

# May 14 food drive's goal is to 'stamp out hunger'

On Saturday May 14, the largest annual one-day effort to combat hunger will once again take place in Vermillion and surrounding communities. That is the day of the 19th annual National Association of Letter Carriers Food Drive. In Vermillion, the food drive is conducted with the help of not only the letter carriers but also the rural carriers who cover the countryside including the Burbank and Meckling areas, as well as all the other postal employees. Volunteers from the Vermillion Food Pantry will also be lending a hand.

The concept is simple and donating is as easy as taking a can or two of non-perishable items and placing them by your mailbox on Saturday, May 14. Each postal address will receive a grocery bag, courtesy of Hy-Vee, several days before the food drive. Please put whatever food items you wish to donate in the grocery bag and place it in or near your mailbox. When you get your regular delivery of mail – whether a house, apartment, in town or in the country – your donation will be collected and taken to the Vermillion Food Pantry, which is operated out of Trinity Lutheran Church.

If you are not able to participate on the May 14, you are encouraged to donate early. Simply leave a note with the items so that the postal employees know that this is a food pantry donation.

The Vermillion Food Pantry is staffed by volunteers from the community and for the past 27 years has been providing extra nutritional support to the needy in our Clay County community. This Postal Food Drive comes at an important time, the conclusion of the school year. This means that all of those children who depended on the school lunch program to provide them with the nutrition they need will no longer have access to it.

In order to fill the gap through the summer months their families depend heavily on the Food Pantry. Current USDA data shows that one in four children in the United States do not know where their next meal will come from. These children are also shown to be at risk for illness, have weakened immune systems, are more likely to be in fair or poor health and more likely to be hospitalized. With the current economic hardships being faced, all of these numbers are

expected to rise.

This is a list of some food items which are in greater demand for the summer and donations of these items are highly important to our Food Pantry:

- Mixed Fruits – Cans
  - Jelly/Jam
  - Mashed Potatoes – Large
  - Mac-n-Cheese - 7 oz
  - Sizes
  - Pancake Mix - All Sizes
  - Syrups - .99 cent sizes
  - Rice Dinner Pouches
  - Bath Bars of Hand Soap
  - Detergent - Liquid Med
  - Peaches - Cans
  - Muffin Mixes - Small
  - Pouches
  - Scalloped Potatoes -
  - Boxed
  - Mixed Veggies – Cans
  - Rice - 1# & 2# Bags
  - Beef Stews
  - Spaghetti Sauces - All
  - Sizes
  - Shampoo - 8 ozs
  - Diapers - 2 thru 6 Sizes
  - Pears-Cans
  - Cake Mixes - Full sized
  - Hamburger/Tuna Helper
  - Peas-Cans
  - Any Pasta - 1# & 2 #
  - Bags
  - Cereal - Small Boxes
  - Tuna Fish
  - Tooth Paste - Family Size
  - Motel Shampoos/lotions
- The postal food drive is held on second Saturday in May. Please be generous, donate a can or two (or whatever you are able) to

the Postal Food Drive on May 14. Please feel free to leave large quantities of food items if you desire; letter carriers will gladly gather it all.

The goal of the

Vermillion NALC is to collect 5,000 pounds of food items and this can only be done with the support of the entire community. Please do your best to help those who need

and deserve our help the most – the local communities' children – and generously support the Postal Food Drive on Saturday, May 14.

Helping the voters of Vermillion was waiting. Improving his community was waiting. Kent Osborne's life was waiting. The weight loss surgery at Sanford Health helped him lay the foundation for health. He lost 199 pounds and continues to structure his life around the work he loves: Building a community to be proud of. Life's waiting.

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Boardroom at Sanford Vermillion Clinic

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**SANFORD HEALTH**

## VHA

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additional funding," Thiesse said. "Basically, we were running in the red, and the city got us back into the black. They gave us around \$10,000 to get us back into the black."

However, this will not always be an option, he said. As a result, VHA has had to make some changes to be able to work within the new administrative budget, starting with cuts around the office.

"It's definitely limits our service ability," Thiesse said. "Our tenants don't have the access to the office (because) our hours are cut. Our staff is cut. Basically, we're a two-person office to begin with. ..."

"My program manager who was full-time has been cut down to 24 hours a week, and I've been cut down to 32 hours a week," he said.

The office now operates under a four-day work week.

"We just cram everything into less time," Thiesse said. "We've got the same amount of work, just less time to do it. We're closed on Fridays now, and the program manager is now down to three days a week, and I'm here on Mondays alone."

Howe said VHA operates under two types of funding: The administrative, which is being cut, and the money for the vouchers themselves.

Thiesse added that if the administrative budget is further cut in the future, the office may leave Vermillion, and the vouchers would be sent to the next-closest agency, which would be Yankton.

"Over time, Yankton has no obligation to keep those vouchers in Vermillion, so as time goes, they could slowly all move over to the Yankton area," he said.

VHA has "not really" heard much about the cuts from its tenants as of yet, Thiesse said.

"It doesn't affect their funding at this point," he said. "They're going to recognize that they're not going to have as many options to come into the office and do the annual recertifications. Because May and June are large certification months. We've got in the next two months, probably 50, 60 people to schedule appointments. Their options are going to be limited now."

Thiesse and Howe both said they hope VHA can continue to be a presence in the community.

"It's a great program," Thiesse said. "There's not a lot of businesses that put that kind of money into the community every year. A lot of people don't know about us, but if we leave there's going to be a financial impact on the community."

Howe added, "These types of programs are vital, and they're at risk right now."



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