

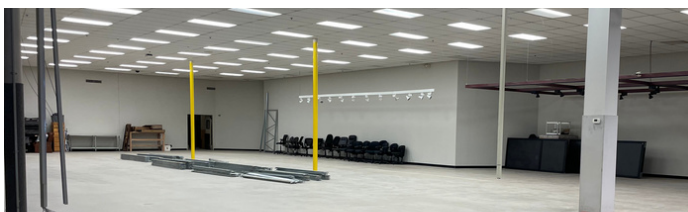


A New Adventure

Opening a new warehouse and kitchen in St. Cloud

For 41 years, we have provided meals, comfort, and kindness without questions to our guests. The need for nutritious community meals in Minnesota are as great as they have ever been and the barriers between our guests and partners to provide these meals have become more and more ominous.

We continue to seek out opportunities to provide meals in new and sustainable ways. Today, we are excited to tell you about our latest opportunity to remove barriers through our expansion into St. Cloud.



| The St. Cloud Warehouse before opening

The growing need for our programming in the Twin Cities metro area and Greater Minnesota has laid the foundation for our expansion into St. Cloud. We are excited to replicate the Loaves & Fishes ecosystem that has served our guests and partners successfully and consistently with dignity for years.

By opening a new space in St. Cloud, we can centralize our food rescue efforts in the area. The food we are already rescuing from St. Cloud partners will now be repurposed and served right back to the community from which it originated.

01

A New Adventure

Opening a new warehouse and kitchen in St. Cloud

02

The Commissary Kitchen

How partnerships remove barriers to food access

03

Save The Date

Spring Time Jamboree |
Wednesday May 10th, 2023

04

Cheers To 10 Years!

Celebrating Emily Carpenter's journey at Loaves & Fishes



We look forward to partnering with local nonprofits in the St. Cloud area to maximize our impact and increase access to nutritious community meals.

In addition to a new warehouse, the new location will house our second Commissary Kitchen and allow us the ability to turn rescued food into 500 meals daily. Our move to St. Cloud will lessen the financial burden of food programming on our partner nonprofits in the area, provide healthy and nutritious community meals, and decrease food waste.

The St. Cloud Commissary Kitchen and warehouse will begin full operations this month! We are grateful for all your support that allows us to take on this challenge each and every day as we continue to grow and serve free, healthy meals to as many Minnesotans as possible. We look forward to this new adventure; it wouldn't be possible without supporters like YOU.

Kiley Benson, Executive Director



**"Seven scouts
and four parents
helped make
1,443 portions in
one hour!"**

**-Jill King- Troop #18448
Commissary Kitchen volunteer**



The Commissary Kitchen

An innovative solution to provide more meals throughout our community

Our Commissary Kitchen in Minneapolis is crucial to ensuring our ability to serve more meals to Minnesotans. It is a fundamental part of the work we do behind the scenes every day, so we want to take the opportunity to bring the work of the Commissary Kitchen to the forefront.

The year was 2020; we were three months into the global pandemic and racial disparities continued to be unmasked in our community. Urban Ventures, a community partner of Loaves & Fishes, was struggling to access food suppliers. Through our street outreach program and local partnerships, we also began to identify a more significant food deficit within the surrounding community at that time.

At their Minneapolis location, Urban Ventures had a commercial kitchen that was going unused. Loaves & Fishes was already providing sandwiches to Urban Ventures for their youth programming when we collectively came up with a solution. We would prepare and cook food out of the commercial kitchen for Loaves & Fishes meal programming, and in exchange, we would provide meals and snacks for Urban Ventures' programming.

We immediately supplied and staffed the kitchen using CARES Act funding and community grants. Now just three years later, we are proud to say 700-1,000 meals are coming out of the Commissary Kitchen every weekday. This rapid growth is made possible by the food rescue team, our chefs, volunteers, and supporters.

Megan, a Chef with Loaves & Fishes, comes to our warehouse in Minneapolis throughout the week to select the ingredients and prepare meal plans for the days ahead. Then our trucks distribute the needed pallets to the Commissary Kitchen the following day.

We host volunteer teams regularly to help prepare and cook food alongside our Chefs.

Recently, Jill King, a Girl Scout Troop Leader from Troop #18448, shared about the experience:

"Chef Chad was extremely welcoming to the troop. He took the time to explain to the scouts the importance of the Commissary Kitchen, what types of meals they make, where they get the food, and how many people they serve in the community. The troop was extremely excited to learn about the Commissary Kitchen and make meals for our community."

