



TOWN OF NEDERLAND OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

"Nederland is just a little bit cooler ... on multiple levels"

P.O. Box 396
45 West First Street
Nederland, CO 80466
(303) 258-3266



<http://nederlandco.org>

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Nederland Food Pantry is a Life Saver – 5 Reasons to Donate

NederMayor Blog – February 20, 2014

By Mayor Joe Gierlach

There's no fancy marketing. No catchy name. It's just the Nederland Food Pantry.

The business plan is simple – They give food to people who need it, along with basic toiletries.

The Nederland Food Pantry is welcoming, and yet it's more discreet than expected. Volunteers prefer to stay 'behind the scenes' with no recognition. They are even reluctant to be in my picture (especially Executive Director Chris Current) often turning their backs, or hiding behind food isles. However, one-on-one, each patron is welcomed, and individually walked-through the pantry by a friendly volunteer. This special care is important because in most cases, when a person comes to terms with needing food assistance, there is no doubt that they are dealing with bigger issues in their life as well.



I had a chance to meet with the Nederland Food Pantry's Executive Board as they were planning for their "Stone Soup" fundraiser which will be held on **Sunday, February 23rd at the Community Center**. (Scroll to the bottom of this article for all the details of this event.) On February 18th, the Nederland Board of Trustees (BOT) will review a fee waiver for the event and I strongly encourage my fellow board members to approve the waiver. I came up with five fortuitous reasons why it's important for you to especially donate this year.

1. There's No Sign. You might not know it's there.

The Food Pantry is tucked in a back room of the West Wing of the Nederland Community Center with no heat. Over two years ago, (January 17, 2012) the Nederland Board of Trustees (BOT) approved waiving rental fees for the Food Pantry to use this storage area. According to the application, it was to "... provide service to our community, while funding allocations are being reduced, and the number of households being served, has increased. Thus, we've outgrown our current space." Two years later, the need is greater.

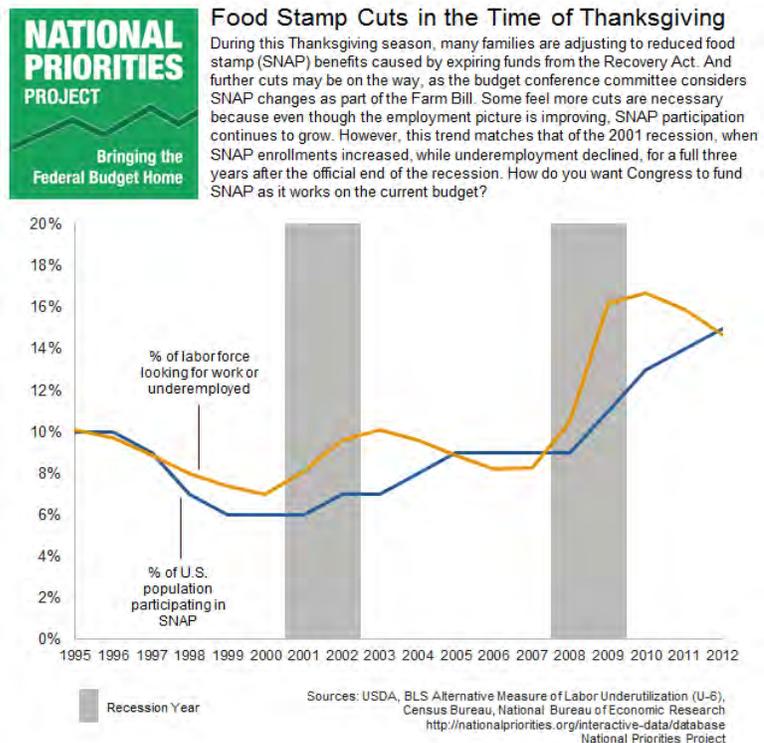
2. The Nederland Food Pantry is a Savior:

By 2013, the Food Pantry grew to serve 200 people per month and expanded to include anyone from as far as Allenspark, Jamestown, Ward, Gold Hill, Eldora, Salina, and anywhere in between. After the September Flood, they consistently served an additional 110 people per month, exceeding 310 monthly people in need. Exponential demand growth. At Thanksgiving, the Food Pantry provided "holiday boxes" for 244 people. By the end of 2013, the Food Pantry assisted 2,708 people in the fight against hunger, by distributing over 55,000 pounds of food.

3. Funding Cuts when Demand is Increasing:

Last Thanksgiving, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), was cut by \$5 billion, when the number of people looking for work, or are underemployed, haven't been this high in decades. Then, just last week, the new farm bill signed into law, cut another \$8.6 billion from food stamps during the next decade.

