Amandia (center) sits with Employment Services staff Tanya Williams and Josh Katzenmeyer. Amandia now works at her “dream job” helping young people strengthen and succeed.

Interfaith Outreach is not just another run-of-the-mill nonprofit. This place changes lives. I am closer to independence than I have ever been. They really helped me get on track.

- Amandia, program participant

Hunger in our community is hard to see, but it’s real

Nearly half of the families who come to Interfaith Outreach need food

The most vulnerable members of our community - families struggling to make ends meet, children, and seniors living on fixed incomes - too often miss meals. While food might be the most urgent need, it’s usually not the only challenge our neighbors face.

Poverty in the Twin Cities suburbs has grown three times faster than poverty in Minneapolis and St. Paul over the past 10 years. 14% of people in the Interfaith Outreach service area live in poverty. The lack of available living wage jobs means that many working families are struggling with incomes that can scarcely cover basic needs like food, housing, child care and transportation.

And, children often feel the pangs of hunger on evenings, weekends and during school breaks.

Social Security is the only source of income for almost 3 in 10 Minnesotans age 65 or older, forcing people to make difficult choices like dropping medical insurance to put meals on the table.

2018 Prevent Hunger campaign goal: $200,000 and 100,000 pounds of food and goods by March 31

Gifts will be DOUBLED by The Mosaic Company up to $20,000

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
- See how hunger affects people of all ages
- Relationships and partnerships prevent hunger
- Learn more about the Prevent Hunger campaign
Finding ways to prevent hunger in the first place

More often than not what brings families and individuals to Interfaith is the need for help with keeping food on the table and a roof overhead — the basics. It’s hard to imagine until you’ve been there how bewildering that can be.

What people find here, thanks to people like you — who care deeply and act faithfully — is not only help with the basics but ways to prevent and overcome the causes of hunger and homelessness in the first place.

Among those causes are unemployment, underemployment, health issues, family breakup, and fixed incomes that don’t keep up with rising costs of living.

Support of the Prevent Hunger campaign makes access to healthy, culturally appropriate food, holistic family support services, connection with community resources, and employment services that help people gain or upgrade skills that make securing better paying jobs — and thereby keeping a roof overhead — possible.

It’s what this community is so good at — staying with folks when the going gets tough — coming together to provide just-in-time resources and the hand up that sets them on a path to new and better futures. A community that sees it unthinkable that, for even a day, any family, any one of us goes hungry or homeless. Stay with us, friends. What more noble task could we be about?

Preventing hunger involves more than food

Food Is Foundational —
On average, 4,500 individuals need the food shelf to stretch their budgets and prevent hunger. Thanks to community support last year, 944,450 pounds of food and household goods were distributed.

Career Jobs Are Key —
The gap between income and ordinary living expenses is staggering for most Interfaith Outreach families. Interfaith and its partners helped 233 job seekers increase job readiness and secure and retain jobs so the entire family could stabilize. Well-paying jobs prevent hunger.

A Holistic Approach Brings It All Together —
Lack of food, rising health care costs and job loss all present big challenges to local families. Last year 2,005 struggling families experienced our holistic care approach and moved toward a better future with the crisis of hunger resolved and their hope restored.

For every $1 donated to the Prevent Hunger campaign, Interfaith Outreach can source $9 worth of food through food partners.

With your help we can do this!
$200,000 and 100,000 pounds of food and goods to the food shelf by March 31.
Your gift will be DOUBLED by The Mosaic Company up to $20,000.

Your gift and the Prevent Hunger campaign are part of the statewide Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign that stocks over 300 Minnesota food shelves each year.
Creating welcoming spaces for all

It is our goal to make sure everyone who walks through our doors feels valued and appreciated. We invite input and ideas from program participants and we frequently translate materials into Russian, Spanish, Somali and English so people feel welcome and comfortable. Food shelf staff and volunteers provide a caring experience with kind rapport and friendly conversation. More than 2,000 volunteers are the heart and soul of the entire organization. Volunteers tell us they can create a welcoming environment because they, too, feel the joy of being on the Interfaith team. Those who operate the food shelf, Resale Select store, reception area, employment program, youth programs, and more tell us that 96% of them also feel welcomed at Interfaith Outreach. (2017 volunteer survey)

Volunteers of all ages work regular shifts to ensure program participants feel welcome and receive the support they need.

Offering more fresh and culturally specific foods

Program participants tell us that fresh, healthy foods and cultural food items are expensive in grocery stores. When it comes to food choice, families with limited incomes often cannot afford to choose fresh and healthy items. That’s why we have more than doubled the fresh foods we offer in the last few years. Healthy products like meats, fruits, vegetables, dairy and eggs are essential to fueling healthy bodies, minds and spirits. We also take special care to stock culturally significant foods to meet their unique needs, and families can celebrate with foods that represent their faith traditions.

