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# A Tale of Three Families

*Reducing barriers to food access at all ages*

Each volunteer tells a different story of how they were led to Loaves & Fishes, but they all share a similar bond of hope and service within their community.

On a recent Thursday evening, Matt, Danielle, and their three children, Jackson, Grace, and Kiegan, gathered in the kitchen of Easter Lutheran Church in Eagan.

Matt's colleague had volunteered with us in the prior months and had shared his experience at work. This led to Matt bringing the idea of family volunteering to Danielle. Now a few years later, they are regular volunteers who say the time away from the daily distractions and technology allows them to grow a deeper connection to each other while investing in their community.

**"We've seen growth in each one of our children," said Matt and Danielle. "We feel really lucky to be a part of our community in this way."**

The next night, Lakoda and her four children, Carter, Cole, Joey, and Kennedy, also joined Site Coordinator Robbie in the kitchen at Easter Lutheran. Lakoda and her family have volunteered with Loaves & Fishes since 2017. As an employee of a company that works to reduce global hunger, the opportunity to volunteer as a family locally is vital to Lakoda.

Over the last six years, Lakoda has noticed the change within her children that has come from interacting with guests from all walks of life. "I wish we could do it more," she said.

Across the state in Aitkin, Jenny and her two daughters, Erin and Courtney, have arrived for their shift at First Lutheran Church. Jenny started volunteering with Loaves & Fishes in 2010 as part of a corporate team that volunteered at Peace House in Minneapolis. As life took her to Crosby, she found the nearest community meal site and got involved as a family. Knowing there was a Loaves & Fishes community meal location in her new hometown provided a sense of comfort.

**"I look forward to my time at Loaves & Fishes. It breaks up my week," Jenny said. "And the whole family is involved in making the community meal happen when my kids are in town!"**

Together, these three families have taken on the challenge to invest in their community while simultaneously deepening their relationships with each other. Volunteers are truly the backbone of this organization – we couldn't serve 4.6 million meals each year without you! If you're interested in volunteering with Loaves & Fishes as a family, visit our website to learn more.



Pictured above is Matt, Danielle, Jackson, Grace, and Kiegan



Pictured above is Josh, Carter, Cole, Joey, Kennedy, & Lakoda



Pictured above is Jenny, Erin, Courtney, Rich, Kyle, and Calvin

**More than \$9 out of every \$10 donated to Loaves & Fishes goes directly to programming.**



Our SFSP meals are prepared and cooked out of the Commissary Kitchen by our chefs who are assisted by our wonderful volunteers. We work with local farmers, restaurants, and grocery stores to ensure that our meals feature the freshest and most nutritious ingredients possible while also being kid-friendly.

**"It's more than just a hot meal on our plates; it's a sense of relief knowing that my kids won't go to bed hungry."**

- Loaves & Fishes Guest

## Our Summer Programs

*Take a peek into Loaves & Fishes' busy summer*

Summer is a time for relaxation and fun, but for many families, it can also bring added stress, financial strain, and food insecurity. Because of this, it's a very busy time of the year for Loaves & Fishes. With school out of session, children may struggle to get the nutrition they need. That's where the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) comes in.

In conjunction with the Minnesota Department of Education, we open additional community meal sites and also partner with local organizations to accommodate students while school is out of session. Through SFSP, we bring fresh produce, balanced meals, and snacks to children during summer break.

For families like Tammy's, the SFSP meals and snacks make a huge difference. As a working mother with four kids, Tammy's family relies on reduced-price school lunches during the school year. She is grateful for our summer meals, saying, "It's really good food and helps reduce the worry I feel that comes with summer." Additionally, her children enjoy visiting with friends they may not otherwise see again until the fall.

Our summer interns play an integral role in our summer programming through assisting with meal preparation, distribution, and site supervision. This is a unique opportunity only available in the summer months. They work closely with program staff to ensure that meals are prepared and served on time, that community meal sites run smoothly and efficiently, and that every guest has a positive experience. We project 28,000 Loaves & Fishes meals will be served through SFSP this summer.

SFSP continues to be a vital program for families in our community. It ensures that children receive the nutrition they need to grow and thrive even when school is out of session. And with our focus on fresh, locally-sourced ingredients and a welcoming environment, we're proud to offer a program that nourishes the children and young families in our community.



