



*Neighbors Helping
Neighbors*

Spring 2021

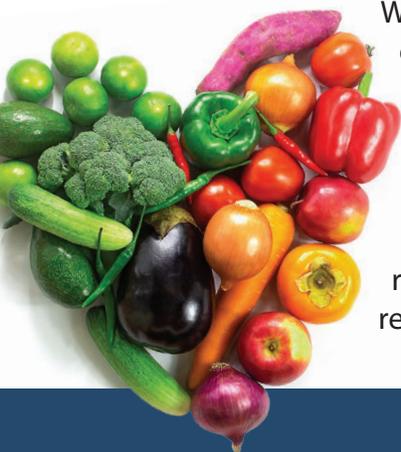
What is going on with the FOOD IS MEDICINE program?

This important program of the Fairbanks Community Food Bank started in the winter of 2018. It began with a simple idea, as all our programs do: **those who are suffering with serious medical issues need special FRESH food in their diets.**

When the volunteers build food boxes in our daily food box program, the goal is to provide 20 pounds of food per person in the household (2.2 pounds per meal for 9 meals). That is approximately 3 days worth of locally collected community food. While this is helpful for emergencies, medical issues can be long-lasting, and special diets are often required. Therefore, the challenge was to find a way to provide daily FRESH food for extended periods of time.

The goal of the program is to provide 6 pounds of FRESH food every day, 5 days a week, with a maximum of 30 pounds of fruits and vegetables each week. The patient who receives this food must be medically referred into the program. **The food is free, of course.**

When the program started, each patient needed a medical referral every 3 months. During 2020, access to medical personnel was so limited we had to change the requirement for a renewal/referral to every 6 months.



Here is where we are with this program to date:

- The name was changed from H.E.L.P. to FOOD IS MEDICINE.
- The food pick-up location changed from 725 26th Avenue (Fairbanks Community Food Bank) to 2216 S. Cushman (Food Bank Volunteer Club House). The reason for the change was COVID related. We had to close our front doors at the Fairbanks Community Food Bank in order to restrict general public traffic.
- We moved to a different location, which allowed the medically referred patients to pick the food they most needed in their diets. There was no possibility for "customer choice" food at the main warehouse due to COVID.
- The daily time to pick up this fresh food is 11 am to 3 pm, Monday thru Friday.
- There were 728 patients enrolled in the program at the end of December 2020.
- The FOOD IS MEDICINE program distributed 84,084 pounds of FRESH food during the period of October 2019 to September 2020.
- Some people come once a week, and some come several days each week for their daily 6 pounds of FRESH food. 6 pounds is the maximum available each day.

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The Alaskan Town Where Everyone Bakes for Good

How a community fights hunger with bread



There are some days in life when you receive a phone call that changes your course of direction. Early in 2014, I received such a call. Local sixth grader Nick Prayner, along with his mom Kim, wanted to know if the Fairbanks Community Food Bank would participate in King Arthur's Bake for Good program.

Kim had it all figured out: using supplies provided by King Arthur, the school kids would bake bread to be donated to the Fairbanks Community Food Bank, and I would tell students the story of the Fairbanks Community Food Bank so they'd be excited about donating their precious loaves. Sounded fun! So with an enthusiastic "Yes!" I began an adventure with Nick, Kim, and Nate Sandel from King Arthur that has since brought in almost 20,000 loaves of bread to the Fairbanks Community Food Bank.

INVITING OUR COMMUNITY TO BAKE

As we started planning our collaboration with Bake for Good, the Fairbanks Community Food Bank team also wanted to build local excitement for the initiative. This desire to expand led Food Banker Sam Kirstein to come up with the brilliant idea to invite community members to participate alongside students. She reached out to House Representative Tammie Wilson about getting involved, and she jumped on the idea.

But before we could get started, we also needed Tammie's help to get around hurdles with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (which oversees food handling safety). To be able to accept homemade bread, we needed a variance to the DEC's regulations. They ultimately produced a pamphlet on how to bake safely, which we incorporated into "baker sacks" that also included a bread bag, a twist tie, and a label for writing ingredients.

Anne Weaver is CEO of the Fairbanks Community Food Bank, located in Fairbanks, Alaska. The Fairbanks Community Food Bank first participated in the King Arthur Bake for Good program in 2014. Anne shares the extraordinary story of how that initial collaboration has blossomed into a community-wide baking initiative.



Donated loaves from one of our local bakers, stored and delivered with our baker sack materials.

We wanted to make it as easy as possible for people to participate, and this way, the only thing the baker had to do was bake!

READY, SET, BAKE!

