

South County Food Bank MEETS THE NEED

The need is ever growing, Darren Gooch, executive director of the Food Bank said on a recent tour of the building in Seaside.

The food pantry’s mission is simple, Gooch said, to provide three-to-five days of nutritious emergency food to low-income families living in Clatsop County. While guidelines suggest “low-income,” anyone entering the Food Bank is welcome, he said. “You don’t have to provide ID, and we’ve never had to turn anyone away.”

Gooch described a growing need, with an average of 250 households served monthly, and 618 individuals.

More than 40 homeless people were served monthly by the food bank in 2018.

For those residents who may have not experienced the need to visit the food bank, Gooch said volunteers try to make the experience inviting.

“Nobody wants to be here,” he said. “I try to make it fun. I don’t want them to feel bad about being here. I’ve had a lot of people shake my hand and say, ‘This has been a really good experience. Thank you!’ And they’re OK with it.”

The South County Community Regional Food Bank is one of several partner agencies to participate in Clatsop Community Action, the regional food bank.

That in turn is affiliated with the Oregon Food Bank and the United State Department of Agriculture Emergency Food Assistance Program. Other partner agencies — about a dozen in Clatsop County — include Helping Hands Re-entry Outreach Center, the Cannon Beach Food Center and St. Vincent De Paul in Gearhart.

Partners place their orders with Clatsop Community Action, but they also help each other, Gooch said.

Cannon Beach Food Pantry

SEEN FROM SEASIDE
R.J. MARX



serves clients on Wednesdays, and any leftover food will be delivered to Seaside’s food bank when they serve on Thursdays.

The South County Food Bank receives food from individual donations, local food drives and restaurants or bakeries. Donations are accepted as long as they come in the original packaging.

Big-box stores like Fred Meyer, Natural Grocers, Safeway and Walmart, among others, participate in the food bank’s Fresh Alliance Program.

When Gooch received a donation of 100 dozen eggs from Natural Foods in Warrenton, he was unable to use them all so after his driver picked them up, he called other local pantries to ask, “Does anybody need eggs?” The food bank subsequently delivered dozens of boxes to partner agencies. In January, the food bank received almost 17,000 pounds of purchases or donations — about 8½ tons of food.

Pick-ups take place every other week, Gooch said.

Monday crews do shelf stocking and product rotation.

Everything is weighed as it comes in, with volunteers supervised by site supervisor Jenny Knight — the food bank’s one paid employee — to maintain a running log of every donation.

Patrons can visit the food bank on Tuesdays and Thursdays once a calendar month. The food bank opens at 1, although staff tend to open earlier.

A visit starts with a food distribution booklet breaking down nutrition guidelines. Volunteers “err on the side of giving more” to customers than the guidelines suggest.



Darren Gooch and Maureen Casterline at the South County Food Bank.

R.J. Marx



Gooch led me on a tour down the aisles, from the breads and pastries from Safeway to the fresh fruits and vegetables from Costco.

Among items, the protein aisle offers dried and canned beans, canned fish and peanut butter.

“It’s an allergen for some unfortunately but it’s a great source of protein,” Gooch said. “It’s one of those things especially among our homeless population they can take a spoon and open it up right up and start eating it in the parking lot or where they’re traveling. It’s an important staple.”

Grains, flour, corn meal, pasta, rice — even cultural items like masa flour — are available. Sugar is highly sought after.

Cereal is a main component of most visits, with an emphasis on nutrition and variety.

Canned tuna, fish, sardines, clams, are “highly sought after.”

Take a turn to the next aisle and you’ll find what Gooch described as a “very modest, small snack section.”

“We do provide snack foods to

break things up and give people extra,” Gooch said. “Everybody likes a treat now and then.”

The food pantry’s “other” category includes soups, chili, ravioli, stuffing, mashed potatoes and gravy packets. While ramen and cup noodles are “not super nutritional,” Gooch said, they are foods important for those struggling to find the right appliances. “You can usually find something that can get some water boiled,” he said.

Dry powdered milk and fresh milk are available; for those with a dairy intolerance, rice, almond, coconut or cashew milk is usually available.

Providence Seaside Hospital provides nutritional supplements like Boost.

Juice is available and highly sought after, either fresh, frozen or concentrate.

What about waste?

Dented or outdated cans are considered potentially dangerous and go straight to the dumpster, Gooch said. Post-dated breads

and vegetables go into recycling bins for chickens. “We go through the produce with what’s called ‘gleaning,’” Gooch said. “We pull stuff that’s bad. That goes into a barrel.”

Chicken farmers pick up the organic debris.

“Everything has a life cycle,” Gooch said. “Food is grown in a field, processed, to the store, and then back to the earth via the chicken or the pigs.”

With the Roosevelt Drive building fully paid off, the South County Food Bank is in a “better place financially” than ever as an organization, he said.

Volunteers are always wanted, with a need for stockpeople, driving and shopping assistants to walk patrons through.

The No. 1 physical need now is refrigeration, he added, with “geriatric” chest storage cases and units subject to breakdown or obsolescence.

“At holiday time I lose turkeys because I have no place to store them.”

The quest for the best burger

VIEW FROM THE PORCH
EVE MARX



Is there anything as good as a perfect hamburger?

