

Our mission is to offer hope
as we provide assistance to our neighbors in need.

Food Insecurity in Our Community Together, We Can Make a Difference!

During the month of March, people throughout Minnesota come together to raise funds and collect food for their local food shelves. Traditionally the time of year when food shelves' inventory was lowest, the March Campaign has become the largest grassroots food and fund drive in the state.



Please join ICA, along with your family, school, neighborhood, business, congregation, and community organization to raise funds and collect food for neighbors facing food insecurity in our community. We need your help. Every dollar donated during March will be proportionally matched, so your donation will go even further!

Here's how you can get involved:

- **Donate funds.** Contribute financially. Remember that all funds donated this month will be proportionally matched, so your gift will go even further. And with our buying power, we can buy more food for the same dollar.
- **Donate food.** View our Current Needs list at icafoodshelf.org/current-needs.
- **Host a food drive.** Food drives are a great way to raise awareness of the need in our community! Collect food; donate it to ICA. View our Food Drive Toolkit filled with ideas, resources, and posters at icafoodshelf.org/toolkit.
- **Host a fund drive.** Gather your co-workers, congregants, classmates, friends, and neighbors to raise money to help our neighbors. "Sell" \$20 certificates; \$20 = 20 meals for people experiencing food insecurity. Donate at icafoodshelf.org/march-donation.
- **"Attend" our virtual Empty Bowls event.** March 2 - 9. More info on the back cover and at hopkinsemptymbowls.org.
- **Round up at the register.** Lakewinds Minnetonka and Driskill's Downtown Market in Hopkins are offering roundups this month for ICA.
- **Involve others!** Do your neighbors, coworkers, congregants, classmates, friends, and family know about the need in our community? Help us spread the word that it's easy to get involved and help. Let's ensure all our neighbors have enough healthy food to eat.



Interested in getting involved in another way? Have questions? Please contact Patti at 952.279.0290 or patti@icafoodshelf.org.

To learn more about food insecurity and how it impacts neighbors in our community, check out our story on page 3.

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ICA's Impact: October - December 2020

Families Served
1,368

Individuals Served
3,736

Pounds of Food Distributed
247,805

that's equivalent to
206,504
meals!

From the Executive Director

Dan Narr

If there is a silver lining in the challenges we faced in 2020, during this pandemic, it would be how we learned to be agile and responsive to meet the needs of our community. Looking forward to 2021, we know that the challenges many in our community are experiencing will continue for some time. We want all of our neighbors to know that ICA stands strong and ready with resources to help provide stability and well-being -- and we are ready to help.

To give you a quick snapshot of what we witnessed this past year, we realized an **800% increase for families needing rental and utility assistance** alone, which was astounding. As we look to the coming months, we anticipate this escalation of need to continue. We are working with all of our community partners on every level to ensure we have the resources in place to continue the same level of support in 2021.

In addition, **our food shelf continues to see a steady increase in first time visits**. Our customer service volunteer desk has relayed a number of messages from callers indicating they know the need is great and chose not to utilize our food program because there are others who are in more in need than they are. I am humbled beyond words by those remarks, and again, **I want to assure our community we can help all who come**.

The generosity of our community has never been stronger! We work hard to collaborate with our network of donors, volunteers, businesses, foundations, food banks, faith communities, government, civic organizations, and our neighbors, all of us pulling together to be front and center. As we close the books on 2020, I see better days with the promise of hope on the horizon as we lean into our ability to reconnect in our familiar gathering places in the coming months.

This is not the time to let our guard down. Rather, we need to continue to build our safety nets to help everyone realize their full human potential. We are taking some time to step back to take a closer look at the needs of our community to identify where there might be gaps. Through this strategic effort we will be reaching out to many of our partners for feedback to evaluate how we can better serve our community so no one is left behind. I look forward to sharing more in the coming weeks.

With gratitude,
Dan



Dan Narr, Executive Director

ICA Scholarships

Each spring, ICA awards two \$500 scholarships to graduating seniors -- one to a Hopkins student and one to a Minnetonka student. This scholarship is funded by an ICA donor and is given to students who have volunteered with or supported ICA.

We are currently accepting applications from 2021 graduating seniors.

For more information, visit icafoodshelf.org/scholarship.

Caring Youth Awards

The Caring Youth Awards celebrate youth who have a positive impact in our community. The award is sponsored by the cities of Golden Valley, Hopkins, and Minnetonka; the Hopkins and Minnetonka school districts; and the Glen Lake Optimists.

Caring Youth Awards recognize students in grades 7 through 12 who live, attend school, or volunteer in Golden Valley, Hopkins, or Minnetonka.

We are pleased to nominate the following students for Caring Youth Awards in 2021:

- **Genavieve Billiet:** *senior*, Watertown-Mayer High School
- **Viviana Gonzalez:** *junior*, Minnetonka High School
- **Jasmine Le:** *senior*, Hopkins High School
- **Jackson Sinykin:** *senior*, Minnetonka High School
- **Molly Welch:** *junior*, Minnetonka High School



To learn more about these students and their projects, visit icafoodshelf.org/blog.

"A Caring Youth takes the initiative to identify a need in the community then volunteers in a way that helps meet that need."

