



For Immediate Release

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Mobile food pantries make impact in South Wood County

WISCONSIN RAPIDS, Wis. – The Neighborhood Table (TNT) and the South Wood Emerging Pantry Shelf (SWEPS) today announced the impact of the last three years' mobile food pantries the two organizations helped bring to the South Wood County area. In partnering with Feeding America of Eastern Wisconsin and other area supporters, 13 mobile food pantries were brought to South Wood County, serving a total of 14,353 people in 4,832 households. The amount of food distributed is estimated to total about 260,000 pounds. The mobile food pantries were held in the south parking lot of the United Methodist Church, 441 Garfield Street, Wisconsin Rapids.

Dale Bikowski, former president and current board member of TNT, commented, "The effort to host and distribute food at these mobile food pantries is tremendous. We wouldn't be able to have these mobile food pantries if it wasn't for the dedicated help from the 60 some volunteers that help each time. The showing of support from the community is exceptional and essential. We can't thank the volunteers enough for their efforts in making our community a better place for our residents."

Terri Rapp, chairperson of SWEPS, added, "The response and participation to these mobile food pantries by area residents is proof positive that food insecurity is prevalent in our area. We hope to continue

(more)

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We share not only a meal, but also an atmosphere of hospitality and mutual respect.

these pantries in 2018 and are currently seeking the financial backing to do so. The recipients greatly appreciate the food they receive at the mobile pantries, especially during the summer months when kids are out of school and eating more meals at home.”

Partners who provided the financial backing for the past mobile food pantries include Feeding America of Eastern Wisconsin, Aspirus Riverview Foundation, and Ministry Health Care and Security Health Plan. Representatives from TNT and SWEPS orchestrated and recruited the volunteers needed to execute each mobile food pantry. According to both Bikowski and Rapp, the whole process is a “well-oiled machine.”

Additional efficiencies have been seen in reducing the area’s food insecurity as both TNT and SWEPS now utilize the same operations manager, Dale Davis. The programs share more resources for food procurement and storage, volunteers and food donations received. Davis can be reached at (715) 422-2050.

Details of future mobile food pantries will be promoted on [The Neighborhood Table’s Facebook page](#), www.theneighborhoodtable.org as well as the Facebook page of [SWEPS of Wisconsin Rapids](#) and www.swepsantry.org.

About The Neighborhood Table

The Neighborhood Table (TNT) is a nonprofit 501(c)3 charitable organization with the mission to reduce hunger, improve the quality of life and create an awareness of the needs that exist in the Wisconsin Rapids community and surrounding area. The organization was formed in late 2003 and has grown to serving approximately 20,000 meals annually on about 75 meal dates. TNT meals are served every Thursday and the last two Tuesdays of each month. More than 115 different groups, businesses and clubs in the area sponsor TNT meals. Core volunteers of The Neighborhood Table carry out the meal/soup kitchen program by offering a free meal to anyone in need. Meals are served from 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm at the United Methodist Church of Wisconsin Rapids, 441 Garfield Street, Wisconsin Rapids. Take-out meals are available on Thursdays only by calling 715-422-1980. The program serves the communities of Wisconsin Rapids, Nekoosa, Port Edwards and surrounding areas in central Wisconsin. To learn more about TNT, available volunteer opportunities, or to make a donation, please visit www.theneighborhoodtable.org or [Facebook/TheNeighborhoodTable](#).

About the South Wood Emerging Pantry Shelf

The South Wood Emergency Pantry Shelf began in 1975 as a nonprofit organization to provide food to area residents in emergency situations. It has been generously supported by members of the community and the First Congregational Church, 311 – 2nd Street South, Wisconsin Rapids. The organization grew to serving approximately 4,000 people annually with volunteers provided by local churches. In the fall of 2015, the SWEPS board approved the reorganization and move of SWEPS in order to better meet the need for food in the South Wood County area. Effective November 16, 2015, SWEPS became an independent 501(c)3 organization known as the South Wood Emerging Pantry Shelf and now operates at 331 – 12th Avenue South, Wisconsin Rapids. Routine days and times of operation are: Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 12 noon to 4:00 pm, and Tuesdays from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Those interested in volunteering for SWEPS should send a request to swepsfoodpantry@solarus.net. Updates about SWEPS can be found on its [Facebook page](#) or at www.swepsantry.org.

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