



[Home](#) [News](#) [Sports](#) [Opinion](#) [Obituaries](#) [Celebrations](#) [Life](#) [LivingNorth](#) [Northland Smart Shopper](#)

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## SHARE food buying club offers savings on food in New Year

On Saturday, Dec. 18, more than 1,000 SHARE Food Buying Club volunteers will distribute affordable Christmas Dinner Packages to approximately 4,000 families in over 200 communities, including at Bethesda Lutheran Church, 204 Fifth Street, in Carlton. Pick-up time at the church will be 11 a.m. to noon.

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The nonprofit organization is also now accepting food orders for pick-up in January.

The program's cost savings can make a big difference. For just \$25, SHARE's Big Value Package typically includes an assortment of seven to eight frozen meats, canned and dry goods, and a deluxe produce assortment with seven kinds of fresh fruits and vegetables. Similar items at the grocery store usually run in the range of \$45 to \$50. For SHARE member families who purchased this package consistently over the past six months, the savings added up to over \$140.

Unlike many other nonprofit food programs, none of the food distributed through SHARE is donated or government commodity. SHARE purchases all of the food it distributes on the wholesale market, just like a supermarket. SHARE offers a monthly selection of quality frozen meats, fresh fruits and vegetables, canned and dry goods, convenience items, family-size packages, and even organic produce. Members can pick and choose the food they order every month, plus they can save even more by choosing one of the monthly product assortments.

A common misconception about SHARE is that families must meet some kind of income requirements or eligibility guidelines in order to participate. But because SHARE is a private nonprofit organization that achieves savings on food through an extensive volunteer workforce, there are no eligibility requirements whatsoever. Everyone is welcome to participate.

SHARE's volunteer workforce is essential to the program. Over 200 volunteer-run SHARE food pick-up sites are located throughout Wisconsin, northern Illinois, northeastern Minnesota and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. All members who purchase food through SHARE are invited to volunteer, but there are no volunteer requirements.

Families can order online at [www.sharewi.org](http://www.sharewi.org) through Jan. 9 or they can call toll-free 800-548-2124 to order through Jan. 7. Pick-up will be held on Saturday, Jan. 22, at most SHARE sites. SHARE accepts all forms of payment, including SNAP (food stamp) benefits on the Quest, Link and Bridge cards.

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