

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT SERVICE LEAGUE
UNIVERSITY DISTRICT FOOD BANK
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Food For Thought

The Newsletter of the University District Food Bank

Food Prices Soar

Filling your tank - not the one in your car - has never cost more.

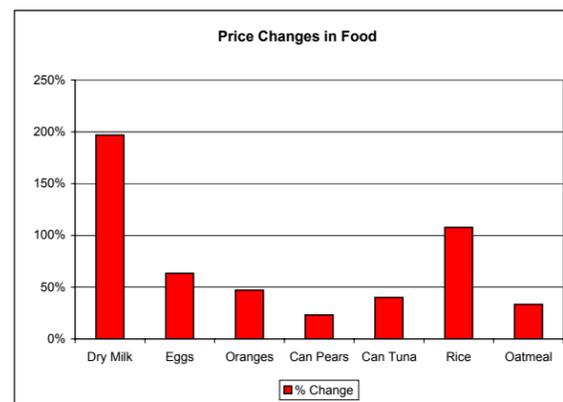
While the nightly news leads with stories about the rising gasoline prices, the price of food is also going up at record rates. Prices for many foods have doubled and even tripled in a few short years. Fresh fruits and vegetables are both more than twice their 1988 price.

With rising rents in the city, and crazy gas prices, increases in the price of food are making it impossible for the poor to make ends meet.

As a result, we have seen an increase of 25% in the number of monthly visits since the Fall of 2007. Consequently, we are giving out more food. For example, we handed out 50,000 more pounds of food in April 2008 than in April 2007. In 2008, we are on pace to distribute more than 1.9 million pounds of food which is 500,000 more than in 2007.

Unfortunately, the wholesale prices we pay are increasing too. The impact is not just on our customer's budgets but ours too.

Below is a graph showing the percent increase in the price of some food that we regularly buy from last July to this July.



The Need Continues

Twenty five years ago, persons in need of food and other services approached University District churches for help. At the time, the nearest food bank was in Fremont – a few miles and a long bus ride away. Foresighted community activists and church leaders responded. They organized programs to meet these basic human needs, including a senior program, the first Latchkey child program in Seattle, and a food program that became our food bank.

Our founders - Patty Whisler, Betty Clinkenbeard, Dick Cunningham, Frederick Fortine and Barbara Keely - began planning in Fall 1982 and opened for clients by May 1983. They hired Trish Twoney as Executive Director to oversee the senior program and the food bank.

Patty was instrumental in providing the passion and power to initiate the programs. Patty staffed the City of Seattle University District Office. She shared that social services had been severely cut during the Reagan administration - institutionalized individuals were released and others who depended on government funding were left with no support. The University District churches, especially University Christian and University Presbyterian, helped provide resources necessary to initiate the food program.

Patty credits Trish with the success of the food bank, "Trish did an incredible job. She instinctively knew how to put together the organization and make it successful." And that, "Dick and Bob made the operation work – loyal and hardworking volunteers." Patty also shared that the food bank was a model operation from the start. "Everyone recognized the University District Food Bank was superlative."

The initial food program served 2,000 clients a month. The organizers worked with Northwest Harvest, Fremont Public Association and area merchants to identify food sources, freezers for storage, delivery volunteers and other resources. They negotiated a nominal fee for space in the University Christian Church basement – the same space from which we serve our clients today.

Trish Twoney served as Executive Director for a decade – she moved to the Fremont Public Association (now known as Solid Ground) and remains there today as manager of the Hunger Action Center.

The founders believed the UDFB would be a short-lived operation. Patty shared, "we never thought the need would exist for 25 years." Dick, now Faculty in Seattle University's School of Theology & Ministry, imparts the "notion of hungry people in the US is a travesty." We agree. The UDFB continues to work every day in the mission the founders initiated to help eradicate that travesty. (Continued on page 2)

Come join us for the 13th annual "Take a Bite out of Hunger" auction on October 18th at Saint Demetrios Hall. It will be a special night as the Food Bank celebrates its 25th Anniversary!

Tickets are \$60 and can be purchased from our web site at www.udistrict-foodbank.org/events. Note: ticket prices will go up to \$70 on October 1.

The procurement team is busy acquiring auction items. However, we always need more. Please contact Paul at 206.527.1990 if you have items to donate.

Hot auction items:

- Two night stay at the historic Bloomer Mansion
- Wine tasting for forty at E.B. Foote Winery
- Two unrestricted Alaska Airline tickets
- Sri Lankan Eco Farm Vacation
- Twelve day Holland America Cruise

Check our web page for a complete list of auction items:
www.udistrictoodbank.org/events



The University District Food Bank assists low-income individuals residing within zip codes 98102, 98103, 98105, 98112, 98115, and 98125.

Food for Thought is published quarterly by the University District Food Bank for our volunteers, donors, and the public at large.

The University District Food Bank is a program of the University District Service League, a registered 501 (c) (3).

