



Investing In Our Community

Without VEAP, what would these families do?

VEAP is most well known for its Food Program. In fact, VEAP operates one of the largest food pantries in the state. How does this program work and what difference does it make to a family?

VEAP's food pantry provides a 5-7 day supply of fresh and healthy foods at each visit. Clients are able to access the food pantry only once per month unless they are in extreme financial distress. In these cases, clients are working with one of VEAP's licensed social workers to re-stabilize their financial situation and are able to visit the food pantry more frequently for a period of time. Over 50% of clients visit the food pantry four times or fewer over the course of a year which equates to about 20-30 days of food.

These folks are making ends meet until a car repair or illness stresses their resources to the point that they need food support.

VEAP offers more than food—with a holistic approach to services and licensed social workers on staff, our goal is to help individuals and families move out of crisis to stability and toward sustainability.

This year VEAP will support several thousand households in Bloomington, Richfield, Edina and south Minneapolis. These families will not only have food in their cupboards, they will be able to remain stable in their housing and in their community.

Thankfully, VEAP is here for our neighbors when crisis strikes. VEAP helps keep families stable. When households are stable, our neighborhoods and our community are stable, too.

VEAP is a good investment in our community.



This holiday season, VEAP's goal is to raise \$1,000,000 through the inspire.give.hope. holiday challenge.

Thank you to everyone that has supported this campaign and we are on our way to meeting the challenge. However, we still have a way to go.

Nearly 60% of VEAP's annual contributions come in over the final months of the year and that is why this campaign is so important. VEAP is an efficient steward of donor gifts and with each dollar donated is able at to purchase nearly \$10 worth of healthy, fresh foods for the food pantry. With a staff of 21 professionals and over 2,500 talented volunteers, VEAP is making a difference in the lives of families every day.

How We are Making a Difference

Long time Bloomington residents, Jonathon and Sara had busy lives as working parents of four young children.

When the recession hit, they both lost their jobs and their world was turned upside down. It didn't take long to go through the small savings they had accumulated. Soon they were unable pay their mortgage and worried about being able to buy food for their children.

"The worst day of my life was when I realized we weren't able to provide for our children," remembers Sara. "We had never had to ask for help and we didn't even know where to start. The day I walked into VEAP was one of the most frightening days of my life. I felt ashamed that I needed to ask for help."

The family was able to get financial help for their mortgage and visited the food pantry several times over a period of a couple of months while they looked for work. "We were looking for jobs with thousands of others. We worked odd jobs for a while until we found jobs in our field and slowly worked our way back."

Sara never talked to anyone about the short period that her family needed VEAP for food. But she never forgot about it either. Over the years Sara became a community advocate for VEAP and organized her block club and business with food drives. Giving back was one way she could say thank you.

"With time, I have come to understand that it's not about the fall, it's about how you get up. Thankfully, VEAP was here for my family when we needed it most."



Your Donation Makes a Difference

Your gift will support VEAP programs that provide access to healthy foods, transportation and social services for the most vulnerable among us. Our goals are ambitious, and your support will help VEAP meet its financial goals for 2016 and position us for success as we move into the future.

Now more than ever, partners such as you, can make a difference in the lives of our low-income neighbors. Through the strategic planning process, we are moving toward a future where VEAP works in partnership with clients to support them as they move to re-stabilize their financial situation.

VEAP clients share that they often feel overwhelmed with the financial impact of an illness, job loss and other situations that have an impact on their income. However, when they come to VEAP and meet with one of our licensed social workers, they are able to work through their financial crisis step-by-step to regain financial sustainability. Even those that are unable to work or on fixed incomes—the elderly and disabled—know that VEAP is a resource that can help them maintain a level of independent living.



Donate & Do!

Are you looking for a way to start 2017 off on a positive note and make a difference in your community?

If so, *Donate & Do* is for you!

Donate & Do is VEAP's answer to groups that want to volunteer. More and more businesses are looking for ways to get employees involved in projects that make a difference and **Donate & Do** is a perfect fit. It's also a great way for friends, family, faith groups, schools, book clubs, etc. to get involved in a fun, yet impactful activity.

Donate & Do groups can participate in a variety of activities from baking banana bread in the VEAP commercial kitchen to sorting and bagging produce for the food pantry shelves. Some groups organize special collections of diapers or toilet tissue which they bring to VEAP for re-packing for the pantry.



Considering a New Year's Resolution?

- Sign up to volunteer at VEAP
- Sign up to make a monthly contribution
- Donate & Do: Organize a group of co-workers, family, or faith group to volunteer
- Attend A Toast to VEAP on Friday, March 3, 2017

Other ideas? Contact Kial at kialn@veap.org

In the Spirit of the Season

A Gratitude Jar collects notes from families as they leave the food pantry. Each month, hundreds of notes are written and shared with volunteers and staff.

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We are always blessed by the kind staff and patient volunteers. It is amazing how we have food for our table so the money can stretch in other areas. Thank you.

Thank you—you help me make it through the month. Your kindness will not be forgotten.

Thank you so much for helping my family. We were going hungry and didn't know what to do.

Thank you. This helps so I don't have to decide on food or meds.

Thank you so much. My husband passed away and he was my support. Bless you.

veap.org



LINK

Winter 2016



Save the Dates!

March: All Month Long
Food and Fund Drives

Friday, March 3
A Toast to VEAP
Wine, craft beer, & food

Friday, May 19
VEAP Annual Gala
New Date!

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