The national debate over government funding the food assistance program has cut resources locally, just as we are coming to understand that the problem is growing in the Greater Nederland Area.

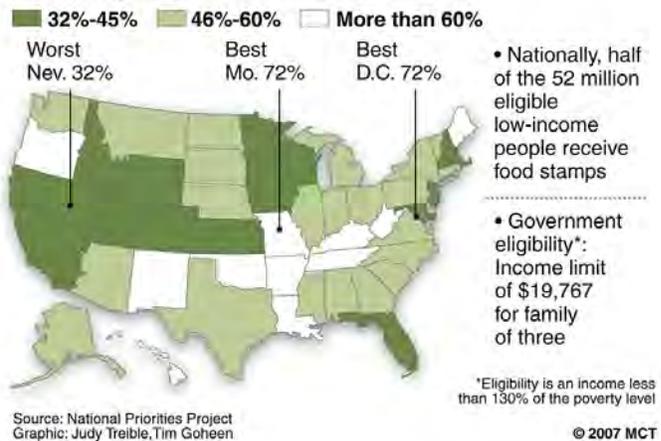


If that's not bad enough, Colorado has historically been one of the worst states for people not enrolling in the SNAP program even though they are eligible. People will specifically live in mountain areas to get away from 'the system'.

There are many underemployed people living in the mountain region of western Boulder County, but do not feel comfortable filling out the paperwork down below. Therefore, they are unreported, and the mountain region receives less resources.

Who's getting food stamps

The percent of eligible poor Americans getting food stamps varies considerably from state to state. The rates for 2004:



This was the status quo, until the September Flood, which pushed many folks over the tipping point, with more and more people in the middle class are falling through the cracks, with little understanding of assistance programs that are available. We have already seen the increased demand for the Nederland Food Pantry services. Of the 14 counties effected by the flood, Boulder County was impacted most. Limited resources in the flood relief effort are being sent to the areas that help the most people, which has never been the Nederland Food Pantry.

4. The Middle Class is Least Likely to Donate:

As I met with the Nederland Food Pantry's executive board, it was clear that the need is quite obvious, but our community is the least likely to donate funds. With only a few exceptions, the Greater Nederland Area does not have an über-rich population, nor does it have chronically poor population. According to a recent study by The Chronicle of Philanthropy, (sited here in The Atlantic) in which researchers analyzed giving habits across all American ZIP codes ... they found that less affluent ZIP codes gave relatively more. The theory is that populations with high poverty rates contribute a higher percentage of their income to charity because they see the direct benefit.



Wealthy populations have long standing philanthropic traditions, trust funds, and established foundations which are designed to provide tax incentives for their patrons. For example, I had the honor of being a guest at a fundraiser from my friend and colleague, Mayor Doug Tisdale of Cherry Hills Village. I watched in amazement, as he raised over \$50,000 in about 45 minutes for the Cat Care Society. I've been an animal advocate for many years, and fully appreciate his fundraising skill. By comparison, it would pretty much take a miracle for the Food Pantry to raise that much funding in the fight against hunger in the Peak to Peak region.

5. It's Not Sexy, but it's Vitally Important:

Everyone knows that it's more gratifying to donate to a charity that saves cute little animals, than facing the reality that there is a hunger issue in our own community. So, the Nederland Food Pantry's Executive Board came up with a fun event called "Stone Soup - If Everyone Gives a Little, EVERYONE Can Eat".

Here's the details:

Sunday, Feb 23, 2014, 2:30 - 6:30pm

at the Nederland Community Center

Dinner, Silent Auction, and Activities for the Kids.

Suggested Donations:

Adults (age 16+) \$12.50

Seniors (age 60+) \$8.50

Kids (1yr to 15) \$4.50

Also, with your donation, please bring a non-perishable food item, or a personal hygiene item.

Part of the Stone Soup Fundraiser is a silent auction and they need people to donate items/services. They are emphasizing asking people to donate their personal services, such as taking down a tree, housecleaning, craft lessons, etc., as well as handmade items. They are doing this instead of asking local businesses to donate things, since businesses are asked so often for other silent auctions. This will also offer an opportunity for folks who don't have the cash to donate, to donate something they can afford to.

If you would like to donate services, please email Janette Taylor at Janette.Taylor@Forethought.net or call (303) 258-3586.

If you cannot make it to the event or donate services, you can also make a tax deductible donation. Just make your check payable to:

Nederland Food Pantry

P.O. Box 467

Nederland, CO 80466

You can call the Director, Chris Current, at (303) 642-0599 with donation questions.