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Thank You Taproot Team

For the past year, we've had the pleasure of working with a fabulous marketing team from the Taproot Foundation. On behalf of the board and staff, we'd like to thank John Kelly, Patty Betz, Lisa Samuelson, Margaret Simonson, and Craig Nelson for the great work they did developing a brand strategy for us. Collectively they donated over 500 hours of service. And, their excellent work set us up to receive a follow-on grant from the Taproot Foundation too. Thank you!

Letter From The Director

Dear Friends:

For more than a quarter of a century, the University District Food Bank has helped prevent hunger in Northeast Seattle neighborhoods. Each week, more than 900 families receive the groceries they need to prepare nutritionally balanced meals. By strengthening the health of our neighbors, we strengthen our entire community. And it is your support that makes our work possible. Together, we're an effective team.



However, the work we do together seems endless. The problems that our founders struggled with 25 years ago still exist today. The cost of living in Seattle today makes it even harder for low-income families to make ends meet each month. While we'll continue to provide the nutritious food that our neighbors in need, more fundamental changes are needed to permanently move families away from the food bank.

In October, there will be an increase in the income levels eligible to participate in our state's food stamp program. While seemingly small in scope, the change will bring an extra \$180 a month in basic food money to more than 3,000 Seattle families. This small change is life-altering for these 3,000 families new to the program. More changes like this are needed.

I urge you to find advocacy opportunities that protect low income families, promote asset building and reduce the regressiveness of our state's tax structure. Ultimately, this will increase the value of your donation to us and it won't take much more time than what you spend reading our quarterly newsletter. I'm happy to keep you informed about opportunities to engage (just send me an email), but I am also confident that you can find opportunities that matter to you. With difficult budget years at the city, county and state, the value of your involvement will be immense. Together, we can continue to improve the community well-being of all our neighbors.

In peace,
Joe

Continued from Page 1...

University District Food Bank staff, volunteers, Board and clients served throughout the last 25 years wish to thank our founders for their activism and commitment to serve the hungry. We also thank you, our volunteers, for enabling us to faithfully serve our community.

Note: The author thanks Dick Cunningham, Patty Whisler and Trish Twoney for their input to this article. The author regrets that we were not able to directly contact Fred Fortine or Barbara Keely. We regret that Betty Clinkenbeard passed in 2003.

Powdered Milk, a Luxury Item?

2008 brings the 25th birthday for the University District Food Bank! Birthdays are usually times of celebration. But can we really celebrate that we serve more clients each week than ever before? Or that food is more expensive each week?

Each reader knows how the current economy has impacted their own personal finances – increases in transportation costs, food costs, rents, and decreases in home equity. Many of us are in a fortunate position to alter our spending habits without significant impact to our standard of living.

This is not the case for us at the food bank. Fresh meat, dairy, vegetables and fruits are "luxury" items for us. These items are not always donated and certainly not donated in the quantities we need, so we purchase them with the funds you donate.

While our client visits have increased 25-33% in the past nine months, our funding sources and food donations have not increased by nearly this much. Donations for 2008 are only about even with those received last year.

To meet our increased client needs, we now opt for more canned fruit and vegetables and not so much fresh meat and dairy. Where feasible, we provide powdered milk for our clients in place of fresh milk. Now even powdered milk is deemed a luxury item -- the cost of powdered milk increased from \$32/case in 2007 to \$95/case today.

We are working hard to increase our funding through more grant requests, business partnerships and fundraising. We are asking for your help to meet our increasing demand and decreasing purchasing power.

Please do what you can to help us feed our community. Cash donations have the most immediate impact. If you can't afford to donate cash, there are other ways. Maybe you can organize a food drive at the office or drop off a box of apples or plums from the fruit tree in your yard? Small steps like these can still make an important difference in our community.

As always, we greatly appreciate your generous support!!

Donor Spotlight: PCC



Emma Lentz & Britta Rindal two of our youngest PCC repack volunteers scoop pancake mix into quart bags.

An organization like the University District Food Bank doesn't thrive for 25 years without the support of the community. One of our integral partners in reducing hunger in Northeast Seattle is PCC Natural Markets.

Since 1989 PCC has utilized an innovative food donation program. PCC customers have the opportunity to make a monetary contribution to local area food banks by rounding up their bill to the nearest dollar and donating the difference or making a donation amount of their choice. In 2007 PCC customers generously gave \$67,164. PCC used that money to purchase 69,264 pounds of nutritious bulk foods at a discounted price.

After the food has been procured the real work begins. One or two members from our Board of Directors host a repack night on the fourth Wednesday of every other month at our food bank. A team of PCC repack volunteers led by Lisa and Brien Lindstrom repackage the bulk food, anything from rice to granola to pasta to raisins, into family-sized packages.

Lisa, who has been the repack volunteer coordinator for 3 years says, "My husband Brien and I have enjoyed learning more about the great work that the Food Bank does within the community, and we have a great time getting to know the volunteers. There is a great need for healthy food choices to be available to low income or homeless individuals, and we're honored to play a part, with the help of PCC to make this happen at the University District Food Bank."

Interested in helping? Please call us.