Supermodel of the moment Gigi Hadad has more than once been quoted saying, “Eat clean to stay fit, have a burger to stay sane.” I’m totally down with this. At our house these days we eat pretty clean; a slab of Kerry Gold butter can last more than a week. When it comes to baked goods, we’ve really cut back. At home we eat no bread except for corn tortillas. As for sweet breads, we’ve trained ourselves to avert our eyes from scrumptious locally made scones, donuts, and cinnamon buns. I can stroll past Dairy Queen without a twinge. Our adoption a decade or so ago to strive for a more plant-based diet has paid off in lowered cholesterol, and definitely slightly smaller sized pants. I rarely feel resentful or frustrated about our decision to eat more healthily. The seafood is so amazing in this part of the world, I no longer miss the turf in surf & turf.

Unless it’s a hamburger.

Burgers are my weakness.

I still remember the first burgers of my life. I was at least eight years old before I had my first burger and that was only because someone other than my parents fed it to me. I should explain my

parents were not burger people. They were people who grew up in restrained circumstances who aspired to something better, starting with what was on the table and table manners. My mother had her beef in the form of filet mignon. My father was full on lamb chops.

Burgers, they alluded to me were a shade déclassé. Ground beef? What was in it? And you eat a burger with your hands.

The newsperson Anderson Cooper says he’s never been a Burger King guy. He’s a total McDonald’s man. My first burger, and I mean my very first burger, was from Burger King. I was astounded when I saw it. I’d never seen food that came dressed in a paper wrapper. It wasn’t like I didn’t get out much. My mother wasn’t much of a cook. We ate out a lot. We mostly ate in restaurants with tablecloths. On Sundays we had Chinese. But after I’d wrapped my hands around my first Whopper Junior, nothing tasted as good to me as my first cheeseburger from Burger King.

Like the actor Dennis Quaid, wherever I am, wherever I’m living, I like to find the best burger in town. This is not an easy thing to do in a town with so many burgers. Seaside has a lot of burgers. They make a nice juicy one at The U Street Pub. The Big Kahuna is said to have a good burger. I’ve heard it said the best burger is at The Crabby Oyster; they serve their burger on a potato roll at Ruby’s Roadside Grill. Tom’s Fish & Chips has a petite burger for smaller appetites. Bee



Eve Marx

There’s nothing like a perfect burger. This one’s at Maggie’s on the Prom.

Bop Burgers is an entire establishment built around the burger. They do a half pound burger at Seaside Brewing and even offer a vegetarian version called The Impossible Burger they swear tastes just like meat. Mo’s has a 6 oz. NW beef patty on a brioche roll with lettuce, tomato, onion and pickle. It’s a bit spendy, but when I am really craving a burger, I’ll spring for the 6 oz. Nehalem river ranch beef hand crafted burger served with lettuce, tomato, onion, cheddar cheese, and a secret sauce that comes with either salad or fries at Maggie’s on the Prom.

Wimpy, who you may recall was a character in the comic strip Popeye, was best known for his utterance, “I’ll gladly pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today.” Wimpy was soft spoken and romantic, but he was also a glutton and a cheapskate. Although he’s almost a tramp, he pretends to be a person of high status. Hamburgers were his favorite food. His famous phrase is commonly used to illustrate financial irresponsibility. Well, that would also be me, too.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Another view on mountain biking

Haven’t we already destroyed far too much habitat? That is exactly why we are in the midst of the Earth’s sixth extinction crisis! Mountain biking is environmentally, socially, and medically destructive!

Bicycles should not be allowed in any natural area. They are inanimate objects and have no rights. There is also no right to mountain bike. That was settled in federal court in 1996. It’s dishonest of mountain bikers to say that they don’t have access to trails closed to bikes. They have exactly the same access as everyone else — on foot! Why isn’t that good enough for mountain bikers? They are all capable of walking.

A favorite myth of mountain bikers is that mountain biking is no more harmful to wildlife, people, and the environment than hiking, and that science supports that view. Of course, it’s not true. To settle the matter once and for all, I read all of the research they cited, and wrote a review of the research on mountain biking impacts. I found that of the seven studies they cited, (1) all were written by mountain bikers, and (2) in every case, the authors misinterpreted their own data, in order to come to the conclusion that they favored.

Mountain bikers also love to build new trails — legally or illegally. Of course, trail-building destroys wildlife habitat — not just in the trail bed, but in a wide swath to both sides of the trail!

For example, grizzlies can hear a human from one mile away, and smell us from 5 miles away. Thus, a 10-mile trail represents 100 square miles of destroyed or degraded habitat, that animals are inhibited from using. Mountain biking, trail building, and trail maintenance all increase the number of people in the park, thereby preventing the animals full use of their habitat.

Mountain biking accelerates erosion, creates V-shaped ruts, kills small animals and plants on and next to the trail, drives wildlife and other trail users out of the area, and, worst of all, teaches kids that the rough treatment of nature is OK (it’s not!). What’s good about that?

The common thread among those who want more recreation in our parks is total ignorance about and disinterest in the wildlife whose homes these parks are. Yes, if humans are the only beings that matter, it is simply a conflict among humans (but even then, allowing bikes on trails harms the majority of park users — hikers and equestrians — who can no longer safely and peacefully enjoy their parks).

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