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Stretching your food dollar through SHARE

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Reader Submitted

In Wisconsin alone, 11 percent of the population is living in poverty, nine percent have food insecurity, and four percent have very low food security, according to SHARE statistics. The SHARE Food Buying Club is set up at 174 different sites across Wisconsin to help stretch out our food dollar while providing a balanced diet. It is also available on the Internet, increasing the convenience of the program through online ordering.

From 2007 to 2008, there has been over one million in food savings for the SHARE users, serving almost 8,500 families. The participants place a food order at the beginning of the month, either online or at a local SHARE site, and on the third or fourth Saturday that same month to pick up that order. Payment is required when placing an order. Individual food items can be purchased, but they also offer a couple of choices for value packages with food lineups that change each month. The packages consist of several kinds of meats, fruits, and produce lineups. There are no qualifications or income requirements needed to use this program.

Ben LeFort, Communications and Public Information Manager of SHARE said, "This program makes a difference two main ways. First, it helps people save 30 to 50 percent on food, the second largest part of the family budget. This enables families to eat good, nutritious food at affordable prices. The second great impact comes from the organization's emphasis on volunteerism. SHARE literally would not exist in communities like Oshkosh without a dedicated team of local volunteers."

Oshkosh's volunteer coordinator, Theresa Glasnapp is pleased to be helping the community through SHARE. She said over the past three months, the Oshkosh site has seen a 50 percent increase of families who use this program. She believes this is due to the new online food ordering option.

The SHARE program is not a food pantry. The difference between a food pantry and the SHARE program is that food is being purchased for the wholesale rate, and not donated. "We give our orders to the central office to fill, and the food supply never runs out," Glasnapp said.

SHARE is currently gearing up for their holiday campaign, offering a delicious meal for Thanksgiving and Christmas that would feed a family of six for \$25.

For more information on the SHARE program, or to place a food order, you can go online at www.sharewi.org or contact the Saint Vincent De Paul's Thrift Shop at (920) 235-9368.