Hunger & Food Insecurity in Our Community

Of the many ways COVID has impacted our community, one of the most dire is the increase in food insecurity for our neighbors. Prior to the pandemic, 1 in 11 Minnesotans were food insecure; that number has now risen to 1 in 8. ICA opened our doors 50 years ago to provide essential food for our neighbors; addressing hunger and food insecurity continues to be a key focus.

What is Food Insecurity?

According to the USDA, the term "food insecurity" is defined as *the lack of consistent access to enough food for all family members to lead an active, healthy life*. Hunger, though related, refers to *a personal, physical sense of discomfort*. Food insecurity is a financial issue; hunger is a physical one.

What Does Food Insecurity Look Like?

Food insecurity takes a variety of forms. Often, food insecurity can mean a family has to choose between food and another essential need.

Food insecurity can look like:

- choosing between food and
 - transportation
 - medical care
 - housing
 - utilities
- purchasing cheap, unhealthy food because a family cannot afford more nourishing foods
- relying on friends, family, or workplace for food

Families can experience food insecurity for just a short time -- weeks or months -- or as a more ongoing crisis.

How ICA Addresses Hunger & Food Insecurity

ICA is available to help anyone in our community who is in need of food. There are no income requirements and we offer help without judgement.

We serve anyone who needs help because we know that sometimes even a family that appears to be doing well financially might have a lean month where they have to choose between a bill and groceries. In addition to free food, we offer assistance with employment, rent and utility assistance, and referrals to other programs and services.

In 2020, 46% of families who visited ICA used our services three or fewer times. Regardless of why or how long a family is in need of food or other services, ICA is here to help.

If you or someone you know could use some extra help, call to make an appointment or speak to our case managers: 952.938.0729. Learn more at icafoodshelf.org.

As the needs in our community continue to evolve, so does ICA.

In February we hosted our first Pop-Up Food Distribution event, and we're continuing to explore new ways to reach our community.

We have the opportunity to reach new families experiencing food insecurity, as well as to remove any barriers preventing our neighbors from accessing the help they need.

1 in 8 Minnesotans now face hunger

including 1 in 6 Minnesota kids

The Devastating Impact of Food Insecurity

Food insecurity can have serious, lasting effects on the people who experience it. Some of the most common impacts include:

- **Poor health:** People who are food insecure experience higher rates of chronic disease including high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, and mental health issues such as PTSD and depression.
- **Child development:** Kids who are food insecure are at higher risk for delayed development and lower academic performance; chronic illnesses including asthma and anemia; and behavioral issues including hyperactivity, anxiety, and aggression.

"Kids can't focus on learning when they're hungry."

Being hungry also leads to behavior issues. Having food from ICA really helps in the areas of both academics and behavior."

-- Eisenhower Elementary School social worker



Spring 2021 Events Calendar

For the most up-to-date information, please visit our website: icafoodshelf.org/event-calendar.

March Campaign

March 1 - April 12

Help us raise \$150,000 and collect 150,000 pounds of food this March during the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign! Learn more and view our Food Drive Toolkit at icafoodshelf.org/march-campaign.

Online Bazaar

Ongoing

We've moved our Bazaar online! Browse a variety of great items, including furniture, rugs, home goods, and more. All proceeds benefit ICA Food Shelf. View the auction at icafoodshelf.org/online-bazaar.

March Round Ups

March 1 - 31

When you shop at **Driskill's** Downtown Market and **Lakewinds** Minnetonka this March, be sure to round up your purchase for ICA!



Empty Bowls

VIRTUAL | Tuesday, March 2 - Tuesday, March 9

Our 23rd annual Empty Bowls event will be virtual this year!

Please join us to help neighbors in our community. Here's how you can get involved:

- **Sponsor Empty Bowls.** Contact Patti Sinykin to learn more: patti@icafoodshelf.org or 952.279.0290.
- **Donate to Empty Bowls.** Donate online at hopkinsemtypbowl.org. Proceeds benefit ICA & ResourceWest.
- **Enjoy Soup and Art.** All donors are welcome to stop by ICA Food Shelf to choose a piece of community-created art. Plus receive a coupon for a free cup of soup from one of our favorite local restaurants and a loaf of bread from Breadsmith!
- **Bid in Our Silent Auction.** Our popular community art silent auction will be going online. This year's auction will also feature fun food items! Begins Tuesday, March 2. View online at hopkinsemtypbowl.org/auction.
- **Make Art at Home!** We have crafty projects for you to create at home! View at hopkinsemtypbowl.org/volunteer.

Recent Grants

ICA recently received grants from the following organizations. We are so grateful for their support.

- Allianz
- Greater Twin Cities United Way
- James R. Thorpe Foundation
- Kopp Family Foundation
- Larson Family Foundation
- Medica Foundation
- Old National Bank
- Otto Bremer Trust
- RBC Foundation

ICA FOOD SHELF

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Food and Client Services

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ICA is a 501(c)3 organization. Tax ID # 41-0979010 Your donation is tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. Serving residents of Hopkins, Minnetonka, Excelsior, Shorewood, Deephaven, Greenwood, & Woodland since 1971.