Volunteer Spotlight

Dave Reilly
Mobile Food Pantry Volunteer

When did you get involved with VEAP? I started volunteering in January 2019. I retired last year and was able to get a bunch of projects done around the house, however I wanted something to keep me busy, like volunteering. I was aware of VEAP; I had donated food but I didn’t know a lot about the services VEAP offers, so I decided to come in and check it out!

Why do you volunteer? I have been pretty lucky in my life and I feel an obligation to give back to the community. I did a lot of volunteering when I was younger- I taught all the religion programs at our church, I coached every sport, then I traveled a lot for work and wasn’t able to volunteer as much. I am glad to be able to give back and volunteer again.

What’s it like to be a volunteer with VEAP? It’s fun! I don’t work a standard shift, so I get to meet a lot of different people on all shifts, which is really nice. It’s really fun to work with the clientele - I really enjoy that aspect of volunteering a lot!

What volunteer roles do you have with VEAP? What is your favorite? Mobile Food Pantry Driver, Van Driver, and Distribution and Warehouse. I like volunteering with the Mobile Food Pantry best. I really like interacting with people and enjoy getting out in the community.

Has anything surprised you about volunteering? I’m amazed at the amount of food we go through at VEAP. I’m really just blown away with the quantity of food! There is such a need out in the community, almost every time we go out with the Mobile Food Pantry we run out of food.

What would you tell someone who is thinking about volunteering at VEAP in the Mobile Food Pantry? It is very rewarding. You get to meet and connect with a lot of different people as they wait to shop on the bus. You really get to know the clients and build a rapport, which is nice.

What do you wish other people knew about VEAP? All the different services VEAP offers. Before volunteering, I just knew about the food, but VEAP does so much more.

What do you do when you aren’t volunteering? I read a lot. I love mysteries and spy novels. I have 10 grandkids, 7 in the Twin Cities, and I could spend every day watching their activities. I enjoy traveling with my wife.

Interested in volunteering with VEAP? Contact Courtney, Volunteer Manager at 952.955.8325 or courtneyf@veap.org

School Supply Drive 2019

Help students succeed in school! Backpacks, earbuds, calculators, and USB thumb drives are the most needed items!

Learn more at veap.org/schoolsupplies

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Graduation parties, picnics, and summer celebrations...

Summer celebrations are part of our Minnesota traditions. As the school year winds down and summer approaches, many families find themselves planning graduation parties. Natayla, a single mom with three children, had been visiting the VEAP food pantry for six months when her oldest child was nearing graduation. She was excited for her son, but worried about how she would pay for the traditional celebration.

Originally from the Ukraine, Natayla and her family have lived in the Twin Cities for many years. Graduation from high school is a momentous occasion for anyone, especially a first-generation immigrant family, and she wanted her son’s party to be absolutely perfect.

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Our Community is Growing Healthy Food for VEAP

Local businesses, schools, and places of worship have partnered with VEAP this summer to create community gardens, with the intention of growing fresh, healthy foods for our food pantry! All produce grown this summer goes directly to neighbors in need.

We are really excited about our newest community garden partner, Sensata Technologies—check out the start of their new garden below. They are well on their way to joining our expanding list of gardeners growing fresh produce for our pantry. Thanks to all of our community garden partners- we couldn’t do it without you!

Contribute from your garden

Be a part of our community growing fresh produce for VEAP! Simply add an extra row, pot, or square to your growing space. Plant carrots, tomatoes, cucumbers, or whatever you love, and bring your harvest to VEAP. Half of the food we distribute is fresh produce, which translates to better health and well-being.

How can you help?

VEAP provides our community with much more than food, we provide hope to people in need. Donations from our generous partners are what makes this work possible. Your dollars help remove barriers to stability, keep families healthy and together in their homes, keep kids in school, and ensure greater success in life.

Give today! veap.org/donate