More than 1,200 amazing volunteers keep the food shelf running smoothly.
Food “rescue” is a win-win
Food rescue is a way of donating quality food that would otherwise go to waste due to shelf life or damage to packaging. It involves partnerships with area retailers, grocery stores and produce markets. Six days each week, Interfaith volunteers pick up fresh food items such as fruit, carrots, lettuce, yogurt, meat and seasonal products that would otherwise go to waste. Volunteers bring the items to our food shelf. When the food shelf opens, local families are thrilled to have fresh and healthy items from which to choose.

Faith-filled people use time in service to help
Every year, faith communities play a huge part in the success of the Prevent Hunger campaign. One amazing example is Plymouth Covenant Church (PCC), which conducts a massive food drive during — yes, during — their church service. They stop the service and send everyone to Cub Foods to buy food and household goods. In 2017, PCC filled a box truck multiple times as they dropped off 19,459 pounds of food and household goods collected in just one weekend.
Neighbors of all ages face hunger

While food might be the most urgent need, it’s usually not the only challenge our neighbors face. At Interfaith Outreach, we also work holistically to prevent future hunger through employment and family support services. Your gifts to the Prevent Hunger campaign are feeding families and fueling hope for people of all ages who live, work and play right next door. Nearly all program participants live at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. Our neighbors of all ages are struggling just like those mentioned here.

Adults: A living wage job strengthens the whole family. Many Interfaith Outreach program participants are employed but struggling in low paying jobs; their incomes just don’t add up to the rising costs of housing, child care, transportation and basic living expenses.

Meet Amanda: “I needed some help with food and my kids needed a strong start in school, too. I came to the food shelf for help right away and then applied for a Caring for Kids scholarship, and I got it! That was amazing because then my kids had a safe place to be during the day while I was at work. I am grateful for the case managers at Interfaith who helped me figure out how to go back to school – then the employment team worked with me to expand my income and confidence.”

Seniors: The food shelf can stabilize fixed-income budgets. Individuals, especially the elderly and those with disabilities, struggle with hunger, too. Our neighbors often use the food shelf monthly as a way to stretch their budgets far enough to cover other basic needs. The median income for Minnesota seniors is $37,400. With housing costs continuing to rise, it is estimated that over one-third of older adults are paying more than they can afford for a roof overhead.

Tammy: “When I retired, I began drawing from a lifetime of hard-earned Social Security (SSI) payments. My monthly check is just not big enough to cover necessities. I live in a small apartment. Still, my medical insurance co-pays and gas for my car alone are more than my SSI check. I use the Interfaith Outreach food shelf to make my budget work.”

Kids: 44% of those served by our food shelf are children.

Our Kids: 11.5% of K-12 students in Wayzata and Orono Public Schools are eligible for free and reduced meals at school.* Right here in our neighborhoods, kids are leaving school and heading home hungry. Evenings, weekends and vacation days can be especially hard. When families have to choose between paying rent or buying food, they often choose rent so hunger remains.

To see a short inspirational video visit iocp.org/food4all

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Donate dollars at iocp.org/donate, in person or by check

Donate food shelf items to Interfaith Outreach, Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Organize a food drive with family, friends, co-workers, a civic group or faith community iocp.org/preventhunger

Examples of Prevent Hunger dollars hard at work:

- $100 can source 435 meals
- $500 can fund three months of family support work with a struggling family
- $2,081 provides employment services for a parent to land a “career” job
- A gift of any amount will help feed families and fuel hope

*Source: Wayzata and Orono Public Schools 2016-2017 school year
Thank you for sparking hope through the Sleep Out!

We are so grateful to you, our amazingly generous community. Thanks to your support of the Sleep Out, together we can care for our struggling neighbors. On behalf of the more than 2,000 families we will work with this year, thank you for supporting the 2017 Sleep Out campaign! Together we raised $2.3 million that will provide hope and help to local children, families and seniors! Interfaith Outreach depends on the generosity of people like you to help families every day. Thank you!

Girls, Glamour & Giving is April 19, 2018

Presented by

Past years' events have sold out so don’t wait! The International Market Square in Minneapolis will be the trendy backdrop for an evening of food, fashion and philanthropy. Glamorous attendees will enjoy hors d’oeuvres, a sit-down dinner, shopping from unique vendors, a chance to win a celebrity-donated purse and a fashion show featuring fresh looks for spring. Hosted by local television personality Kim Insley, proceeds support local families and individuals in key impact areas including housing and neighborhoods, education and youth, and more. General Admission: $90 per person or join the VIP reception at $150 per person (limited number available). Contact Cate Fossing at cfossing@iocp.org or 763-489-7513.

Registration: iocp.ejoinme.org/GGG

MISSION – To engage the heart and will of the community to respond to emergency needs and create opportunities for all to thrive.
VISION – To build a vibrant community where everyone counts and all sectors and systems work together for the good of all.

Interfaith Outreach & Community Partners
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SERVING THE CITIES OF HAMEL, LONG LAKE, MEDICINE LAKE, MEDINA, MINNETONKA BEACH, ORONO, PLYMOUTH & WAYZATA

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