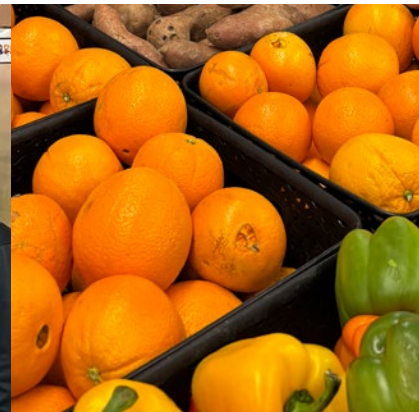


White Bear Area Food Shelf



Simplifying
Paths to
Food



Decreasing
Barriers



Supporting
Community

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Friends,

In a year of continuing rising levels of food insecurity in our community, we stayed focused on what matters most: creating welcoming, uncomplicated ways for people to access food. We are committed to providing a stable and supportive environment for everyone in need.

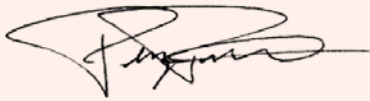
Recent research from Second Harvest Heartland found that 42% of Minnesota households worry about their overall stability, especially when facing rising costs in housing, utilities, and employment. These pressures can quickly disrupt a household's budget and push families into food insecurity, forcing difficult choices between grocery budgets and other bills with deadlines. Having straightforward, reliable access to food helps neighbors stay steady through these moments of pressure and uncertainty.

This year also brought changes to several of our funding sources. The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) was reduced by 50%, and two federal grants were paused. These adjustments required us to be thoughtful and resourceful in how we operated, even as community need increased. Check out page nine to learn more about where our food comes from.

The Food Shelf depends on the reliable support of individual donors during times of wavering community resources and grants. Monthly gifts—whether \$5, \$25, \$100, or any amount—help build the consistency we need to plan ahead, respond to changing conditions, and ensure food remains available to anyone who needs it.

Thank you for your support and for helping strengthen access to food across our community.

With gratitude,



Perry Petersen
Executive Director



Understanding Food Security in MN

1 in 5
households
in Minnesota can't
afford the food
they need.

(Second Harvest Heartland -
2025 Survey)

36%
of food shelf visitors
in MN are children.

(The Food Group - 2024 MN Food Shelf
Visits Report)

34%
of individuals
served by the White
Bear Area Food Shelf
are children.

(White Bear Area Food Shelf, FY2025)

Simplifying Paths to Food

Simplifying pathways to food is a complex task. One of the ways we address this challenge is by increasing food accessibility. The White Bear Area Food Shelf provides food for the community at 28 locations throughout the year, including Mobile Markets, free produce markets in local parks, school and community partner pantries, and our flagship brick-and-mortar locations.

Where can you find the White Bear Area Food Shelf?



