

Fall 2023

THE PANTRY PAGE

Rhineland Area Food Pantry Newsletter



7TH ANNUAL HARVEST HOEDOWN BEST EVER!

By Guy Hansen, Executive Director

New location. New games. New partners. New volunteers. But, we still had the brats, burgers and smoked pork plates plus live music, free kids games, horse-drawn wagon rides to the pumpkin patch, demonstrations, bake sale, craft sale and raffle sales all afternoon AND sunshine (eventually).

The new, Pioneer Park, location worked out very well; with extra room, level grounds, easy access to the city, an existing playground, permanent shelters with ample electricity, plus an on-going farmers market, an open museum complex and help from park and museum staff.

It took a lot of time and effort to make it happen, but it turned out to be a great community/family event. We set up what we could on Friday and staged the rest for Saturday. The pouring rain Saturday morning delayed final set up until about 9 AM when another RAFP miracle occurred, and the rain stopped. We ended up with a record number of attendees and profits. Both horse-draw wagons went steady all day. We gave kids over 300 pumpkins from the pumpkin patch, went through almost 160 pounds of smoked pork, ran out of baked beans and potato salad, sold all 500 Packer Game raffle tickets and wore out our volunteers. We made nearly \$13,000, enough to run the Pantry for almost a month.

A huge THANK YOU to all the folks who volunteered their time and energy to make 'The Hoedown' happen and our many sponsors who donated goods and services. Some key players were: LeRoy organized and commandeered the grilled food, Cindy organized and ran the Woman's Club bake sale, Judy and Bill organized and supervised the craft 'tent', Amy obtained and supervised games and helpers, Board members ran the smoked pork plate tent, Mike helped set all up, Marcia and Joan spent all day in the Pumpkin patch and Courtney, Linda and Dave got it all organized. Many thanks, also, to our major sponsors: CoVantage Credit Union, Nicolet National Bank, Superior Diesel, Heck Capital Investors who helped pay the bills and to WXPR, The Star Journal and the Rhineland Tourism & Marketing Committee for their help with promotion.

We have already discussed improvements for next year (Sept. 28, 2024). A major need will be volunteers to help manage major activity areas including kids games, ticket and/or basket raffles, pork plates and craft areas. Please consider how you can help!



**627 COON STREET
RHINELANDER, WI 54501
715-369-7237**

OFFICE & DONATION DROP-OFF HOURS:

**MONDAY- FRIDAY
8AM TO 11:30AM**

DISTRIBUTION HOURS:

**MON: 3PM TO 5PM
WEDS: 4PM TO 6PM
SAT: 9AM TO 11:30AM**

**RHINELANDERAREAFOOD
PANTRY.ORG**

Our Mission:

We strive to achieve food security for everyone in our community through collaboration, cooperation, advocacy, resource sharing, and increased public awareness.

**Working Together to
Build a Hunger-Free
Community**

The Rhineland Area Food Pantry is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization and your contribution is tax deductible.

Hodag Kids:

Because Full Bellies Make Strong Bodies, Smart Brains & Healthy Hearts.

RAFP is home to 3 programs to address childhood food security:

Weekend Food For Kids, the Hodag Food Wagon, and the Hodag Snack Attack.

Hodag Food Wagon Serves Record Numbers



Launched in 2021 in partnership with the YMCA of the Northwoods and the UW Extension FoodWise Program, and the District of Rhinelander Library, the Hodag Food Wagon is designed to address the nutrition gap often experienced by children and youth during the summer. 12% of children and youth in Oneida County are food insecure and many rely on school breakfast and lunch.

The Hodag Food Wagon offers a weekly free bag of food without registration or income eligibility to reduce stigma and barriers to access. Our goal is food security. We focus on fun and healthy eating. For many families, a simple bag of food once a week makes a big difference.

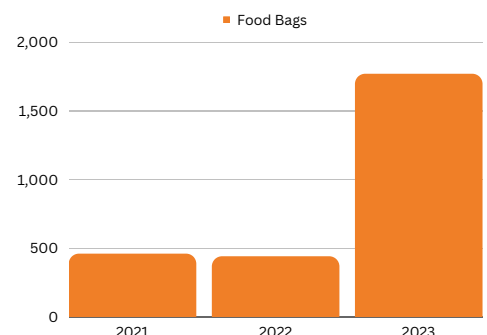
The Rhinelander Area Food Pantry conducted a community survey of area households with children and found that the hours offered for pick up were too limited, many were not aware of the program, and households were in greater need.

The food bags went from a lunch bag with single serve items weighing approximately 4 pounds, to a grocery bag with single serve and family size items weighing approximately 8 pounds. In addition, we focused on providing fresh produce. FoodWise continued to be onsite and offered nutrition education and fun activities. Food bags were also made available to children and youth enrolled in the YMCA and Boys and Girls Club summer camps.

Hodag Food Wagon distribution was hosted at the District of Rhinelander Library on Thursdays from 4-6pm and bags were available at the YMCA and Boys & Girls Club summer camps. A total of 1,267 food bags plus 500 produce bags were given out in July and August. That's an average of 158 food bags every Thursday and a grand total of 1,767 bags.



