

Nourishing Change

Fall 2025



A volunteer of Keystone Community Services, a partner food shelf of The Food Group, packs groceries for home delivery, ensuring people with disabilities receive the food they need.

Partnering To Increase Food Access For Individuals With Disabilities

High grocery prices are putting pressure on families across Minnesota, and **the strain is even greater for individuals with disabilities who face more barriers to accessing food.**

At the same time, organizations like The Food Group are navigating federal funding cuts and rising food costs as they work to keep shelves stocked and families fed.

One key barrier that many individuals with disabilities face is transportation. Disabled adults often rely on public transportation or ride with someone else to access food. Some must depend on a case worker's schedule to get groceries.

Thanks to you, The Food Group is removing barriers for people in our community to access food. We partner with food shelves like Keystone Community Services and Intercongregation Communities Association (ICA) to supply nutritious and culturally

connected foods that help stock their shelves, mobile grocery sites, and home delivery programs.

"Without support from food banks like The Food Group, food shelf partners like Keystone would not be able to bring in as much healthy, nutritious food," shared Georgi Nguyen, Keystone's Director of Basic Needs and Volunteer Board Member of The Food Group.

For community members like Barb – who struggled with transportation and rising grocery costs – home delivery of groceries from her local food shelf, Keystone Community Services, brings her stability. She knows she'll have nutritious food each month without worrying how to afford or access it.

Your generosity helps Minnesotans access the food they need in ways that work for them.

Food Security & Disability

People with disabilities are twice as likely to live in poverty and struggle to put food on the table.*

41% of food insecure households

had at least one disabled adult in 2023.*



Among households with very low food security, a staggering

49% had at least one disabled adult.*



*Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP)

*The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Harnessing The Power Of Local Food To Fight Hunger



Sinying, a first-year farmer in The Food Group's Big River Farms' Incubator Program

This summer, **farmers in The Food Group's Incubator Program** worked long days in the fields, pulling weeds, and preparing for harvest. This fall they are selling their crops at local co-ops, farmers markets, and to The Food Group.

Thanks to your support, these farmers are not only building their own businesses but also strengthening Minnesota's food system.

After decades of disinvestment in local farmers, Minnesota is reliant on fragile national supply chains. Those supply chains are easily disrupted, leading to scarcity and high food costs for families. The Food Group is addressing both immediate hunger and the root causes of food scarcity by sourcing more local, nutritious and culturally connected food.

Rhys Williams, The Food Group Volunteer Board Member and Former Director at The Good Acre, shares how a strong local food system builds community power by disrupting the conditions that create food scarcity.

"Everybody wants to live in community where you support each other. It's a circle – when you don't have local food, you're very dependent on outside the circle... it's a breakdown of community." – Rhys Williams

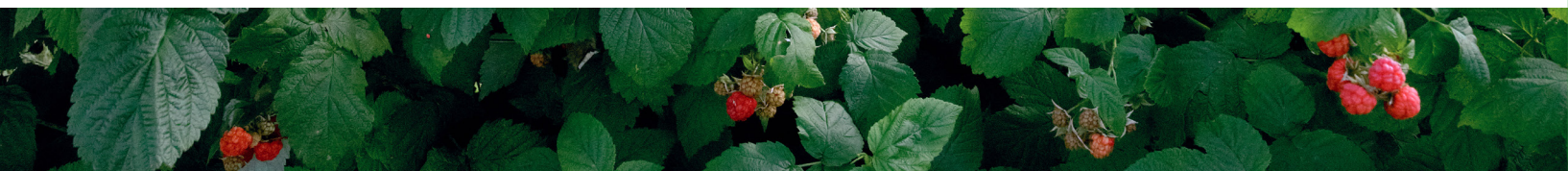
A strong local food system is a lasting remedy to hunger. By sourcing food from Minnesota farmers, we're creating a reliable food source for the future and building up the local economy.

"You need organizations like The Food Group to support the farmers... The Food Group's Big River Farms program is training farmers in how to make a living at farming." – Rhys Williams

Your generosity is an investment in local farmers and brings culturally meaningful food to families. When avian flu threatened egg supplies this past winter, we turned to local farmers including graduates of our Incubator Program, the Carillo Brothers. By making a two-year commitment to purchase their eggs, we ensured a steady supply of this household staple while supporting their farm business and Minnesota's economy.

"Food that is produced locally by people you know is generally going to be better because it's closer and you can have awareness of production and farming practices." – Snow Aukema, The Food Group's Associate Director of Anti-Hunger Programs

A strong local food system does more than fill shelves today – it creates a foundation for tomorrow. **By supporting immigrant and emerging farmers, paying fair prices, and investing in sustainable practices, we are building a future where food is accessible, equitable, and rooted in community.**



Farmer Spotlight

Your support makes it possible for farmers like Nicolette to **bring fresh, local produce to the community while strengthening our food system.**



"I love growing food for people. I love sharing things with people and food is one of the great connectors. I feel really honored and humbled in a way to be a part of our food system." – Nicolette, second-year farmer in The Food Group's Big River Farms' Incubator Program

Did You Know?

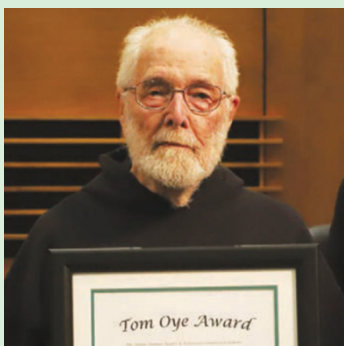
The Food Group's Local Food for Every Table program purchases produce from local farmers and distributes it via food shelves and our affordable grocery programs, Fare For All and Twin Cities Mobile Market, to share with households most in need.

