

IOWA FOOD WASTE REDUCTION PROJECT Case Study

Food Displaced = WASTE

Turning Waste into a Resource – the Food Bank Way

Situated on the western edge of Iowa, the Food Bank of Siouxland is able to serve 11 counties in two states – Iowa and Nebraska. More than 100 agencies, such as food pantries, soup kitchens, emergency relief centers, shelters, and daycares, get their food from the food bank. This organization definitely plays a role in reducing the amount of food making it to Iowa landfills. Rather than throwing out day-old bread or canned food just at the expiration date, the Food Bank of Siouxland can take this food and distribute it to feed families in need of nutritious food.

Here's how it works. The Food Bank of Siouxland purchases food items at an exceptional rate in bulk or they receive donations of food from grocery stores, manufacturers, or individuals. They store the food in a warehouse and then agencies can shop and acquire food from the food bank for just \$0.16 per pound, which is actually a shared maintenance fee. The relationship between the Food Bank of Siouxland and these agencies is very important in making sure people in need receive food.

Linda Scheid, Executive Director of the Food Bank of Siouxland has been passionately working towards feeding the hungry for the last seven years. "Hunger is one of the most solvable issues

of our time." she stated. People who are living with limited funds do not always have enough money for food once their bills are paid. Throw in an unexpected car repair or medical bill and now any money left over for food is gone. She has noticed a consistent annual increase in the amount of food going through the food bank and 2013 will set a record at 1.7 million pounds of food distributed. Scheid explained that emergency food needs have become more of a way of life for many people and families.

FACTS AT A GLANCE

At the end of any local farmers market, the Food Bank of Siouxland receives donations from farmers with left-over produce and food items.

The Food Bank of Siouxland also offers cat and dog food.



PROGRAMS

The Food Bank of Siouxland's core program is working with the over 100 agencies that purchase food for distribution. In addition, there are two other very important programs: the Backpack Program: *Food for Kids* and the Mobile Pantry Program: *Food to You*.

In fall 2013, seven area schools will be participating in the Backpack Program: *Food for Kids*. The food bank understands that children's need for food goes beyond weekdays into the weekend.

This program distributes food sacks each Friday afternoon to students in need of healthy and nutritious food. Food items found in each bag includes cereal, fruit cup, juice box, peanut butter crackers, fruit snacks, sunflower kernels, and a fruit or granola bar. The food in each bag must be kid friendly, easy to open, appealing (no asparagus), nutritionally sound, shelf stable, and financially feasible.

IN THE 2012/2013 SCHOOL YEAR:

1,800 FOOD SACKS

were given to students every week in the Siouxland area



FOR THE UPCOMING 2013/2014 SCHOOL YEAR

so far will be donating **2,200** FOOD SACKS

each week to students in need. That's an increase of 400 additional food sacks.

Food Displaced = WASTE

The other program, Mobile Pantry Program: Food to You Program, feeds families that may have fallen through the cracks in underserved areas. The program removes any transportation barriers and brings the food to families in their communities. When the program first started in 2010, two events were scheduled every month. Now in 2013, nine mobile events occur each month to bring food to hungry families.

FROM WASTE TO RESOURCE

In many cases, the Food Bank of Siouxland is able to turn waste into a resource. Many area companies and organizations including Tyson, Dean Foods, Wal-Mart, Target, Starbucks, and Panera Bread donate food that would have been sent to the landfill. Instead of being disposed of at a landfill, food that results from inventory control, packaging errors, or approaching sell-by dates is donated to the food bank. In addition, partnerships with organizations such as Feeding America and commodity programs such as the Emergency Food Assistance Programs keep food donations steady. In 2012, 1.5 million pounds of food was delivered to the Food Bank of Siouxland through these above mentioned organizations plus many others.



The food bank also receives donations through canned food drives which create sizeable dents in food needs. Two such examples are those held at local schools and Scouting for Food. Scouting for Food is a non-perishable collection program held by the Boy Scouts of America. The mother-load of all food drives though is the National Association of Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the United States Postal Service letter carriers, every second Saturday in May in over 10,000 cities and towns across the United States, generous postal service customers leave non-perishable foods in their mailboxes. This food drive alone delivers over 15,000 pounds of food to the Food Bank of Siouxland in just one day.

A SUCCESSFUL AND THRIVING FOOD BANK

This goodwill can also be recognized through the many volunteers that work to help the food bank by picking up products, putting together food sacks, unloading trucks, sorting food, and distributing food at each Mobile Pantry Program: Food to You event. It is through the generosity, thoughtfulness, and time of these people that the food bank is able to recognize a successful and thriving non-profit organization that feeds so many people.

The Food Bank of Siouxland is a special place. Not only are they providing a valuable service by feeding people in need, and diverting usable and edible food from Iowa landfills, but they are also showcasing waste reduction efforts. Any food that is not usable or edible is taken by a local hog farmer to feed pigs. These types of food include any meat not USDA certified, home canned foods, or any food too far past expiration date. The food bank otherwise, provides a service to 11 counties that is essential to the health and well-being of many people.

DID YOU KNOW?

In order to shop at the Food Bank of Siouxland, an agency must be a non-profit, qualify as a legitimate church, distribute products to the hungry without charging or bartering, and/or distribute to people below the financial poverty level.