**Did you know 34% of our guests are under the age of 25?**

**5%**

0-4

**13%**

5-12

**10%**

13-19

**6%**

20-25



# WE HAVE A MATCH



OTTO  
BREMER  
TRUST

We have accepted another challenge from The Otto Bremer Trust this summer! We are asking for your help to raise **\$30,000** by the end of August to ensure Minnesotan families can feed their children this summer. Once we reach this goal, Otto Bremer Trust will donate **an additional \$30,000** to Loaves & Fishes. Use the enclosed remittance envelope to mail in your donation or donate online at [www.loavesandfishesmn.org/donate](http://www.loavesandfishesmn.org/donate).

**DOUBLE YOUR DONATION TODAY**

SAVE THE DATE

## FALL JUBILEE

We are thrilled to announce our biggest fundraising event of the year. We invite you to save the date and join us for an unforgettable evening of food, drinks, live and silent auctions, raffles, and more – all for an excellent cause.

Mark your calendar, gather your friends and family, and join us for an evening of fun, philanthropy, and community. We can't wait to see you there!

**JOIN US ON SATURDAY  
SEPTEMBER 23RD!**

**We celebrated Volunteer  
Appreciation Month with FMSC and  
packed 19,224 meals!**



## Community Partnerships

*Reducing barriers here at home in Minnesota and globally*

As part of our ongoing commitment to reducing barriers to food access, we are excited to announce our partnership with Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) and Urban Ventures. Together, we will be partnering to provide free meals to anyone in need not only here at home but across the world.

In April, we had the privilege of celebrating Volunteer Appreciation Month with FMSC in Coon Rapids. Loaves & Fishes staff and board members came together to pack 19,224 meals! Our team had a blast and immediately wanted to plan the next event with FMSC.

So, we are teaming up with our friends at Urban Ventures (where our Commissary Kitchen is located) to combine forces at a FMSC MobilePack event this summer. Anyone can volunteer to measure, scoop, seal, and pack meals that consist of rice, soy, dehydrated vegetables, and a nutritious blend of vitamins and minerals. Once filled, these meals are shipped to distribution partners in countries around the world.

By participating in a FMSC MobilePack event with Urban Ventures, we can come together with other compassionate community members to nourish those who need it most. Together we can reduce barriers to food access here at home in Minnesota and globally.

Are you ready to get involved in upcoming two-day MobilePack event on August 15th and 16th? Stay tuned for more details on registration and fundraising on our website at [www.loavesandfishesmn.org/events](http://www.loavesandfishesmn.org/events).



# A Teachable Moment

*Board Member Karthik Viswanathan shares how he teaches his children about food insecurity*



*Board Member Karthik Viswanathan and his wife, Deepta*

After following and supporting the work of Loaves & Fishes for many years, I joined the board of directors in February of 2021. I had the opportunity to listen to the people who are serving and meeting the needs of those who are often overlooked. Hunger impacts so many people here in Minnesota but to the naked eye, we may not know that someone does not have access to food.

Soon after I joined the board – when my now seven year-old was five – he decided to express his anger about his food choice during dinnertime by throwing his plate full to the floor. Rather than getting angry (I was really fuming), I resolved to create a teachable moment; I told him about people who did not have access to food and showed how they struggled to survive or put food on the table for their families. This struck a chord.

He recalled that I served on the board of Loaves & Fishes and asked if he could donate some of his money. He had been saving up to buy a bike, but decided to give that money to the “place that gives people food” instead.

So we did, and I’m glad to note that was the last plate of food flung in our house... although our three-year-old son is equally rambunctious so perhaps there’s another teachable moment coming!

Loaves & Fishes is one of those organizations that helps those that you can see are clearly in need and also those who don't want others to know they're in need. This for me is something so incredibly valuable in how the organization goes about our work. We happen to live in one of the wealthiest states in our country yet there are many of us who on appearance may seem like they have what they need to feed their families, but inside there is deep anxiety about how they are going to feed their children. That’s where we come in. Just to play a role in being part of the solution is inspiring enough for anyone to work for Loaves & Fishes.

–Karthik Viswanathan, L&F Board Member

I became a monthly recurring donor because I knew it would make a difference.

Before I moved to Minnesota a few years ago, I gave back to my community by supporting nonprofits like the local food shelf. I began researching similar organizations in the Twin Cities when I found Loaves & Fishes. I was impressed with the direct approach of feeding anyone in need with no questions asked.

Donating monthly not only helps spread out my philanthropy budget throughout the year, but it helps Loaves & Fishes plan their expenses as well. Plus, it was so easy to set up. Now Loaves & Fishes can count on my ongoing support every month.

**–Loaves & Fishes Donor**



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