Manager's Report for AGM September 18, 2023

By Savanna Dee – Manager

Welcome all Board members. We have another year under our belt here at the Foodbank. Our local farmers and backyard gardeners are bringing in lots of fresh veggies for us and we thank them all for this help. It's so nice to see the generosity of others wanting to help in this time of need.

We made another trip to our Foodbank hub in Nanaimo this month. They are working with us to bulk up our loads as it is a very long day for the volunteers who come with me. We have to be at the ferry by 7am and don't arrive back until 5pm and then we must unload. When they offer smaller amounts it's just not worth the cost to go, so I have worked with Foodbanks BC and fixed this problem. They now combine two or three loads for us to pick up in one trip. We also apply for the $200.00 travel subsidy to help with the cost of gas and travel.

I received an email from the Union Protein Project offering us pallets and half pallets of Tuna at a discount. I have ordered one pallet at .97 cents a can and with the ever-rising amount of clients and the cost of food this is a welcome savings. This is a non-profit organization that offers peanut butter, salmon and tuna at a discount for Foodbanks and we thank them for this savings.

We had our event tents set up this year and did very well fundraising for the Foodbank. I did have one glitch though; I had bought stacking chairs for the Rest Tent but had to return them. They were very flimsy, collapsing when you sat in them and it's too late in the year to buy more so I will be on the lookout in the spring to replace them. Debbie and I brought chairs from our yards for this year and the Rest Tent was very well received by the public. We were invited to man the three gates at Loggers Sports and the public were let in for free but were asked to bring a donation of food or money for us. This was extremely successful for us bringing in just under $8000.00 in mostly money and some food. The two-day Blues and Roots Festival on Texada was a challenge to get everything over there but a lot of fun. We are invited back next year and Gerry, the event organizer, will provide us the use of a fridge and freezer for the event which will be extremely helpful. Blackberry Festival was a whirlwind of action and sales, this is a fast-moving event. All of the volunteers got together with suggestions on how to make it less hectic and this worked out great. It was our best year ever in the fundraising dept for Blackberry. We also have been invited to the Seniors Centre Open House on September 30th to set up our food and rest tent. This is a 4-hour party with live music, Highland dancers, Firemen, Vintage car show, Clansmen pipe band and more. We are all looking forward to this.

I would like to ask you to make a decision regarding the distribution of food from the annual Brown Bag Thanksgiving food drive. Gina had this arranged through the Mormon Church to organize vehicles and volunteers to drop off the brown bags in mailboxes on specific routes around town. Then the food gets picked up on the next Saturday, gets weighed in three one-ton

vans and shared in thirds with the Mormon church, us, and the Salvation Army. This is a specific food drive for Foodbanks put on by Foodbanks BC. We used to receive around $7-$8,000.00 of food and over the years it has steadily dropped to last years number at just over $2,000.00 of estimated food. I have no problem working with the Mormon Church but the Salvation Army has not been so kind to us. We used to donate extra farm veggies and helped them out in other ways over the years. We gave them two pick up days for the back of Save On Foods as I thought it best to share with the local charities who were already picking up this food for years. Again, another Foodbanks BC offer. Then I found out that they already pick up all the extras everyday from the back of Quality foods and did not ask us to share. Then last Christmas they excluded us from the fundraising event at The Town Centre where we would set up tables and share in the donations of money, food, and toys, which of the toys they keep them all. Now they have the event at their church and we are not invited. They also put on their own Thanksgiving food drive last year two weeks after our drive and we were not included. I'm not sure if I am being petty or what but I know I can do a better job at this working with just us and the Mormon church. I called the radio station and Vickie and Bobby are putting it out over the air waves helping us get more volunteers for this year. These are the ladies who do such a fabulous job during Christmas and raised over $60,000.00 last year for us with the corporate pallet challenge. So, the question is - do we cut out the Salvation Army from this food drive next year?? Or do we just continue on?? Do we wait and see what this year brings?? If I do take over and work with the Mormon Church, the bags and posters need to be ordered in June 2024.

We have two gentlemen who have been instrumental in the Foodbank operations for years. Glen and Wayne started out volunteering and when Covid19 hit they were paid through the emergency workers grant until it ran out. They both are seniors on disability and when the money stopped, they still volunteer here every week. They do the pickups and deliveries, they are the muscle for the large case lot orders and the Nanaimo hub trips, and I could not have done the events without their help and the truck use. It took four days, the van and two pickup trucks to get everything to Texada and back as one example of their help. So, with the rising costs of everything, these men are super struggling financially right now, and it's very sad to see. I am asking if we could pay them for, say a year, as I need them and we are able to improve the lives of these volunteers . We do have extra money and as they are on disability, they are allowed to make an extra $1,250.00 per month, it's not a lot of money but it would make all the difference for them.
If you say yes, this decision could be revisited when you chose to.

As usual I thank you all for your guidance and awesomeness …

Savanna Dee - Manager