certain days of the week customers can buy a bag of linens or clothes for $5, just fill the bag as full as you like and it’s only $5! What a deal!

Caryl is exceptional at merchandising all the items that come into the thrift store. She & her team of ‘creative wizards’ change the window displays almost daily to showcase the great “finds” that have been donated. Each department has a volunteer assigned to it and they take full ownership of their area. Every week they “change it up” and feature new, ‘must have’ merchandise. It’s fun to see something fresh in the windows or on exhibit as you walk by the store.

The upcoming months are very busy for the thrift store! First, there is Halloween. The store has many costumes and decorations for this spooky holiday. Then, Thanksgiving with all the trimmings. If you need a new dish, decorations or a full set of china for your Thanksgiving feast, you will find it at the thrift store at a great price. Then the big holiday – Christmas! Caryl and her team make custom Christmas trees for those who want something unique and special. What a great idea! She and her team are busy right now coming up with new ideas for the holiday season. The jewelry case has been booming lately after the Estate Jewelry Sale in August. It was such a hit that in December they will be having “Blitzen’s Bling sale”. All the holiday jewelry will be featured and available to take home at phenomenal prices. Don’t miss this highly anticipated event.

Caryl and her team of volunteers are the best at making everyone feel welcome and many times they will personally shop for customers as they see the need. Last summer a customer came in and wanted to know if Caryl had any Christmas trees. Carly went to the attic and pulled out what she had and the customer bought them. Little did we know they were building a float for the Bothell 4th of July Parade. They won “Best of Theme” for their Sasquatch themed float. If there is something unique needed the thrift store is the place to get it!

Call the Thrift Store at 360-629-6646
HOPE Meals for Kids Backpack Program

LaCrisa Spencer, Backpack Coordinator

The HOPE Meals for Kids Backpack Program helps to alleviate child hunger, financial burdens to families, and provide meals to children when they are not in school. These programs are funded by private donations and grants. Some smaller communities rely on food donations, churches to run the programs, resource centers to distribute bags, etc...

Our backpack program started at our pilot school on Camano Island, Elger Bay Elementary. As word got out and families needed the help, the program grew. We were fortunate enough to have an entire building donated to the food bank in memory of Dorothy May Brand Anderson, M.D. in 2015. This building soon became known as the “Grabill Building” which now houses the entire H.O.P.E. Meals for Kids Backpack Program and Summer Meals For Kids Program.

This service is available and free to anyone that has children in the Stanwood/Camano School District. The family’s information is kept private & confidential. All families signing up at their child’s school remain anonymous – the food bank only knows the number of children needing a pack delivered to each school (no names are shared). Each child receives a weekly bag of food. There are no income qualifications, and it is completely voluntary to participate. Many children are recommended to sign up by their local school personnel. Anyone, for any reason, may contact the front office of their child’s school or stop by the food bank for a sign-up/waiver.

Many think that you must be homeless, in poverty or this is all the children get to eat at home… Not true! Many people make a decent wage, but with the cost of raising a child, housing costs, medical bills, etc. it is often hard to pay those bills and have adequate food in the house. This can be very stressful for families. That’s where we come in! If you or someone you know needs help please reach out to us at backpackcoordinator@scfbs.org or visit our website at www.stanwoodcamanofoodbank.org.

We currently provide meals to 250 children in our community 52 weeks per year! As of now, it costs about $3 per day to feed a child breakfast, lunch, & dinner along with snacks, milk, juice, fresh produce, and cheese. We also provide pantry items for tweens and teens enrolled in our 2 middle schools and 2 high schools. All of our food, minus pantry items, is purchased at local stores, online stores, and vendors across America to provide the freshest foods, variety, and an always changing menu.

Last year, ‘Chase’ was a senior in high school trying to complete his education and living without a permanent roof over his head. He was able to connect with the food bank for ‘Meal Packs’, Heater Meals, & supplies while working with the district to stabilize his housing and schooling. Chase isn’t a statistic – he is a survivor. Chase successfully graduated.
A Simple Gesture started in Paradise California in 2014 by Jonathan Travers and his wife after they retired. Since then, many food banks and pantries around the country use this program to collect food for the hungry. Our program first began picking up food donations on October 10, 2015 on Camano Island with a handful of registered donors. Thanks to Dennis and Marikae Moraski and their dedicated team of volunteers, over 500 homeowners now participate with A Simple Gesture in Stanwood and Camano Island. Donors fill the ‘cool green bag’ with food & essential items six times a year on the second Saturday of even-numbered months and a volunteer picks up the bag from the homeowners front porch or designated location.

Gordon Riggs, A Simple Gesture Neighborhood Coordinator and longtime volunteer at the food bank, has been participating in the program in the Warm Beach area for many years. He even has a sign on the front of his home for the program. He supplies bags and sign-ups for the drivers in his ‘neighborhood’. He manages over 200 A Simple Gesture participants and will bring in about 2500 pounds of food for the food drive. Gordon is very committed to the program and makes sure that all donations are picked up in a timely manner and delivered to the food bank. He coordinates 11 driver teams to pick up the filled bags, load them into a food bank van, and deliver everything to the food bank to be sorted and distributed to local families in need. He is a passionate, convincing recruiter for the program and if he talks with you, he will definitely have you signed up before saying goodbye.

Gordon is just one of many volunteers that work hard to make this program a success! Camano Island has over 20 driver volunteers and a dozen recruiters for the program. Mike Brown is the volunteer coordinator for Camano Island. The greater Stanwood area has 5 driver volunteers and is currently recruiting for the Volunteer Driver Coordinator position.

