



## Summer 2020

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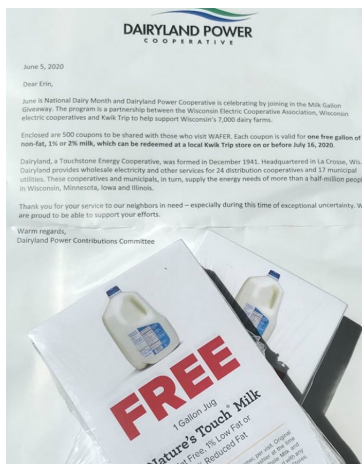
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## Community Coming Together To Fight Hunger At Home

The food that fills the food packages comes from many sources such as retailers, Channel One Food Bank, trucking companies, businesses, government programs, and you—our faithful community partners. It literally takes hundreds of people coming together to make sure no one goes hungry. For example, for Charlie's 9th birthday (pictured above), he told his mom he didn't need gifts. Instead, Charlie and his mom created a "drive-by food drive". Family, friends, and neighbors all pitched in for Charlie's birthday initiative and collected enough to provide 470 meals!

There are many ways in which people add to the variety and quality of WAFER services. Such as (pictured left to right):

- \*George and his wife Gail, deliver direct from the farm products that a neighboring farm can't use before spoilage.
- \*Prairie Farm received Farm to Table funds to produce and deliver dairy products to food pantries, which WAFER is one of.
- \*Dairyland Power, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative, and Kwik partnered to donate 2500 milk coupons to six food pantries.
- \*FEMA, Feeding Wisconsin, and Channel One Food Bank provided baby kits, canned goods, meat, and produce at a special giveaway event in June.



## A Note From The Director

WAFER's strength is built on partnerships with other food pantries, our Feeding America food bank Channel One in Rochester, community liaisons, champions for hunger relief, churches, local retailers, businesses, service clubs, individuals, and YOU! Thank you for your continued support of WAFER. Your gifts of time, money, food, and more are greatly valued, and in the last several months you have showed your support to an even greater extent. Many donations included notes of encouragement and 'thank you's'. I posted them on my office door so that staff could be lifted up by your words during a time when our daily work has become physically and emotionally more demanding. Your words have helped us to press on. ***"We don't need the stimulus money, but know you can put it to good use. God bless you for the good work you. We need good people like you!"*** ***"God bless you all for the work you do—keeping you in my prayers."*** I can never thank you enough!



COVID related changes haven't been all doom and gloom. In fact, one area that we have been able to make some progress is within the immigrant population. Thanks to a new partnership with The Coulee Region Immigrant Task Force and invitations to distribute food at their events, we talked one-on-one with immigrants, gave them WAFER's services and programs information, built a connection, and made some progress toward decreasing food insecurity within underserved populations. In addition, a significant influx in government commodities has allowed us to increase the frequency patrons can receive a *complete* food package up to two times per month.

Friends, I greatly appreciate you staying connected to WAFER via newsletters, on Facebook, through emails, when you stop in, and more. Likewise, your gifts are put to good use and food ends up on the tables of individuals and families in La Crosse, Onalaska, Holmen, Bangor, West Salem, Rockland, Mindoro, La Crescent, and more.

### **You are the reason why our friends and neighbors don't go hungry!**

Monetary and food donations have been trending downward since May, so if you find yourself in a position to help I can assure you that we will be good stewards and make the most of your gifts.

In Service,

Erin Waldhart, Executive Director



## Poverty and "ALICE" Explained



Liz Evans, Community Impact Director for Great Rivers United Way explains, "Who is ALICE?"

ALICE is living paycheck to paycheck. ALICE is working two jobs and still having a difficult time making ends meet. ALICE is piecing together childcare and struggling with reliable transportation. Do you know ALICE? ALICE is Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. 1 of every 4 households in La Crosse County is ALICE.

Every two years United Ways in Wisconsin commission a study to look at economic conditions of households living above the poverty threshold, but just barely scraping by. ALICE works in job sectors that maintain our economy like retail, hospitality, manufacturing, education, healthcare, and construction; often working unpredictable schedules and for less than \$20 per hour.

The ALICE report published last month found that in 2018 a household of four with two adults and two school-aged children needs to earn \$59,448 per year to meet basic needs. If the children are both in childcare, that amount goes up to \$72,912. Just scraping by means that ALICE households are often one unexpected expense or disaster away from spiraling downward.

With COVID-19 causing so much disruption to local businesses, childcare, and schools ALICE households are really hurting. There are no easy solutions, but there are ways that we can all help ALICE. Two things that everyone can do are 1) learn more, visit <https://www.unitedwaywi.org/page/ALICE>; and 2) share your ALICE stories to raise awareness and compassion.

## Wish List

- ⇒ Volunteers. Call us to see if WAFER would be a good fit for you, ask questions pertaining to your safety and health, and which days need the most help. Refer your friends and family!
- ⇒ Bags. Paper or plastic, we can use both! Drop off at any door is perfect!

## Mobile Pantry Update

In the last several months I have had the opportunity to participate in some exciting events and new opportunities with the Mobile Food Pantry. Despite the change of distribution procedures for the Mobile Food Pantry in March, I have received so many gracious and appreciative comments from the patrons I serve on the frontline. With nearly each visit to a particular site in Onalaska one patron mentions to me that she is so ***“grateful for the variety of produce and items that I would not normally pick, it’s like a surprise each time I gets a package and it brings a smile to my face”***. I am equally as grateful and appreciative as the patrons I serve, that we are able to continue offering such critical services during this global pandemic.

The Mobile Pantry has a new site! Becker Plaza, La Crosse Housing Authority apartments, had been a highly request Mobile Pantry stop. Now, this site serves 30 people monthly.

In May, and again in June, the Mobile Pantry partnered with the Coulee Region Immigrant Task Force to provide food packages at the events at Mary Mother of the Church and First Congregational Church. These events provided a variety of resources to 45 families in our area.



Throughout summer we have partnered with the La Crosse School District Summer Meal Program in hopes of providing food packages to families utilizing that services. With the uncertainty of school opening, child care, and school meals throughout the pandemic, food needs for families and children in our area have been greater. These stops have been excellent opportunities to get the Mobile Pantry into areas with no presence and provide an opportunity for people to become familiar with the vehicle and WAFER’s services!

The Mobile Pantry has become an exceedingly critical piece of equipment and service during these uncertain times. It’s been an exciting and wonderful experience to grow the Mobile Pantry presence and I am eager for whatever opportunities comes next.

Sanya Frescura, Mobile Pantry Manager

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To sign up to receive the e-newsletter  
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WAFER is a United Way Partner Agency

## Our Mission:

Responding to God's love, WAFER provides food and works to eliminate hunger.

# How You Can Help Now

**VOLUNTEER | DONATE FOOD | DONATE ONLINE**

Call, click or visit WAFER to volunteer and donate food.

Donate online at [www.waferlacrosse.org](http://www.waferlacrosse.org) and  
use the PayPal link .

**If you would like to write a check to donate,  
please use the envelope enclosed.**

# Thank you!