Thank you to Finnegans and Lakewinds for powering this work that **brings fresh food from farmers to food shelves in our community!**



Turning Loss Into Legacy

An Enduring Commitment To Justice and Equity



Sanford "Sandy" Berman has supported The Food Group for 36 years. As a retired librarian, Sandy has spent his life working to make the world "a little better" — raising awareness around causes he holds dear, including food and housing justice.

More than 30 years ago, Sandy established a scholarship for Black women to attend law school, honoring his late wife. But earlier this year, due to a Supreme Court ruling and policy changes, the university could no longer administer it.

What could have remained a painful loss instead became something remarkable.

Rather than let the legacy end, Sandy directed the full value of the endowment to The Food Group. His gift will provide culturally familiar meals to families in need, support language translation services at our upcoming Emerging Farmers Conference, and purchase crops from Big River Farms farmers to stock local food shelves.

Through this remarkable act, Sandy is **transforming disappointment into impact** — and continuing his lifelong fight for justice and equity. We are honored to carry forward the legacy of his gift and the memory of his wife.

Meeting The Growing Need In Rural Communities

Across rural Minnesota, many families have little access to local grocery stores. Instead, they often rely on convenience stores with limited options and higher prices. Recent cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will make accessing nutritious food even more challenging, especially **for the 45% of Minnesotans on SNAP who live outside the metro and have fewer resources to turn to.**

That's why The Food Group's **Fare For All pop-up grocery program is making such a difference.** By offering fresh produce and frozen meats at up to 40% less than retail prices, **families can stretch their budgets and put more nutritious food on the table.**

In Rush City, Fare For All sets up monthly at the high school, serving more than **100 households each visit.** This site opened last February in response to Chisago County Health Workers asking for our presence in their community. Teachers, the principal, and even students pitch in to shop and help push carts and carry groceries, creating a true community effort.

Your support brings Fare For All to rural Minnesota, helping families access healthy food, weather federal funding cuts, and strengthen community connections.



YOUR IMPACT, THEIR WORDS

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"This is so helpful, it really helps to stretch our budget" – Fare For All Participant

"We do not have a grocery in town, community members are forced to shop at Kwik Trip and Family Dollar for their groceries"
– Fare For All Participant

Federal Funding Update

In July, **Congress passed the largest cut to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in history** – slashing \$186 billion, or 20%, from the program. These cuts will also impose stricter work requirements, raise state costs, and eliminate nutrition education.

Nearly half a million Minnesotans rely on SNAP to put food on the table. The ripple effects go beyond families. Local grocers, farmers, and food shelves will also struggle. SNAP dollars fuel local economies – generating \$1.50 for every \$1 spent – and without them, jobs, stores, and farms will be at risk.

Your support makes it possible for The Food Group to fight hunger from all angles – providing affordable groceries, supporting local farmers, strengthening food shelves, and advocating for SNAP and other long-term solutions to end hunger.

Building A More Resilient And Collaborative Food System

I love the changing of the seasons. It offers a chance to reflect and plan for the months ahead and lately I've been doing a lot of planning for what's to come. **Minnesota's emergency food system is facing one of its greatest challenges yet.** Recent cuts to SNAP and Medicaid will create a dramatic rise in community need, straining food shelves already operating at or above capacity.

In response to the growing need, The Food Group is spearheading conversations to rethink how our food system works. **In partnership with organizations across the state, we are fostering collaboration, driving innovation, and sharing resources to ensure more families have reliable access to the food they need.**

Over the summer, we convened food shelves, food banks, and statewide partners for critical conversations about a coordinated response in the months ahead. We're also elevating the voices of those most affected by funding and policy shifts through our Lived Experience Leadership cohort, ensuring solutions are shaped by those most affected.

By bringing people together, sharing resources, and centering equity, we are strengthening Minnesota's food system for today and the future.

THANK YOU for standing with us to meet this critical moment. I'm grateful for your support.

With Gratitude,



Sophia Lenarz-Coy
Executive Director



We Met The Match!

Thanks to you we unlocked a generous \$28,375 matching gift from our board of directors this fall. Together, that meant twice the impact – **providing 113,500 meals to families across our community.**

Volunteer Spotlight

For the past three years, Bruce has been a dedicated volunteer at The Food Group. He shows up twice a week – and even comes in early to help set up the volunteer projects.

His advice for anyone considering volunteering? *"It's necessary – and it's rewarding."*

Thank you to Bruce and all our dedicated volunteers! You make this work possible!



"Helping families who need food has always been important to me." – Bruce Artman (pictured above during a volunteer shift)

Calendar of Events



Donor & Friends Volunteer Night

October 22, 5-7pm

New Hope Warehouse Tour

November 11, 5pm

Give to the Max Day

November 20 (all day giving event)

Virtual Update

December 11, 8:30am

New Hope Warehouse Tour

December 17, 10am

RSVP to Mai Kaying Yang at info@thefoodgroupmn.org

For more information visit:
thefoodgroupmn.org/events/



Pictured here: high quality, shelf-stable food for our community in need thanks to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

THANK YOU!

Thank you to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for sharing a truckload of high quality, shelf-stable food with our community and to the below corporate partners for your support:

