

SHARE club offers delicious discounts

By Gail Boehm, Star-Times | Posted: Wednesday, September 8, 2010 11:59 pm

A spring addition to the area has seen a generous donation of time, elbow grease and financial savings for individuals and families alike.

The SHARE (Self Help and Resource Exchange) Food Buying Club arrived in Juneau County in March. Lend a Hand, a local homeless coalition, under the umbrella of the Juneau County Peace Committee, concerned residents and church members invited a SHARE representative to meet at Mauston's Hatch Public Library in February in order to bring the club to the area.

Dan Schuman of Mauston, the SHARE local coordinator, said, "The [Mauston] Bible Baptist Church members wanted to do it [be the host site]. My friend, Ben Sweeney, didn't want the responsibility, but wanted to help, so I decided to be the coordinator."

According to the SHARE newsletter, the program is a nonprofit food buying club that offers nutritious products at reduced cost through a volunteer-run, community-based distribution system.

Schuman said, "Once a month, we send in orders of food from a SHARE list. People order what they want and pay at a 40 to 50 percent discount of what would be paid at a store, which is \$25 for the big value package. In July, the average savings was 54 percent and in August it was 47 percent."

A 10 percent shipping and handling fee is added to the order and placed in a relief fund, which is given to the church at the end of the month if not used.

He said usually 15 volunteers come to unload the semi at the church on delivery day, stack the bulk food on tables and then form an assembly line to box individual orders.

"Anyone can order from the club, any age, religion or whether they drive a Cadillac or clunker, it doesn't matter," he said.

People with a low income can use food stamps, Quest and SNAP credit cards to purchase food.

Depending on where they live, members can also order delivery at the closest location to their home such as Adams, Mauston, Oxford and Tomah.

The Mauston orders will be ready for pick up on Wednesday, Sept. 25 from 3 to 6 p.m. at the church host site located at 148 Grayside Ave., Mauston.

The program, located in 200 communities in the Midwest, has an order online deadline of Sept. 12 at www.sharewi.org.

For more information, call (800) 548-2124 or the church at (608) 847-6059.