



FEEDING MONTANA

News from Montana Food Bank Network www.mfbn.org

From serving my country in Vietnam...

To relying on the Food Bank for survival

My name is Clarence and I was a tunnel rat in Vietnam. The military needed someone small (I'm 5'4") to crawl into small spaces in search of the enemy. So they picked me. It was hard for me to do because I'm claustrophobic. It's an experience I'd just as soon forget. But I can't. It's printed indelibly on my mind.

In the process of doing my "tunnel" work my discs began to deteriorate. I later began to develop mental issues, and I've been on

medication ever since. I tell you this not because I want you to feel sorry for me, but rather to let you know why I appreciate the Montana Food Bank

Network so much. Without the help of the Food Bank and your generosity, I don't know how I would survive. I honestly don't know.

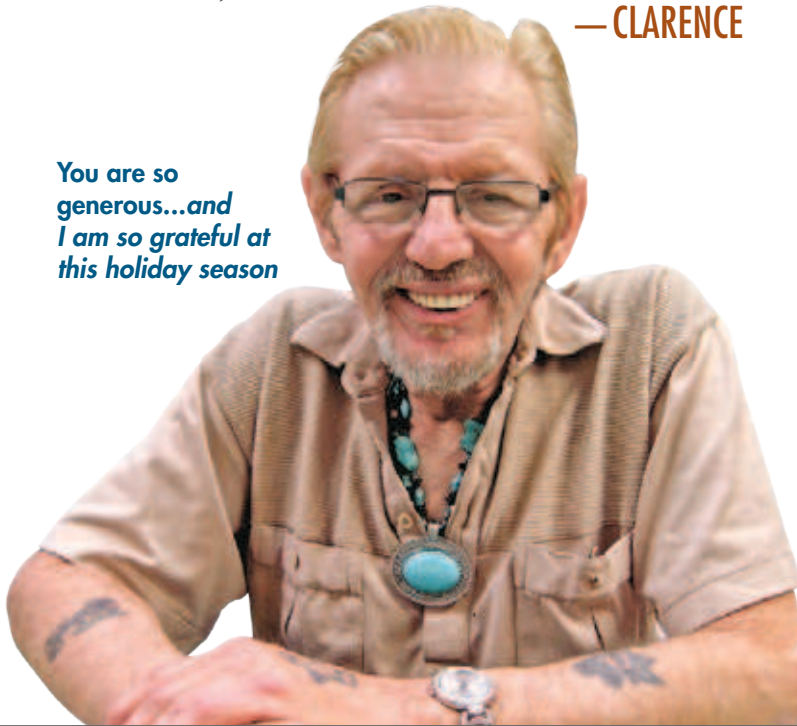
Thank you for the food I received today

Just today I received an amazing box of food. I couldn't help smiling as I discovered canned goods, salad bags, milk, cheese, bread and a lot more. What wonderful gifts, especially at this holiday season. Actually, every time I come here it's like Christmas. These are foods I could never afford to buy on my own—especially when I need to share my box with so many other people in my house.

But I want to focus for a second on what you mean to someone like me. I wonder if you realize the good you are doing through your donations and acts of service. You and I may never meet. But your generosity is never far from my mind. For the past 18 months you've made my burden lighter and my life better. So this holiday season, I want to say a special thank-you to all of you. I may be small in stature, but my heart is large and grateful.

"These are foods I could never afford to buy on my own — especially when I need to share my box with so many other people in my house."
— CLARENCE

You are so generous...and I am so grateful at this holiday season



INSIDE

A Word of Gratitude from our Board Chair

PAGE 2



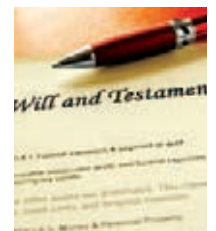
"If my grandfather could survive World War II, I know I'll make it"

PAGE 3



A legacy of giving

PAGE 3



A WORD OF GRATITUDE

FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

At this holiday season I bring you a special greeting of thanks for all you do to put nutritious food on the tables of our friends and neighbors. It's been said that *giving often comes from a heart that recognizes its own abundance...* and I agree with that.

The more we give, the more we have

It may sound like reverse logic, but the more we give of ourselves to reach out to a hungry child, a senior without food, or to a family that struggles to make it through one more day, *the more we get filled up.* This is the uncompromising win-win *law of compassion.*

Right now we want to be able to distribute more food into the vast, rural areas of Montana—into what we call *food deserts.* There are too many gaps in our food distribution chain at the

moment, and with your help we will continue to meet this challenge head-on.

It's the right thing to do

And how important is it for a child to eat good, nourishing food? I can tell you from personal experience what it means. My husband was food insecure as a child. As a result, he's lived with a weak immune system all his life. His poor health is a daily reminder of the importance of good nutrition early on. That's why we reach out to hungry children. That's why during the holidays we fill children's backpacks with extra bags of nutritious food so they'll have adequate sustenance during the long holiday vacations, when they are away from the school lunch and breakfast programs they depend on.

Finally, it takes each one of us to move toward our goal of realizing a hunger-free Montana...and we continue to make great strides through the *power of one: one dollar, one donor, one volunteer and one compassionate heart at a time* are helping to turn the tide. It's the *right thing* to do. Happy holidays,

Kim Jolliffe-Meeks

Kim Jolliffe-Meeks
Board Chair, Montana Food Bank Network



Everyone is genuinely concerned about the mission to end hunger in Montana

Ann Sharkey was looking through the paper one morning and spotted a help wanted ad for the Montana Food Bank Network. Our organization was in need of a high-level volunteer to help the development team process contributions. "It sounded like something I'd like to do, because it was for such a good cause," she says. "It was a very comfortable fit."