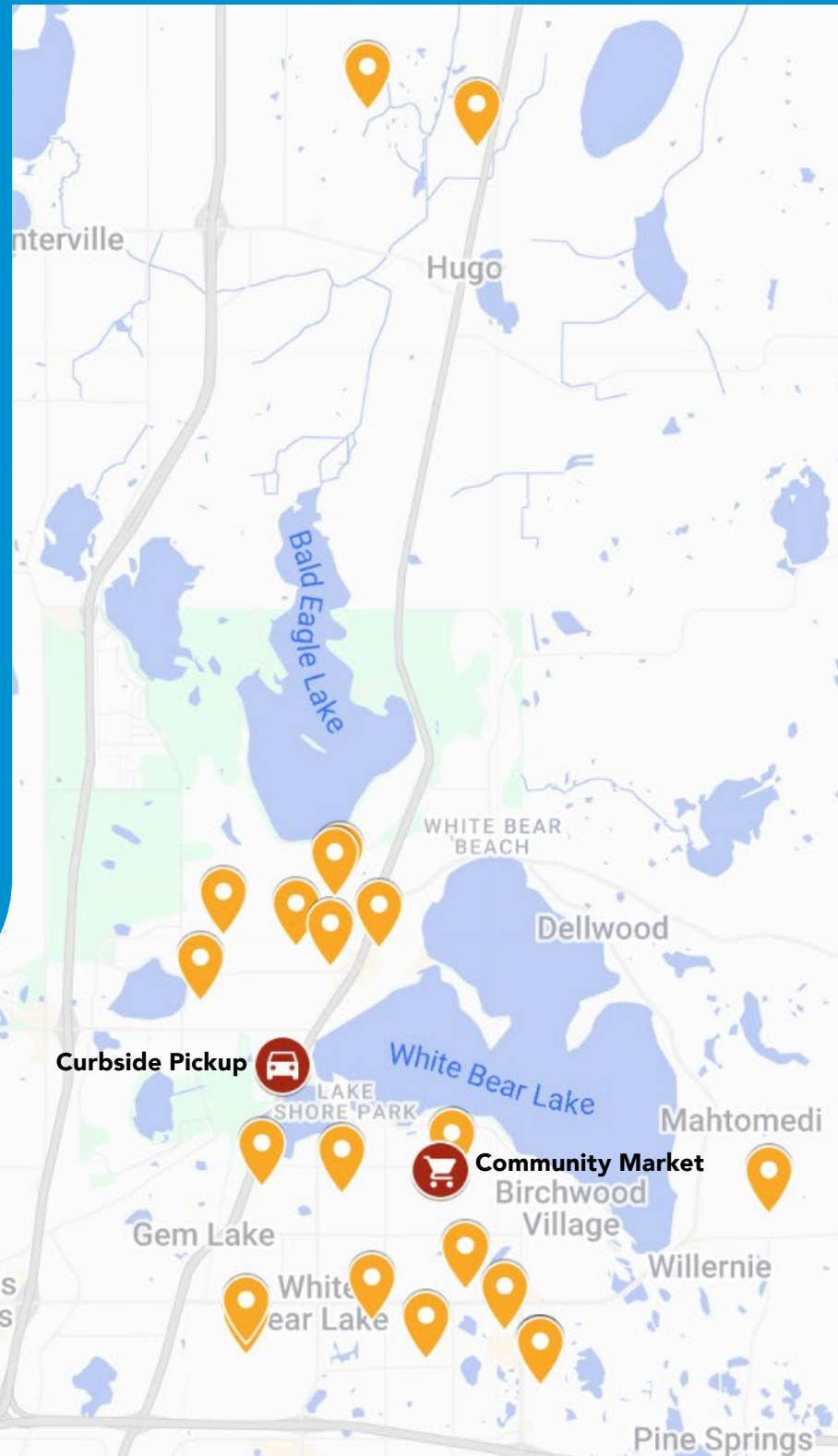
Curbside Pickup
1884 Whitaker Street,
White Bear Lake



Community Market
2446 County Road F,
White Bear Lake



Twenty six other locations supporting Free Produce Markets, KidPack in Schools, Mobile Markets, Pantries, and Community Partners.



78,298 VISITS WERE
MADE TO THE
WHITE BEAR AREA FOOD SHELF

17% INCREASE
IN INDIVIDUALS SERVED



Increasing Accessibility

Curbside Pick-Up

The staff, volunteers, and donors at the White Bear Area Food Shelf understand that need happens at every level of income and in every season of life. Need can be seasonal, chronic, immediate, and unexpected, and we are here for all of it. Curbside Pick-Up on Whitaker St. and Community Market on County Rd F are open to everyone as often as needed.

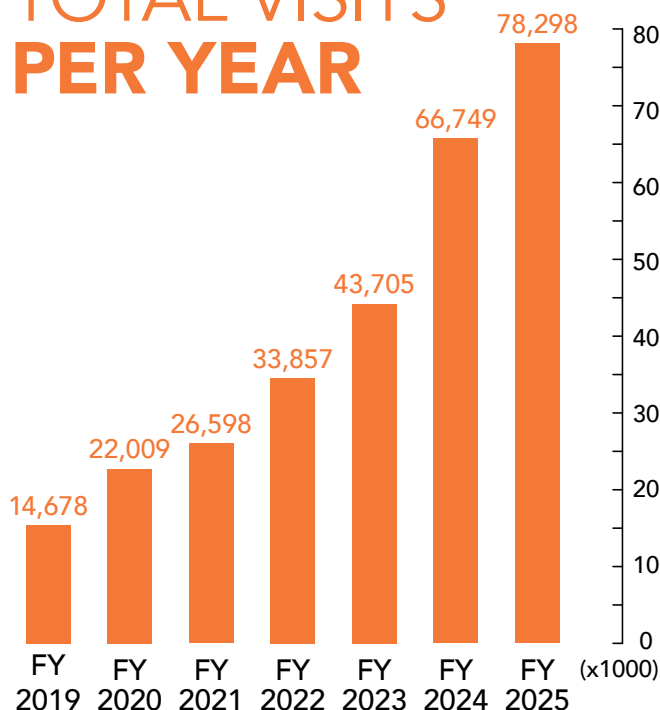
Neighbors choose to access our services for many different reasons. Some are living on a fixed income, some are adjusting spending to pay for health bills and car repairs, and others are simply finding it difficult to make ends meet as costs continue to rise.