Family of volunteers helping to pass out food bags.



WFFK Starts the School Year Strong

The Weekend Food For Kids (WFFK) program started the 2023-24 school year on September 28th with an all time high enrollment of 265 kids within the School District of Rhinelander. At the time of writing this article, enrollment has risen to 289 kids. Of course high enrollment means more food, with an average of 1,000 pounds of food sent home with the kids each week.



The program has 4 drivers on a rotation to deliver the food bags to Central, Crescent and Pelican schools: Judy Lake, LeRoy Eades, Ron Skala, and Dave Robinson. Mary Tulowitzky delivers bags to NCES and Gail Fitzgerald delivers to the YMCA 4K program.

Volunteers returning to pack the ziplock bags on Tuesdays are Joy Holquist, Helen Kuczmarski, Amber Barnes, Deb Peters, and Karen Eckert. Volunteers returning to pack the food bags on Thursdays are Karen Hall, Mari Vocke, Bev Mangerson, Judy Skala, and Paula Braun.



As always, this program would not be possible without the dedication of these volunteers and my thanks go out to these reliable workers. I would also like to send a thank you out to all who continue to support and donate to the WFFK program and the Rhinelander Area Food Pantry.

Submitted by Jackie Popko, WFFK Coordinator

4H Comes to the Garden




When we give tours at the Rhinelander Area Community Garden, we start off with our mission statement. 1) We grow healthy food for our pantry customers, 2) We grow our food in an environmentally sustainable manner using no pesticides and practicing water conservation. 3) We educate our community about gardening and growing your own food.

I was fortunate to have the Oneida County 4H youth at the garden twice this summer. We talked about how our drip irrigation system conserves water. We watched bees pollinating bean flowers and learned about the importance of pollinators to our food systems. We dug in the soil and learned how microorganisms help feed our plants. Of course the youth did a bit of weeding but the highlight of the last day was sampling some of the produce. We made fresh garden salsa and sampled edible flowers. Did you know that borage flowers taste like cucumbers? I have a rule when we sample vegetables. I ask everyone to at least try it and if they don't like it they can spit it out. Guess what - not one person spit out any vegetable! The final lesson; eating a rainbow of vegetables builds healthy minds and bodies. It was the highlight of my summer and it's why I love what I do! Submitted by Tom Jerow, Garden Curator.



Giving Tuesday: Double Your Donation!

RAFP is your local community for the CoVantage Cares Giving Tuesday Campaign! From November 28th to December 12th, all donations made through the CoVantage Care Foundation for RAFP will be matched dollar to dollar. Our goal is to raise \$10,000 to support our services and programs. Anyone can participate and you do not have to be a CoVantage member. Checks should be made out to CoVantage Cares Foundation and can be dropped off at our local branch or mailed or dropped off at RAFP. Help us meet our goal and turn \$10,000 into \$20,000!

The logo features a large white heart outline on a red background. Inside the heart, there is a smaller yellow heart with radiating lines. The text "Nov. 28 - Dec. 12" is written along the left curve of the heart. To the right of the heart, the text "CoVantage cares" is in a script font, with "CoVantage" in black and "cares" in yellow. Below this, "GIVING TUESDAY" is written in bold, black, sans-serif capital letters.

Tuesday, November 28th, nationally known as Giving Tuesday, kicks off the two-week period where the **CoVantage Cares Foundation will match up to \$175,000 in total donations for local organizations.**

HELP BY MAKING A DONATION

Donations and CoVantage Cares matches will stay within each local community that benefits from your support.

Your local charity is:



For more information, visit
www.covantagecu.org/givingtuesday

Night on the Farm



Over fifty men, women and children came to the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Rhinelander Agricultural Research Station near Starks to pick potatoes for The Pantry. The Night on the Farm was a joint effort between the Research Farm, Rhinelander Area Food Pantry and Trig's Grocery Store.

The farm provided the machinery to bring the potatoes to the top, and the pickers filled pails after pails of potatoes which were loaded into large bins on two wagons. Many hands made fast work, as we were able to get the potatoes picked up in less than one hour. 12,000 pounds of potatoes in twelve large bins were then hauled to the farm for storage until The Pantry is ready for them. Our customers are always very appreciative of these farm potatoes! As a thank you to our pickers, the three participating groups provided hot dogs, chili, baked potato cubes and taco soup, plus other goodies for all to enjoy!

RAFP thanks all who helped with the potato picking and especially The Farm for making all of this happen. As an added thank you to the pickers, each family could go home with a bag or two of potatoes!