That was 18 months ago, and she has been assisting the development team ever since. Ann admires the work the staff at the Montana Food Bank Network does on a daily basis and she says, "A certain type of person works at a Food Bank. Everyone is genuinely concerned about the mission to end hunger in Montana."

Ann has lived in Montana for 29 years, and she feels that the issue of hunger is a real one and something she can't imagine going through herself. "I have never been hungry. I can't imagine having food insecurity be an issue in my life. I think it is especially important for children to be well-nourished. I think by helping MFBN provide food to the hungry, we are investing in the future of our children by nourishing them."

Ann enjoys her time working at the Montana Food Bank Network. "I feel very valued and appreciated as a volunteer," she says. "That's why I keep coming back. I enjoy it. And of course, there is the free coffee."



If my grandfather could survive World War II, I know I'll make it

My name is Mark. This is the first time in my life I've been unemployed. But during this difficult time, I keep seeing the goodness of people—especially the folks at our food pantry and at the Montana Food Bank Network. I now have a growing appreciation for what I used to have—a home and a few worldly goods. Now those are only memories. Today, I must rely on the kindness of others.

I have the choice to take the right fork in the road

Every day I see another fork in the road. I realize I can either take the road of self-pity or walk toward the path of appreciation for what I *still* have. I do my best to go in a positive direction. For a while, I'd lost faith in people. I used to just come to our food pantry

to eat and then leave. Then one day I realized I still have something offer—a handshake and a smile, if nothing else. Now, every time I eat a meal or take something back to where I'm staying on the street, I say a word of thanks for the Montana Food Bank Network, our pantry and to you who make all this possible.

"Personally, I can't thank you enough. I'm starting to feel normal again. For the first time in a long time I have peace in my heart." —MARK



Personally, I can't thank you enough. I'm starting to feel normal again. For the first time in a long time I have peace in my heart, even though there's no money in my wallet. I also try to keep my life in perspective. My grandfather was drafted into World War II, and when I think of what he went through I have every confidence that I will make it. Thank you for the food, the encouragement and the *hope* you give me every day.

Your gifts of food this holiday season and throughout the year are lifesaving. Thank you.

A legacy of giving

It is with great respect and humility that we are noticing a growing number of donors to the Montana Food Bank Network are choosing to make a bequest in order to help others in the future. Our grateful hearts thank donors like Barb in Drummond, MT, who says:

"I included the Montana Food Bank Network in my will because it was the right thing to do. Hunger is an immediate need that is easy and inexpensive to fulfill. A bequest to the Montana Food Bank Network will help assure its financial stability into the future so it can continue to provide food for those people who fall on hard times. Including the Montana Food Bank Network in your will is an act of compassion that costs you nothing."

It is a simple process to include any nonprofit organization in your will to ensure that the good work continues. If you are interested in making a bequest to the Montana Food Bank Network or just have general questions, please contact Kathryn McCleerey at (406) 721-3825, extension 244.



Celebrating 210,000 meals

Thanks to many generous sponsors, outstanding local chefs and 200 wonderful guests, the 5th annual "A Chef's Affair" gala was another big success! By keeping event costs very low—through in-kind gifts of everything from linens and flowers, to auction items and diamonds—over \$30,000 was raised after expenses. And that is enough to provide food for 210,000 meals for hungry children, seniors and families across Big Sky Country. Thank you!



Hunger is not taking a vacation this holiday season...

We thank you for giving hungry Montanans the gift of food

The mission of the Montana Food Bank Network is to end hunger in Montana through food acquisition and distribution, education and advocacy. To do this requires the teamwork of an amazing group of people...and this teamwork starts with you. Our mission also depends on our dedicated staff, pantry workers and volunteers who give one of the greatest gifts of all: *their time*.

As you read the stories, you'll see firsthand how your involvement with the Montana Food Bank Network is making a difference in people's lives. Clarence is a Vietnam vet who served his country well. *Now it's*

our privilege to serve him. Mark is unemployed for the first time... and until he finds employment, we will be there to provide him with the food he needs. Although Montana has just over a million residents, *we live within a 147,000-square-mile area.* That's a lot of territory, and for thousands of Montanans it's a *food desert*, meaning there is little or no emergency food available.

We will not let the vastness of Montana win this battle

That's why we are doing all we can to close the geographical gap by providing food to those who need it most: our children, the elderly, single parents and

families who find it difficult to make ends meet. We will not let the vastness of Montana win this battle to put food on the tables of those in need. If you know of someone who desires the assistance of the Montana Food Bank Network, please let us know. And if you ever find yourself in need of food, you know where to turn.

Thank you for your many acts of kindness. To continue to show your support, we urge you to complete the remit slip enclosed and mail it to us along with your holiday donation today. You may also give your gift on our secure website at www.mfbn.org. Thank you!

As you read the stories, you see firsthand how your involvement with the Montana Food Bank Network is making a difference in people's lives.



Visit us on Facebook at facebook.com/feedingmontana



AND

Follow us on Twitter @mfbn to see the work you support and spread the word about Montana Food Bank Network!



MY HOLIDAY DONATION

YES, Kim, you can count on my continued support of the Montana Food Bank Network during the holiday season.

Here's my gift of: \$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 Other \$ _____

I commit to a monthly gift of \$ _____. My first gift is enclosed.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Please make your check payable to:

MONTANA FOOD BANK NETWORK

P.O. Box 17830, Missoula, MT 59808-7830

Your donation is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. We will send a receipt for your records.



Please charge my gift on my credit card:

VISA MC AMEX DISC

CARD NUMBER _____ EXP. DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____ TELEPHONE # _____

My email address is: _____ @ _____

To charge your gift by phone, please call (800) 809-4752 or give online at www.mfbn.org

Your gifts change lives!