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missoula food bank
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WINTER 2025

news from missoula food bank & community center



missoula food bank
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NOURISHING TIMES

we nourish community

NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:



As 2024 draws to a close, I am filled with profound gratitude for our community and all we've accomplished together this year.

One of our proudest achievements was the success of our School Meals Are for Everyone campaign, which brought free breakfast and lunch to students at Lowell and Franklin schools. Ensuring every child has access to nourishing meals is a cornerstone of our mission, and this milestone is a testament to the power of advocacy and community support.

In November, we came together to distribute nearly 2,000 turkeys and holiday meal fixings, ensuring families could celebrate the season with joy and abundance. Moments like these remind us of the deep impact we can have when we unite for a common purpose.

This work would not be possible without our incredible volunteers, whose time and dedication fuel our programs, and our staff team, whose commitment inspires me every day. Together, they embody the spirit of service and compassion that defines our organization.

I am also in awe of the resilience of our customers, who navigate challenges with strength and dignity. So many of our customers generously find ways to give back—volunteering their time, sharing their stories, and inspiring us to do more.

2024 AT A GLANCE

58,569
store visits

1,601
satellite pantry visits

222
SNAP applications

17,463
visitors in
EmPower Place

Thank you for being part of this incredible community. Your generosity and belief in our mission make it all possible. As we look ahead to 2025, I am excited for all we will accomplish together.

With gratitude,
Amy M. Allison

CANDEMONIUM GAME ON 2025



MARCH 28: PREVIEW DAY

APRIL 4: BUILD DAY

APRIL 11: DECANSTRUCTION DAY

We lead the movement to end hunger through advocacy, volunteerism, and healthy food for all. We nourish community.

GROCERY RESCUE PROGRAM

Our Grocery Rescue program partners with local grocery stores to accept food that would otherwise be set aside for the landfill. Instead, this food is hand sorted for freshness and expiration dates, by food bank volunteers, to help stock our shelves. "It's a win-win situation" says Gregg Ascuitto, Purchasing & Warehouse Manager at MFB&CC. "Grocery Rescue provides our customers with a lot of good, healthy food. This program gives our customers choice and variety while keeping good food out of the landfill." Our warehouse team and volunteers go on Grocery Rescue runs daily to collect good food that will be distributed to our customers later that day. We receive a selection of deli, dairy, meat, bread, produce, and personal care items from our partners. In 2024, we rescued an astounding 1,456,837 pounds of food, redirecting it from the landfill to our store. Thank you to all of our Grocery Rescue partners!



WELCOME BACK JESSY LEE

We welcomed our former employee Jessy Lee back to our staff team. Jessy accepted the role of Director of Development and is eager to join MFB&CC's Leadership Team. Since her last permanent role here, Jessy has been quite busy. She completed her Master of Public Administration in 2018 before serving as Executive Director of North Valley Food Bank in Whitefish. She has primarily been home with her daughter, Finley (3) and new baby boy, Asher (6 months) over the last few years. You may have seen her in the Food Bank as a temporary employee throughout the last three years. The opportunity to return to the Food Bank as Director of Development was well-timed, as she is eager to put her professional skills to good use at her favorite place. Many of you know Jessy from her years at the Food Bank. If you see her, please give her a warm welcome back!



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 EmPower Place Support

TWO LOCAL BUSINESSES TEAM UP FOR FUN AND TO SUPPORT THEIR NEIGHBORS

In November, Pacific Steel & Recycling and Blackfoot Communications teamed up to collect more than 10,000 pounds of food for Can the Cats. This food drive collected the largest amount of food by any group during our annual food drive competition with our friends in Bozeman.

The food collected also helped Missoula's Pacific Steel location secure another win, within their own company. For the past 5 years, Pacific Steel has held an internal food drive competition between their employee-owned locations across the northwest United States. This year, this competition raised over 54,000 lbs of food for food banks across the participating areas. Missoula Pacific secured the win this year, with assistance from Blackfoot Communications, as well as gain bragging rights for the year to come.

"Pacific Steel is a longtime customer of Blackfoot Communications, and we have worked closely with the Missoula Food Bank & Community Center to support their mission for many years as well," said Jason Williams, CEO of Blackfoot Communications. "Our entire team was excited for the opportunity to partner with Pacific Steel to help our neighbors in need."

The Pacific Steel and Blackfoot Communications team up also brought some fun energy to this year's Can the Cats, with Pacific Steel's Assistant Manager Jered Anton taking the lead. During this two-week long countywide food drive, Jered dressed up as a turkey and got out his megaphone at the Pacific Steel/Blackfoot Communications Stuff the Truck event, hosted at Yoke's Fresh Market. Jered also donned a carton of milk costume while helping to collect food during the Griz Football Game on Nov. 17th. He brought so much spirit and heart to the food drive this year!

"What makes Can the Cats so special is that we get to have fun with our community partners like Pacific Steel and Blackfoot Communications," said Jesse Jaeger, Missoula Food Bank & Community Center's outgoing Director of Development. "Jered Anton and the staff at both Pacific Steel and Blackfoot Communications are a perfect example of supporting our neighbors while also having a great time."

Missoula Food Bank & Community Center is so thankful for everyone who helped raise food and funds during this year's Can the Cats. Together we raised and gathered 649,000 pounds and dollars for our community! We didn't quite secure the win this year, falling short of our Bozeman counterparts by only 3,600 pounds and dollars. However, everyone wins when our two food banks raise over 1.5 million pounds and dollars to feed our neighbors across the state! With partners like Pacific Steel and Blackfoot Communications, we know we have a good shot at Canning the Cats next year!



Jered Anton