Our Site Coordinators who manage our community meal sites creatively plan and prepare a unique menu each day and provide culturally appropriate meals. Site Coordinators rely on the help of local volunteers to prepare and serve meals as well as clean up after meal service. Even when a location is low on volunteer sign-ups, we can now prepare meals at the Commissary Kitchen to ensure a smooth meal service every day.

We take safety and health very seriously. We operate under the Department of Agriculture regulations for food storage and distribution at our central warehouse. The Commissary Kitchen operates under the commercial licensing of the Department of Health with additional annual compliance through other regulatory agencies.

The Commissary Kitchen is just one product of our ongoing innovation and community partnerships to create solutions. We look forward to replicating this model in St. Cloud to provide more meals to Minnesotans in need.

For more information on volunteering at the Commissary Kitchen, please contact our Director of volunteers and Outreach Latisha Moening at lmoening@loavesandfishesmn.org. Looking for a solution for your meal programming? Contact our Director of Operations Mel McCormick at mmccormick@loavesandfishesmn.org.



"I've been receiving cancer treatment for a couple of months now. Between the side effects of the medication and the cost of my care, Loaves & Fishes has been a point of consistency in my life. I'm so grateful for the meals they provide for my family and me through this difficult time."

-Loaves & Fishes Guest



Wednesday May 10th, 2023 | 5:30-7:30pm
The Market At Malcolm Yards

We are excited to bring the Loaves & Fishes community together for an in-person celebration this spring. Join us for free food and drinks while learning more about our latest initiatives. This event is free and open to all. We would love to see you there!



Calling all gardeners! Fresh Food Connect is a mobile app that helps local gardeners track and manage homegrown produce donations to support Loaves & Fishes. Scan the QR code below to get started today.

Methods to help us end hunger

FIND OUT MORE ON OUR WEBSITE!

CONTRIBUTE ONLINE

DONATE BY MAIL

LEGACY GIVING

VOLUNTEER WITH US

Scan the QR code to learn more



Cheers To 10 Years!

Celebrating Emily Carpenter's journey at Loaves & Fishes

Emily Carpenter first joined the Loaves & Fishes team in the spring of 2013 as a summer intern who managed one of our Summer Food Service Program lunch sites.

"My first memory at Loaves & Fishes was serving a lunch meal at River of Life Lutheran Church in North Minneapolis," shared Emily. "I quickly learned how guests counted on that meal every single day – Loaves & Fishes sites and meals were a constant in their lives."

Later that year, Emily was hired on as the Director of Operations. At the time, Loaves & Fishes operated about 10 community dining sites; food storage was limited to two shelves in a small closet and one deep freezer in the main office.

"We relied almost solely on volunteer groups to provide the food for meals to be served," Emily explained. "That was (and continues to be) an incredible gift, but we knew if Loaves & Fishes was going to grow, this wasn't sustainable."

Under the leadership of former Executive Director Cathy Maes, Emily and the Loaves & Fishes team explored a new innovative model of how to get food on the plates for guests. This developed into our current model including food rescue, a warehouse, staff cooking at community meal sites, and continuous creativity.

Emily later took on a new opportunity outside of the organization after being on staff for four years. However, she knew she wouldn't be able to stay away for long.

"Although I moved on from my role on staff, I continued to be passionate about the mission and the work of Loaves & Fishes," explained Emily. "The opportunity to join the board of directors was presented to me and it was a very easy 'yes'. I believed I would bring a unique perspective as a former staff member and I was thrilled to contribute to the organization in a new way."



Emily joined the board of directors in the fall of 2018. She quickly moved into the Vice Chair role and eventually became the current Board Chair, but her passion for the work doesn't end there.

"I decided a number of years ago to be a monthly recurring donor to Loaves & Fishes," Emily shared. "Every donation to the organization makes a difference and means more meals can be served to our community."

Emily will be finishing her term as Board Chair in the coming months and is looking forward to passing the baton to the next Board Chair.

"It has been an honor to work with the board and staff at Loaves & Fishes," said Emily. "I have valued learning from Cathy Maes as a leader, mentor, colleague, and friend, and I am so excited about the future of the organization under Executive Director Kiley Benson's leadership. I couldn't ask for two better leaders!"

Though Emily will be moving on from the Board Chair role, we know she won't make it too far. She plans to continue supporting our mission in a variety of ways and invite family and friends to do the same.

"As I reflect on the past 10 years, there has been so much change and growth, yet the constant has been the supporters: the incredible staff, the passionate volunteer base, and the dedicated donors," said Emily.

Thank you, Emily, for 10 years of service, enthusiasm, and leadership. We are incredibly grateful for your countless contributions to Loaves & Fishes from serving lunches as a summer intern to guiding our work as Board Chair. We cannot wait to see what comes next for you.



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