“I appreciate how non-invasive it feels to visit here. The volunteers walking up to my car are always smiling, I feel welcomed and not judged for coming”

– Curbside neighbor



TOTAL VISITS PER YEAR



Natalia visits the food shelf once a week for her family of four. Before giving birth to her twins, she was working, and the budget was tight but manageable. She tried to save money by switching to generic groceries, but the added childcare costs for her growing family pushed the budget beyond its limit. Natalia made the hard decision to step away from the workforce for now to care for her children and has deeply appreciated the partnership of the White Bear Area Food Shelf during this season. Knowing that food is consistently available — including gluten-free options for her child — brings security and stability to her household. When life’s rhythms allow, Natalia is hopeful she can give back by volunteering at the food shelf.

Despite opening the Community Market, Curbside Pick-Up continues to experience high demand, serving an average of 146 visitors each day. Neighbors select from a changing daily menu of 30-50 fresh, frozen and staple items including a variety of produce, dairy, proteins, and culturally connected staples. Volunteers greet neighbors at their car, fill orders, and bring groceries out in shopping carts making this program popular with seniors, people with disabilities and families with young children. Evening hours provide added flexibility for people balancing work, school, and family schedules.

29%

of Minnesota food shelf shoppers report needing to make a **choice between food expenses or housing expenses**

(The Food Group - 2024 MN Food Shelf Visits Report)

Food Shelf Greeters go the extra mile—literally. They walk an average of three miles per shift delivering food to cars. As one volunteer shared...

“I know we started Curbside Pick-Up because of COVID, but I’m glad it didn’t go away. So many good things have happened in that parking lot. It’s even better than the old in-market shopping was!”
— Mark C.



Bringing Food Closer to Home

Mobile Markets

The Mobile Program at the White Bear Area Food Shelf partners with organizations across the community to bring food closer to neighbors in need, whether that is a college student balancing studies and employment, a senior living on a limited fixed income, or a friend experiencing housing insecurity. In the summer, weekly Free Produce Markets pop-up throughout the community helping to increase access to food. Mobile programs provide the essential flexibility to meet neighbors where they are, ensuring food is available in the places they already learn, gather, and receive support.

Living on a fixed income often means making tough choices—especially when it comes to food. In White Bear Lake, 51% of households receiving SNAP benefits include a senior citizen, a figure significantly higher than surrounding zip codes. For many older adults, mobility and transportation challenges add another layer of difficulty accessing nutritious food.

Mobile Markets are pop-up grocery and produce markets set up in public spaces around town and in senior housing communities. During a recent visit to Willow Wood Apartments, the impact was clear. Residents greeted volunteers with smiles and gratitude, one sharing,

“I feel very fortunate every time I come to the market.”

The Mobile Market meets residents where they are—literally. On this visit to Willow Wood Apartments, 80% of the apartment’s residents participated. Grocery bags were tucked into four-wheeled walkers as neighbors browsed the tables, chatting with volunteers about new foods and favorite finds.

Milk and fresh produce were especially popular, along with simple, microwave-friendly meals. Others expressed appreciation for protein options they could cook at home. One 89-year-old shopper beamed,

“I love the variety of food.”



