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Make no mistake about it, Brittany and Jasmyn Campbell are a team. They laugh together, cry together, sing together, make decisions together, and struggle together.

Jasmyn shared, “We talk to each other a lot about things. She was thinking about moving and she came to me first to make sure it was OK with me. But then we decided now was not the right time because we’re still struggling a little bit. Almost every day we want to give up.”

Brittany added, “On the one hand it’s hard to hear her say things like that because I didn’t have to worry about that stuff when I was a kid, and here she is having to worry about things that are adult problems. On the other hand, she is my main support, I feel better having an open relationship about our struggles. She may have had to learn a couple harder life lessons, but I think with the collaborative efforts we are better.”

Brittany recalls when she was growing up, “We had what we needed, but not a whole lot extra. I started working when I was 14 because my parents always said if I wanted something extra that I’d have to earn it.” But her parents also taught her the importance of helping others, even if they didn’t have a lot. “If there was a friend that needed something we were always there for them; which is part of how I am now, even when I am struggling, if I can help someone I do.”

For years Brittany went from one low-wage job to a slightly better-wage job trying to make ends meet; all while trying to go to school and earn a degree that would hopefully help her and Jasmyn out of the tumultuous paycheck-to-paycheck life they were leading. “Money is tight. Sometimes we don’t pay one thing one month so we can pay another, and hope to catch up the next month. So, it’s just making the sacrifices to make sure we have somewhere to live, a vehicle to get from point A to point B, and food.”

To help, Brittany relies on family, friends, resources like FoodShare, the school meal program for Jasmyn, and food pantries located in Black Earth and the new school pantry located in Madison College, where she is enrolled in the Occupational Therapy Assistant program. Both pantries receive food and other resources from Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin.

The pantry located in Madison College is unique because it does much more than hand out food. Their philosophy is to focus on ways to educate their students on how to make better choices, make food last longer, different ways to use the food, and on trying healthy recipes. Brittany added, “It’s more of a holistic approach. We’ve made new recipes together so it’s given us those moments to learn together.”

Asked how her and Jasmyn’s life would be different without the food pantries, school meal program, and FoodShare, Brittany said, “I can’t even imagine what we’d do. It would be dramatically devastating on our family. To replace that food would take hundreds of dollars every month that I don’t know where it would come from. I’d have to leave school.”

Thanks to the help she receives, and the prospects of a new career when she’s done with school, Brittany is keeping her focus on the future, “This is my chance to do something with my life. I hope at that point that I will be the one helping other people, and not needing the help.”
This year we are having the anniversaries of two of our programs, the School Pantry Program (5 years) and our Kid’s Cafe Program (20 years). As I thought about this article, I paused to think how “celebrate” sounded when referring to a program that exists because it addresses a basic need – food. The reality is if hunger didn’t exist, we wouldn’t need these programs, but here we are, 20 years later and about to open our 11th Kid’s Cafe at the new Boys and Girls Club in Sun Prairie. Should we celebrate?

Yes, we should celebrate because we’ve made a difference in the lives of those kids and families who have used these programs!

School pantries have ensured that kids can focus during the day, and their families have enough to eat on the weekends and over school breaks.

Kids Cafe’s have provided millions of meals and snacks, and countless hours of nutrition education in a safe environment to a generation of kids.

These programs made a big difference for the clients who have used them, and now there are new children in those same towns and schools who need help to thrive.

As you read the other articles in this newsletter, you will hear from someone struggling with hunger who uses multiple pantries, including one inside Madison College, to make ends meet. You will also hear from two Co-Coordinators of our Mobile Pantry in Tomah mention the importance of serving those facing hunger with dignity. These are additional examples of proud partnerships to celebrate – not because we need them, but for our ability – with your help – to meet people where they’re at.

A bigger celebration will surely occur when we have a hunger-free community, but we must not overlook the importance of celebrating small achievements that will make the ultimate achievement possible.

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**NBC15 SHARE YOUR HOLIDAYS HITS THE MARK**

During the 2019 NBC15 Share Your Holidays campaign we focused on the fact that “one ______ makes a difference.” Whether it is one gift, one hour of volunteer time, or one meal, there are many different types of “one” that make a difference in our community. We needed your help to meet our goal of raising 4.5 million meals. In the end, you raised 4.67 million meals!

We are grateful to all our supporters for being part of the fight to end hunger, including our top schools and businesses...thank you!

**Top 10 Business Food & Fund Drives**

1. Epic  
2. M3 Insurance  
3. Potter Lawson  
4. UW Health, Quartz & Unity Point Health  
5. Affiliated Engineers
6. Landmark Services Coop  
7. Dean Health Plan  
8. Suttle-Strauss  
9. Steve Brown Apartments  
10. First Weber

**Top 5 School Food & Fund Drives**

1. Mauston High School  
2. Blessed Sacrament School  
3. Edgewood High School  
4. Madison Country Day School  
5. Hamilton Middle School
IMPACT: WE SERVE

The mission of any local Lions Club is “We Serve.” For this Lions Club member, service is the key to a happy life…that, and a good woman at your side.

Darold and Monica Kukowski have been coordinating the Second Harvest Mobile Pantry in Tomah, Wisconsin for two years as part of his membership in the Tomah Lions Club. In addition to the work done by local emergency food providers, mobile pantries provide more food throughout our 16-county service area to make sure the need is met. Second Harvest handles the transportation of food and other program logistics, while local organizations like churches or service groups secure volunteers to setup, distribute food, tear down, and clean up after the pantry is done.

The Mobile Pantry in Tomah serves between 160 – 170 households each month. According to Darold, “There’s a lot of people who need it here. A lot are disabled, veterans, or on a fixed income. They just don’t have the income to be able to shop at the big stores. People don’t come here to abuse it, they really need it.”

Being on the front lines of helping those who struggle with hunger often times means you run across situations you’ll never forget. Monica retells one such situation:

“There was one gal that came with her little kids, we used to let her go through first because she had nobody to watch the kids, so we let her go through first. She must have been all of 23 with these little kids. She just had a difficult time keeping all the babies together and get the food at the same time.”

At the end of the day, for Darold and Monica, it comes down to the little things. “Giving time so your community is served is important,” said Darold. It’s also important that their guests are served with dignity, “It’s nice to know you can go somewhere and not feel shamed for going to a food pantry.”


WASTING FOOD ISN’T GOOD FOR ANYONE

For years the emergency food system has been reluctant to accept prepared food donations from businesses like restaurants, caterers, and convention sites due to multiple challenges, including the ability to control food temperature during transport. Now, thanks in part to a grant from the Walmart Foundation, we have a solution.

Second Harvest helped secure the grant on behalf of a partner agency, Badger Prairie Needs Network (BPNN), to purchase a refrigerated van to expand their existing Kitchen-to-Table program. The new van will allow BPNN to expand the program’s coverage area while adhering to strict food safety guidelines, and offer more prepared food to those in need; ultimately keeping the food from being wasted.