

SHARE to help with food budget

Hank Snyder Staff Reporter | Posted: Saturday, September 11, 2010 11:00 pm

WAUPUN - It's easier than ever to cut your food budget. SHARE, the food buying club, has changed.

"Originally, to be part of the club, you had to do two hours of community volunteer service each week for a month," said coordinator Don Cook. "Now there is no more requirement to do volunteer work. That's because lots of people are elderly so we don't push volunteerism, but we still encourage it."

Another change allows buyers to choose whatever food they want. Marilyn Whiting, another coordinator, said in the past buyers had no choice in the food they purchased.

SHARE is a nonprofit food buying club that offers food at a reduced cost through a volunteer-run community based distribution system. Cook said the savings run from 30 to 50 percent.

Cook said the program is a community outreach, not a church outreach, although they distribute the food in a church once a month.

"I've been involved with the program since the 1980s," said Whiting. "It's been at Pella Lutheran, the Westley Center, and now it's been at the Union-Congregational Church for about seven years because of the convenience; there are no curbs, no steps and they have automatic opening doors."

Unlike the food pantry that is only for those in need, the SHARE program is for everyone. It's also non-profit.

"We don't make money, but by the same token, it's not free," said Cook.

"There are no restrictions on anything - religion, income, address - anything," said Cook. "The program is for anyone who wants to save money on food."

The pair recently spoke at a Waupun Christian Clergy Association meeting.

"We were impressed with all SHARE had to offer the community, and grateful to Marilyn and Don for their years of service with this ministry," said the Rev. Jeff Brower, president of the clergy group, and pastor of Bethel Christian Reformed Church.

Both Cook and Whiting say that perhaps the hardest part of the program is planning ahead for what is needed at the end of the month.

"The food needs to be pre-ordered. The next orders have to be in by Oct. 5 for the Oct. 23 pick-up day. There is one pick-up day a month, and it's always a Saturday," said Cook.

"And the orders have to be paid for in advance."

The minimum order is \$15 and there is a 10 percent shipping fee and \$1 handling fee.

"This is a great program and in this economy it's something that needs promoting," said the Rev. Mark Arbisi of the Union Congregational Church.

According to Cook, none of the food is donated.

"It's all purchased on the open market, the vegetables are fresh, and the meat is brand name," Cook said.

To find out more about SHARE go to www.sharewi.org or call Don Cook at 324-5677 or Marilyn Whiting at 324-4967.

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