Helping students learn starts with making sure they have enough to eat. The White Bear Area Food Shelf supports learners at every stage by bringing food directly to the places they study and gather. The KidPack program provides allergy-friendly weekend meals for 300 elementary students weekly, food pantries at five local middle and high schools are regularly stocked, and Century College students and faculty can shop at the open-air pop-up market once a month. These programs reflect a simple truth — it is hard to focus, grow, or succeed in the classroom when you're hungry. Collaborative partnerships with Solid Ground and Northeast Youth & Family Services ensure their pantries are stocked, and clients also have access to food where they are and when they need it.

“I’m a full-time student and getting to the grocery store is hard. This is really helpful. Thanks.”

- Century College student who identified transportation challenges and limited time as reasons she visits the Mobile Market monthly.

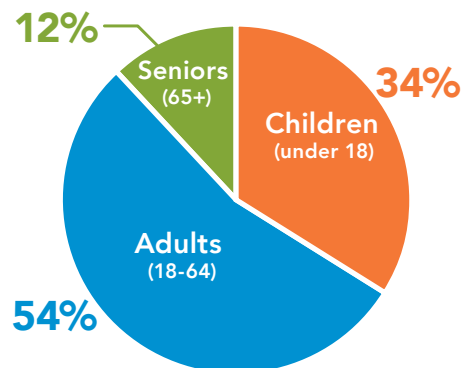


Example of a food pantry at White Bear Lake Area High School



INDIVIDUALS SERVED BY AGE

Mobile Markets offer flexibility in programs to reach specific groups of people, like seniors and children.



Lowering Barriers

Community Market

The White Bear Area Food Shelf celebrated the one-year anniversary of Community Market in January. After opening its doors for in-person shopping in 2024, it has been stocked daily with a wide variety of rescued food, fresh produce, and culturally connected staples for the 125 average daily visitors. The quality of the food is really good. I can find food that I haven't been able to try because it is so expensive at the grocery store," one shopper shared. Set-up like a corner grocery market, neighbors can shop for the food that best fits their household's dietary and cultural needs and preferences. Additionally, there is no intake process and shoppers check themselves out at self-serve kiosks.

Due to the popularity of this market, neighbors shared that they were waiting in long lines with long wait times. So in 2025, the food shelf responded by launching a "virtual line" utilizing Waitlist Me, a tool commonly used by restaurants. Now, neighbors can add their names to the list of the day and get a text notification when their name is coming up, so they can time their visit and shorten their wait time significantly.

52%

of Minnesota food shelf shoppers are looking for **specific foods to meet health needs** or chronic conditions

(The Food Group - 2024 MN Food Shelf Visits Report)

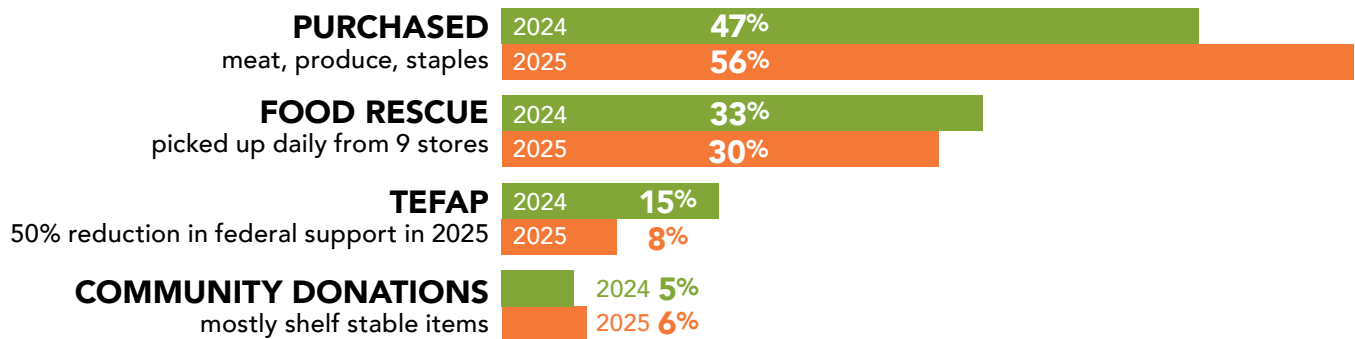
"The convenience, the variety of items and the quantity we receive are working well for our family. The food we get usually lasts in our house for a good amount of time with meal planning. We also appreciate how helpful and nice everyone is. I don't feel judged ever."

