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Little-known program provides discounted food to residents

by Cassandra Colson | Reporter | Posted: Wednesday, June 1, 2011 3:22 pm

Jackson County has several food pantries available to those in need, but a little-known statewide program also has been providing county residents food at significantly discounted prices.

“It’s a good program for people. It saves them a lot of money on groceries,” said Audrey Mohorko, coordinator of Wisconsin’s SHARE program in Jackson County. “This is a great deal for people who are low-income, or it’s just a big savings for anyone.”

SHARE is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. The program provides food to anyone — regardless of income level — at 30 to 50 percent less than supermarket prices. SHARE purchases food on the wholesale market and does not distribute donated or outdated food, according to its website.

For \$25, people can receive a package of 11 items, which includes meat, produce and other grocery items. Orders can be placed by contacting a local coordinator or online, and food is then delivered the third Saturday of each month at the Boys & Girls Club of Jackson County in Black River Falls after orders are sorted by volunteers.

“It’s like going shopping at a discount,” Mohorko said.

Mohorko and husband Dick started out as volunteers for Jackson County’s SHARE program five years ago after moving to the area, and the two have been co-coordinators for the past three years. They, along with about five volunteers, staff the county’s program, which serves an average of 11 people a month.

Val Wise, a longtime volunteer, said she has enjoyed working with the program and also receiving food from it. She began volunteering with Wisconsin’s program when she lived in Racine, and she continued her work when she moved to Jackson County four years ago.

“What is nice about it is that you don’t have to be of a certain amount of income,” Wise said. “You’re going to get what you pay for, and it’s really a bargain. I’d really recommend it.”

Wise, who works primarily with sorting produce in her volunteer capacity, said she’s seen people of all age ranges and backgrounds use the program.

She’s also enjoyed meeting other volunteers in addition to participants.

“I’ve enjoyed it the whole time,” she said. “You meet people. It’s just a good feeling.”

The Mohorkos also distribute SHARE flyers at various locations across the county, including apartment complexes, laundries and the library.

Audrey said she hopes more people will take advantage of the program.

“We’re nice people, and we do have smiles on our faces when they come in. We’d love to have more and more people come,” she said. “I would like everyone to please come and try it once.

“I just hope we can get this going bigger than what it is.”

For more information on the SHARE program or to find ordering information, visit www.sharewi.org. Orders can be placed online or by calling Audrey at (715) 284-0020 or SHARE’s main office at (800) 548-2124.