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## Share food buying co-op available to everyone

It seems not a day passes without more bad news about the economy. Layoffs, reduced hours and dwindling life savings are affecting families of all economic levels. The good news is that in these tough economic times, an increasing number of families are saving 30-50% on groceries through SHARE, a nonprofit food buying club.

SHARE works like a monthly food co-op, where families select the food that they want at the beginning of the month and then pick it up toward the end of the month. Compared to supermarket prices, SHARE offers consistent savings of 30-50%. Everyone is welcome to join SHARE, and there are no membership fees or eligibility requirements. The nonprofit serves the entire state of Wisconsin, the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and northern Illinois.

A variety of high quality foods including frozen meats, dry and canned goods, fresh fruits and vegetables, club-size packages and organic produce are available on SHARE's monthly order form. All of the food is purchased on the national wholesale market, just like a grocery store chain. None of the food is donated, commodity or out-of-date. Some of the items are brand names, and others are made by brand-name companies but packaged under private labels.

In recent months, SHARE has seen a huge increase in participation. During the organization's last fiscal year ending in September 2008, approximately 14% more families saved money on food compared to the previous year. During the last three months of 2008, the increase was 20%. And January 2009 was up 44% over January 2008.

How can SHARE offer 30-50% savings on food? First and foremost, volunteers bring SHARE savings to their communities by helping with every step of the process: getting the word out, taking orders, and organizing the local pick-up. Second, SHARE food pick-ups take place in donated spaces such as church basements and community centers. Third, when SHARE buys the food in bulk for over 7,000 families every month, it can negotiate low prices. And finally, since SHARE is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, there are no stockholders to pay. So the savings get passed on directly to SHARE buying club members.

Members can choose from monthly assorted food packages, or they can pick and choose items individually. One popular assortment, the BIG Value Package, costs \$25 plus a small shipping and handling fee in some areas. In March this package includes turkeyignons with bacon, ham steaks, chicken tenderloins, deli sliced turkey, popcorn shrimp, center cut pork chops, beer bratwurst, frozen strawberries, golden pound cake, fresh Wisconsin eggs, a deluxe produce assortment with at least 7 fresh fruits and vegetables, and a surprise bonus item.

And now it's easier than ever to shop and save by using SHARE's new online ordering system at [www.sharewi.org](http://www.sharewi.org). Online orders for March pick-up can be placed through Sunday, March 15. Orders can also be placed by calling the local SHARE volunteer team or SHARE's main office toll-free at 800-548-2124 through Tuesday, March 10. Pick-up at most SHARE locations will be on Saturday, March 28.

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