From VEAP’S CEO

2019 was quite a year at VEAP. We launched a new initiative to increase our visitors’ access to fresh produce, providing them with six additional visits per year. Strong relationships with food banks, along with donations from people like you, allowed us to distribute more than 4.3 million pounds of food. That is an astounding 600,000 more pounds than any other year in VEAP’s history. And we provided more families with housing financial assistance than ever before. Without a doubt, VEAP is making a difference in the lives of people in the communities we serve.

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Save the date! May 1, 2020 is the official evening of VEAP’s annual Gala and we’d love for you to attend! This year, we’ll be celebrating again at the Bloomington Hyatt. Join us for an action-packed evening with one-of-a-kind silent auction items, live entertainment and a delicious dinner all in support of VEAP. You’ll learn about our impact in the Bloomington, Richfield, Edina and South Minneapolis communities. Please mark your calendars to attend!

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Remember VEAP has excellent purchasing power: every dollar donated allows us to buy enough food for families to make six meals! Make your gift at veap.org/donate or call Kial at 952-388-6410 to get a detailed Food Drive kit to get started.

Please note: A Toast to VEAP, our annual fundraising and food tasting event, will take place this fall. Please subscribe to email updates from VEAP on our website to learn more about this fun (and tasty) opportunity, plus other ways to get more involved.

VEAP • 9600 Aldrich Avenue South., Bloomington, MN 55420 • veap.org
Creating pathways to stability: Tina and Dario’s story

A core component of VEAP’s mission is ensuring that everyone who visits our On-site Food Pantry also has access to holistic, wrap-around supportive services from our team of social workers, community health navigators and housing specialists. Recently, our staff met with Tina who was facing a stressful financial crisis after moving to Minnesota with her 12-year-old son, Dario...

After a series of job losses, she and Dario decided to start a new life in Bloomington and connected with Tina’s sister, who allowed the pair to move into her studio apartment. But shortly thereafter, the landlord had bad news: Tina and Dario could not stay in the small space and had one week to move out. Although Tina had started working a full-time job, her first paycheck was not set to hit her bank account for a month and she didn’t have any savings to make a security deposit on an apartment of her own. She and Dario tried to problem solve by staying on friends’ sofas for a few days, but soon were spending many nights sleeping in her car.

In a recent visit to VEAP, Tina met with our team who helped her create a plan of action. We assisted Tina with locating an affordable apartment for her and Dario and negotiated a security deposit that fit her budget and paycheck schedule. VEAP also provided her with gift cards for gas and other basic needs, so that she can dedicate her first check toward rent. Tina is now in her new apartment and is so grateful for both the food and supportive services she received from VEAP. Dario has started school in Bloomington and the two are happy to have a warm home this winter!

Youth stepping up for VEAP as passionate volunteers

3,031 people passed through VEAP last year as volunteers, spending over 67,000 hours sorting through donated produce, stocking our shelves, greeting visitors, and so much more. We are simply blown away by the giving spirit of our dedicated volunteers, many of whom are here on a weekly basis supporting every aspect of VEAP’s operations.

Some of those hidden heroes are local youth! In 2019, VEAP welcomed nearly 39 groups with youth volunteers—from Girls and Boy Scouts troops, Swim and Dive teams, to faith-based youth groups—nine-year-olds to teenagers and every age in between.

As we look to the future of our communities, we are heartened to see how many young people have demonstrated a commitment to civic service. Thank you to all the youth for your support this past year and we look forward to seeing your smiling faces in 2020.

Learn more volunteering at VEAP! Flexible day-time, evening and weekend opportunities: veap.org/volunteer

Affordable housing crisis continues

Making rent every month remains a major challenge for individuals and families visiting VEAP, despite a strong economy in 2019. How deep is the problem and why?

VEAP interviewed nearly 400 visitors to our On-site Food Pantry in 2019 to look into larger trends in the local housing market. The results are telling.

Respondents share they pay an average of $1,055 for rent each month—and earn just $1,753 after taxes. Many individuals work in the service and hospitality industry, earning minimum wage. Close to 60% of their take-home pay goes directly to rent. Even for those receiving a housing subsidy, rent eats nearly 40% of their income, leaving precious little for other basic necessities, like food and heat. And costs are rising. Seven out of ten families experienced an increase in their monthly rent last year by an average of $76.00—a bag of groceries.

See how VEAP is responding to the housing crisis in our community and what else our respondents had to share. Visit our website, veap.org, to see the full 2019 Housing Report.

Give where you live! $1 = food for six meals!

Visit veap.org/donate to make a gift online

Food on the move!

Our Mobile Food Pantry distributed 87,102 pounds of food in 2019, 138% more than 2018, reaching people with food right where they live, work, study or worship. Stay tuned for new stops in 2020 by checking out veap.org/events
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