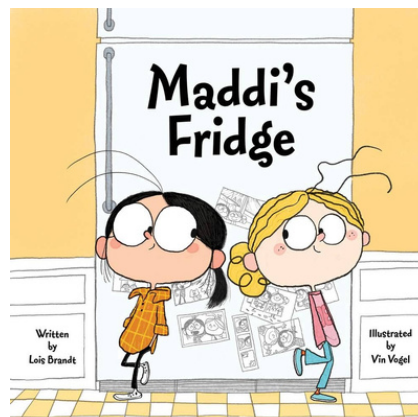
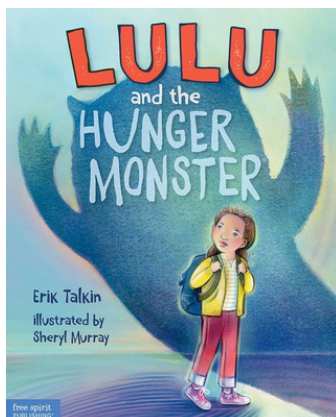
The rain had stopped just as we were ready to pick potatoes and the sun came out, so it was a great day on the farm!

Submitted by Carole Hansen, RAFP Site Manager



Check Out the Library!

Talking about food insecurity with kids can be challenging. The Rhinelander District Library now has 3 books for kids that help explore poverty, hunger and how to help your friends and neighbors. These books were donated to the Library on behalf of RAFP.



HELPING TO BUILD A HAPPY COMMUNITY

We are excited to announce that RAFP has received a generous grant from the GFWC Rhinelander Woman's Club towards the purchase of Holiday Gift Cards. Giving our customers the choice between a turkey or a gift card to purchase holiday meal items is one of the ways we help our neighbors to celebrate the season.



RAFP also receives support from other community organizations and businesses to ensure everyone has a merry holiday season.

We would like to thank Park City Credit Union for their donation to purchase holiday sides and trimmings!



park city
CREDIT UNION

Celebrating Life. Celebrating You.™

HELPING TO BUILD A HUNGER-FREE COMMUNITY



Thank you to the Northwoods United Way!

Pictured: Eileen Persike UW Board Member, Deb Bowns RAFP Treasurer, Courtney Smith RAFP AED, Guy Hanson RAFP ED, and John Viste RAFP Board Member.



Thank You Andrea Olds and Gosia Roszina from Northland CPAs for volunteering at RAFP.



Thank you to St. Mark's Church for the generous donation of school supplies! Terri Lammert.



Thank you Tom Doyle "The Corn Man" for donating delicious corn!



Thank you to Nicolet College for hosting the Community Service Day. A team came to RAFP to stock shelves, scrub produce containers, wash garden pots, clean out coolers and freezers and more.



Thank You Park City Credit Union for the Birthday Cake Kits!



Thank you to Trinity Lutheran Church for your donation from the proceeds of the annual Rummage Sale! Jan Johnson and Yvonne Molinski.

THANK YOU TO:

Blain's Farm & Fleet
Brownberry Bread
Dairy Queen
Oneida County Animal Shelter
Culver's
Russ Davis Wholesale
XPO Logistics
Nativity of Our Lord Parish & School
Goodwill



Thank you Forward Service Corporation for hosting a food drive! Ashley Durand, Lynn Warning, Stephanie Kuski, Lynda Lukowski



Thank you to Logan Hayden and Jason from Advantage Seamless Gutters Rhinelander for their hard work and generous donation of new gutters at the pantry.



Thank you to CT's Deli for hosting the Burger Night Share Night!

Thank you to the YMCA & everyone who attended the "Not So Spooky Halloween Trail" for your food and cash donations.



HELPING TO BUILD A HUNGER-FREE COMMUNITY

Marshfield Clinic Health System: Addressing Health Disparities

We are excited to announce that RAFP is one of 21 organizations to receive a grant from the Marshfield Clinic Health System and Security Health Plan "Addressing Health Disparities" funding program. According to Marshfield Clinic, "Health disparities are preventable differences in health experienced by groups with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantages. Examples of preventable differences include difficulties getting medical care, few options for healthy food, or lacking a safe place to live. Health disparities are barriers to individuals reaching their full potential for health and well-being."

Funds received through this grant will go towards RAFP's Hodag Kids nutrition programs. As the cost of groceries continues to rise, our Hodag Kids programs help to support food security for households with children. We also experience the rising cost of food and this grant will help to purchase healthy, kid-friendly foods and produce.



**Marshfield Clinic
Health System**

To learn more about Marshfield Clinic and their commitment to healthy communities, visit www.communityhealth.marshfieldclinic.org.

CULVER'S GIVES BACK

Our neighborhood Culver's is committed to helping RAFP in building a hunger-free community. Through donating soup and hosting "Share Nights", Culver's is a valued partner. We recently hosted a "Share Night" raised \$500 and over \$150 in canned food.

Please mark your calendar for the "Concretes for a Cause" November 13th through 17th. It's delicious way to give to RAFP!

KEEP UP WITH RAFP!

Please feel free share the RAFP Pantry Page Newsletter!

You can also follow us Facebook - at www.facebook.com/RhinelandAreaFoodPantry or visit our website: www.rhinelandareafoodpantry.org

RHINELANDER AREA FOOD PANTRY SHARE NIGHT!



***Thursday
November 28th
4pm to 8pm***



Join us to support the
Rhinelanders Area Food Pantry.
10% of all sales will be donated.

Valid only at:
Dairy Queen
818 Lincoln St
Rhinelanders, WI 54501