

Feed My People Update

by Assistant Director Michelle Dingwall

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"Eliminating hunger from West Central Wisconsin"... that quite simply is the stated mission of the Feed My People Food Bank. Assistant Director **Michelle Dingwall** was on hand to share the story of poverty and hunger, and how the Feed My People Food Bank helps provide hunger relief throughout the 14 west central counties it serves.

Over 52,000 people in west central Wisconsin live in poverty, and each year more than 20,000 people rely on the various food assistance programs served by Feed My People, according to Dingwall. Unemployment and underemployment are the major reasons people seek food assistance, and the number of people that abuse the system is extremely low.

A total of 91 food pantries, shelters, and meal programs receive food from Feed My People. Some of the Eau Claire County partners include The Community Table, St. Francis Food Pantry and the Boys & Girls Club. During 2010, approximately four million pounds of food was distributed through these partners, which was 74% more than 2009, and over four times that of 2005. The increased need is a direct result of the recent economic down turn. Fortunately, in 2009, Feed My People moved to a new and much larger facility on Alpine Road in Eau Claire, where they are able to meet these increased needs.

Where does the food come from... 85% of the food is donated... the vast majority by national, regional and area food industries. Another 15% is purchased with cash donations. And on the expense side, Feed My People is a very efficient operation with 98% of their expenses related to food distribution and only 2% for fundraising, management and other general overhead.

The efforts of hundreds of volunteers also help to enable more resources to be used to purchase food. Volunteers help fill orders in the warehouse, drive the delivery trucks to the partner agencies, sort and pack the food drive donations, pack and deliver weekend kids' meals, repack bulk foods, and assist with various office projects.

Feed My People is always looking for volunteers and donations. For more information, contact them at 715-835-9415 or visit their website at www.fmpfoodbank.org.



Michelle Dingwall, Assistant Director of Feed My People