We launched the project on the Fairbanks Community Food Bank's Facebook page in October of 2014, sharing instructions on how locals could participate by baking to donate for Thanksgiving. King Arthur donated an amazing amount of flour, and they also sent Nate up to Fairbanks to visit seven schools and teach students how to bake.



King Arthur Bake for Good instructor Nate Sandel alongside Nick Prayner (right), his twin Alex (in blue), and two other students

Ultimately, the community excitement exploded. The Fairbanks Community Food Bank was amazed by the joy and heartfelt stories this baking project was generating.

One boy from Watershed School was so inspired after Nate's Bake for Good presentation that he encouraged his friends to "keep on baking for people in need." He brought in an additional 45 loaves of bread on Monday, and then another 17 the following Tuesday!

A woman named Anna Free donated 15 loaves of homemade bread one morning. She had so much fun with it that she became the first person to start baking for the Fairbanks Community Food Bank year-round. Even now, six years later, she still brings in 5 loaves each week!

Hundreds of loaves were donated that year, and excitement spread throughout the community.

CONTINUING TO BAKE FOR GOOD

King Arthur continued to send baking supplies for several years after we first started working with Bake for Good. Since 2014, the Fairbanks Community Food Bank has kept up an annual tradition of collecting and supplying over 2,000 loaves of bread with our Thanksgiving food boxes. Not to mention, we also supply around 1,000 fresh homemade loaves throughout the year.

These precious loaves come from Girl Scout troops, homeschool projects, some of the same schools Nate visited (many of which have turned this into an annual classroom project), retirees, businesses, and individuals who simply want something meaningful and fun to do at home.

One year, a business located in a large office building called to let us know that every November they were bombarded with the aroma of freshly baked bread. As it turns out, people in other offices were bringing their bread machines into work and baking for the Fairbanks Community Food Bank. Inspired, this business jumped on the bandwagon and started baking as well! Community members have even started a contest each autumn to see who can be the first to bring in 100 loaves of bread for Thanksgiving.

We've also expanded beyond bread. After one of our largest grocery stores closed in 2018, we no longer had access to the cookies and treats we used to receive from them, which were missed tremendously by the seniors we work with. We went back to the DEC and requested the variance be expanded to allow homemade cookies as well. Now, community members bake thousands of cookies for these seniors to enjoy.

Then 2020 hit ...

In the midst of all the hard moments, I received a text from a schoolteacher named Craig, who sent me a photo of three beautiful loaves of bread he had just pulled out of his oven. With the photo, he sent this note: *"When you can't control the world around you, control what you can: yeast, water, flour, sugar. Baking bread for the Fairbanks Community Food Bank is proving quite therapeutic!"*



Anna Free with the loaves she baked to donate



Boxes and boxes of bread, all donated!



Vivian Stiver, who baked with two friends to donate 100 loaves for Thanksgiving



FOOD IS MEDICINE *(Continued from page 1)*

During 2020, how did we get through food and fundraising for this special group?

Alaska Kidney Foundation provided a grant for the program's space, heat, and lights, and Usibelli, Kinross Fort Knox, and Northern Star Pogo Operations provided operation funds to make sure there was sufficient FRESH produce for those who were enrolled when our daily salvage food was so low.

The volunteers who operated the program were provided by the MASST program. We did not have to close down even one day in 2020 due to COVID or other challenges.

We give so many thanks to the grocery stores who provided FRESH food for the daily program, the USDA FARM TO FAMILIES disaster relief program, and donors who saw the need and immediately stepped right up to help.

All medical providers are invited to offer a medical referral to the FOOD IS MEDICINE program. These are the ones who referred patients in 2020:

- **Interior Community Health Center referred 126 patients**
- Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)
- Alaska Center for Natural Medicine
- Alaska Family Health and Birth Center
- Bassett Army Community Hospital
- Cancer Care Center
- Chena OBGYN
- Chief Andrew Isaac
- Chena Health
- Fairbanks Memorial Hospital
- Fresnius Kidney Care
- Holistic Medical Center
- Interior Women's Center
- Kidney and Hypertension Clinic
- Mountain View Medical Center
- Porter Heart Center
- Tanana Valley Clinic
- Veteran's Affairs



Thank you!

Our Mission Statement

The Mission of the Fairbanks Community Food Bank is to collect local surplus food in the community and share it with local people who need it.

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 Samantha Kirstein, Community Development Director
 Gail Ballou, Attorney

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The Difference Your Donation Makes

We will keep you fully informed about the difference your donation makes, and we ask you to consider 5% for the Fairbanks Community Food Bank as you prepare for the next generation in your estate planning.
Thank you.