- Neighbor shopping at Community Market

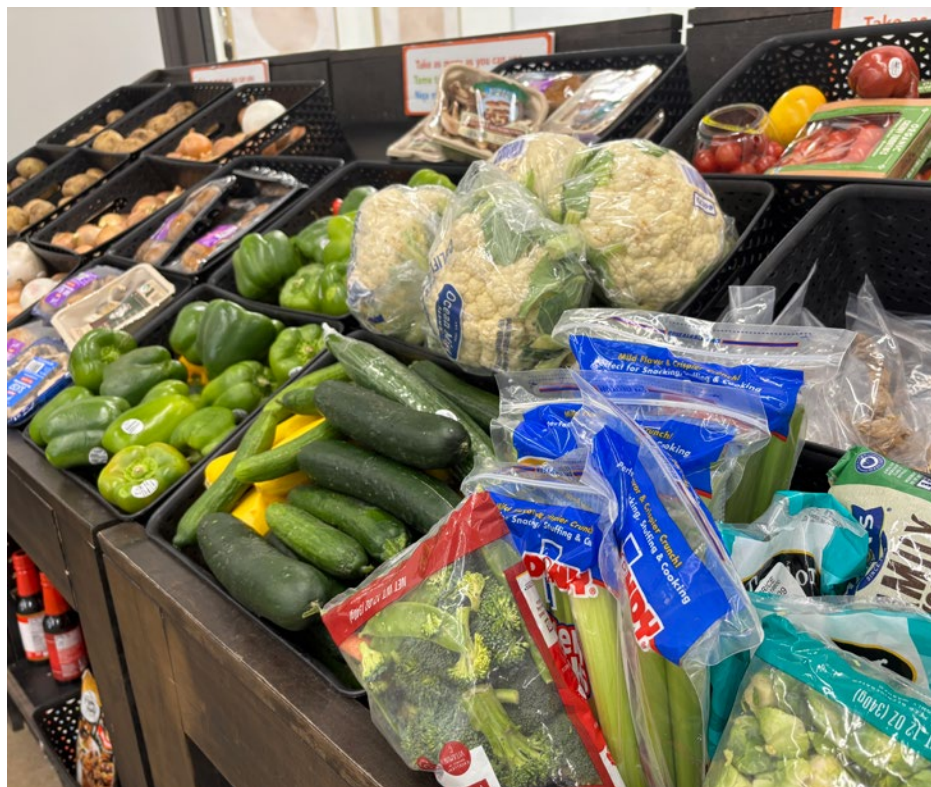


Where does our food come from?

Food rescue makes up one-third of all the food on the shelves, and it plays a vital role in keeping fresh produce, dairy, baked goods, ready-to-eat meals, and seasonal favorites available. Every pickup helps stretch family budgets, reduce waste, and protect our environment. Behind every rescued box from nine different partner locations is teamwork: grocery store staff set aside items, volunteer rescue drivers arrive early to collect them, more volunteers organize and quality check the food, and neighbors leave with delicious options.



The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a federal program that helps supplement the diets of people with low income by providing them with 100% American-grown food assistance distributed through regional food banks. TEFAP provides nutritious, domestically produced food to Minnesotans in need while also providing direct support to the local agriculture community. In 2025, funding to TEFAP was cut by 50% by Executive Order, reducing the amount of free fresh food available from food banks. This resulted in a 9% increase in the amount of fresh food that needed to be purchased.



Volunteer Powered

In retirement, Art was looking for a new “job” to keep himself active and avoid a sedentary routine. With extra time on his hands, he wanted to put it to good use. His first introduction to the food shelf came through a Free Produce Market, where he brought his 80-year-old neighbor and helped her with groceries. Sometimes they even split the produce because a single head of cabbage was more than either of them needed.

As Art began volunteering and tried out different roles, he discovered that his strengths fit best in neighbor-facing positions rather than sorting in the stockroom or assisting with computer work. Today, you can find him each week at the Community Market, restocking food shelves and assisting neighbors. With genuine enthusiasm for his role, Art often reflects,

“We move a lot of food! I’m not saying this is an easy job—there are days I come home tired—but it’s the best feeling.”