The last two food pick-ups focused on the need for cold cereal which is too expensive for the food bank to purchase on a regular basis. The donated food has been a huge benefit to the Stanwood Camano Food Bank and its clients. It allows the food bank to focus on purchasing proteins, dairy and fresh fruits and vegetables.

The great part about this program is that it is so SIMPLE. Just register, get a “cool” green reusable bag and start collecting nonperishable food items from the grocery store, then put the bag out on your porch for pick up on the designated day. We have set up text and email reminders as we know life is busy. Who knew that donating could be so simple?
Warm Coats for Kids 2019/2020 Season Begins

October 16th through March 2020

The staff and volunteers at the Stanwood Camano Food Bank are dedicated to our clients and their families. Each program is designed around our client needs and the Warm Coats for Kids program was born when a mother came to shop for groceries and asked for coats for her two boys. From that humble beginning we have grown into a staple for our parents and last year we distributed over 560 coats.

One of the coat volunteers wanted to thank us for allowing her to take a coat to her granddaughter. She wanted us to know when she first came in to volunteer she was skeptical of our homeless community and what we offered without question. Then her daughter became homeless after living in the same house for 18 years; she was evicted with only 30 days to find a new place. This, of course, caught her daughter off guard and she didn’t have the money to move into another home. She realized homelessness isn’t always by choice, substance abuse or neglect, most of the time it is a working family who are caught in a sudden financial crisis. The most surprising thing about it was the delight her granddaughter expressed, followed by glamour shots on Facebook and Instagram in her new coat and how grateful she was. This is what it is like with EVERY family who comes to shop for a coat….. pure joy on their faces.

Families can pick out a brand new, warm winter coat for their children, 12mo to 18 years of age, by visiting our Stanwood Community and Senior Center, Wednesdays and Fridays from 2:00PM – 5:00PM. The Stanwood Community & Senior Center has partnered with us to provide a safe, welcoming place for parents and children to pick out a new coat. In addition, several of the senior residents are volunteering their time to assist shoppers. A limited supply of coats is also available at the foodbank on Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00AM – 1:00PM and Saturdays from 10:00AM – Noon. The bulk of the new coats will be housed at the ‘Center’. Our hope is that teens and families will visit this location to choose their new coats.

For our families with teens attending Stanwood High School and Port Susan Middle School, the school counselor/advisor will have a supply of new, trendy coat styles onsite. Tweens and teens may ‘shop’ at their home school. A new plan this year is to utilize the Little White School Bus provided by the Stanwood Community & Senior Center to take the coats on the road and offer a ‘Pop Up’ Warm Coats for Kids shopping experience at each of the schools in the Stanwood Camano School District. These will be scheduled with each school throughout the 2019-2020 school year.

The Stanwood Community and Senior Center will be open one Saturday a month: Saturday, October 26th 2PM – 7PM, November 23rd 2PM – 7PM, and December 14th 2PM – 7PM.
BY THE NUMBERS!

JULY, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2019

TOTAL DAYS OPEN FOR DISTRIBUTION
38

TOTAL POUNDS OF FOOD DISTRIBUTED
197,600 (Food Bank) + 8891 (Backpack) = 206,491#

FAMILIES SERVED
2646

INDIVIDUALS SERVED
8374

CHILDREN SERVED (NOT INCLUDING BACKPACK)
2835 (not including backpack)
1482 (HOPE Meals for Kids Backpack Program) = 4,263

SENIORS SERVED
1907

Call the Food Bank at 360-629-2789
www.stanwoodcamanofoodbank.org
YOU DID IT!        SCGIVE #Giving Tuesday        THANK YOU!

Thank you for all your support over the last year. Because of what you gave during Giving Tuesday with SCGIVE, we were able to provide diapers, wipes, baby food and other needed baby items to families with little ones in the Stanwood Camano area. You donated $3755.00 on the Nov. 27th, 2018, exceeding our goal by $1,255. You also exceeded our goal of $2,700 and donated $3425 to help families with hygiene products, such as deodorant, shampoo and feminine hygiene products. These items cannot be purchased with food stamps and are very needed for the families that come to the food bank. The donations lasted the entire year and many families benefitted from your generosity.

This year the Stanwood Camano Food Bank Services will purchase formula, all stages of jarred baby food and pouches to help ensure all babies and young children have the proper nutrition to feed their growing minds and bodies. In addition, other 'necessities' are provided for families with children in need such as: PediaSure, sensitive skin shampoo and body wash, diapers & pull ups for kiddos size 4 through 6, and baby wipes for healthy hygiene & skin care for these little cuties. $40 will provide a care package for 1 child that will nourish our local babies & toddlers with nutritious food for their growing minds & bodies, and swaddle them with clean diapers & wipes.

We will also be purchasing personal hygiene products for our member families. Items include: shampoo, deodorant, laundry soap, toilet paper, toothbrushes, toothpaste, razors, Depends, feminine pads and tampons. Food Stamps can only be used for food items. Families are faced with the tough choice - food or deodorant. When we have personal care products available, it brings a big smile and a whispered thank you. These basic necessities help with self-esteem, build confidence, and can go a long way in having a successful job interview. You can give back dignity to our local families in need. $25 will "shower" 4 families in need with a hygiene kit complete with deodorant, shampoo, soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, razor, and feminine products.

Check out all the great community projects looking for your support this year at www.scgive.org