20,236 hours

of work volunteered, 11% increase from last year

Events



18th Annual BEAR'ly Open was a blizzardy good time! Partiers danced the night away to the live music of Ranger Things, golfers braved the winds and kept playing even as a small blizzard whooped up, and shoppers secured their deals in the online auction from the warmth and comfort of their couch!



Stamp Out Hunger was an unprecedented year! In May, 24,000 pounds of food came to the food shelf through the mail.



In August, the White Bear County Beach was filled with the sounds of the First Annual Heartbeat for Hunger. Yam Haus, Nunnabove and Call Me Fritz rocked the crowd into the night and filled everyone with an evening full of beach concert memories.

Community Supported

Fiscal Year Financials

October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025

Income

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Contributions | \$ 842,970 | 16% |
| Grants | \$ 639,870 | 12% |
| Events | \$ 301,923 | 6% |
| In-Kind (food and other) | \$ 3,382,082 | 65% |
| Other | \$ 37,524 | 1% |
| Total Income | \$ 5,204,369 | 100% |

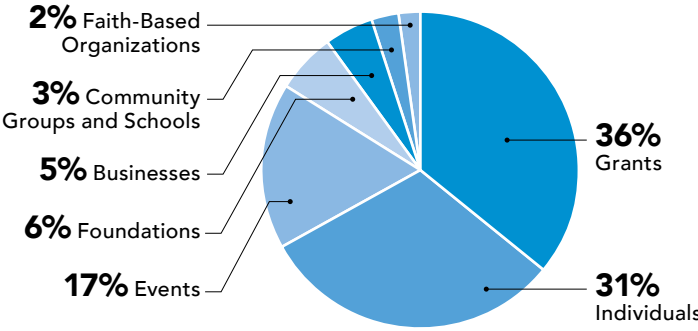
Expenses

| | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Program | \$ 4,642,771 | 92% |
| Administration | \$ 251,199 | 5% |
| Fundraising | \$ 158,212 | 3% |
| Total Expenses | \$ 5,052,182 | 100% |

Balance Sheet

| | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Total Assets | \$ 1,463,959 |
| Total Liabilities | \$ 129,470 |

FINANCIAL DONATIONS



* For additional financial information or to view the food shelf's most recent 990, please visit whitebearfoodshelf.org.



Gloria's Annual Food Shelf Shortest Marathon completed its 13th year with a record 373 marathoners. Runners made their way down the one-block marathon fueled by sliders and lemonade to gather and socialize at the end with coffee and donuts.

“We moved to White Bear five years ago and the food shelf helped us bridge that transition. Now we wanted to give back by walking in the marathon. Although my husband’s health has been difficult, this is the longest he’s walked in three weeks!”

- Gloria's Annual Food Shelf Shortest Marathon participant



November's Give a Gobble was a beautiful two day celebration of community and food. 780 neighbors pick-up a traditional Thanksgiving feast.

Our Staff



As the staff, board, and volunteers work to provide food and support to our neighbors in need, we remain committed to creating an environment that is welcoming, accepting, and grounded in compassion and respect. Neighbors can make their own food choices from an abundance of options made possible by the generosity and involvement of the wider community. Powered by volunteers and careful stewardship of every financial contribution, the food shelf strives to produce the greatest positive impact and offers rewarding opportunities for the community to come together for the greater good.

2025 Board of Directors

Dan Perry, Chair

David Swanson, Vice-Chair

Tina Volpe, Chair Emeritus

Margaret Thor, Treasurer

Sheila Kelly, Secretary

Megan Fairchild Anderson

Tom Horak

Caley Longendyke

Mark Miller

Briana Santoscoy

Dan Wachtler

Pakou Yang

Generous Donors

The staff and board would like to extend a special thank you to each one of the donors who support our neighbors through your contributions. We are also grateful to the food shelf's community partners, including The City of White Bear Lake, White Bear Lake Area School District, local businesses, and nonprofit organizations like the Lions Club, Rotary Club, and faith communities that support important fundraising events for the food shelf.



Find donors on our website

Our mission is to provide food and support to our neighbors in need.



Our vision is to end food insecurity in our community.