



FACES of HOPE

Providing Help, Creating Hope

Brother Francis Shelter |
Clare House | Charlie Elder House |
Family Disability Services |
Homeless Family Services |
Pregnancy Support & Adoption Services |
Refugee Assistance & Immigration Services |
St. Francis House Food Pantry

A publication of Catholic Social Services

Summer 2015

25 YEARS of coming together for Anchorage



For a quarter of a century, the Anchorage community has turned out in their finest attire to come together on one night to show that they care for families and individuals in need. To open the event, attendees sang the Alaska Flag Song, reminding everyone that Charity Ball exists to unite Anchorage in the common cause of lifting our neighbors up and out of poverty.

In 2015, individuals and businesses, large and small, pitched in to raise over \$100,000 during Together We Can—the signature event of the night. This money will enable CSS to buy a new van for client transport and to expand our robust case management system. Case managers are on-the-ground everyday ensuring that people who need help are moving up and out of the cycle of poverty.

Your generous gifts during this gala event have housed veterans, protected homeless mothers and children, and helped our community members turn their lives around. For a quarter of a century, your generous financial contributions have raised \$10 million dollars in order to bring hope to people and make Anchorage the great city that it is.

Next year we will celebrate **CSS' 50th anniversary** at Charity Ball and we will love to see you there! Thank You!



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You can help
support St.
Francis House
Food Pantry
Thank you!

cssalaska.org



St. Francis House Summer Support

Lisa Aquino, Executive Director

WE BEGAN first at CSS as the St. Francis House Food Pantry. In the beginning, Holy Family Parish began to distribute food to the hungry in our community. That was nearly 50 years ago, and still our St. Francis House Food Pantry is very busy, serving on average 115 families everyday, distributing more than 600,000 pounds of food every year. St. Francis House is the largest food pantry in the state and clients run the gamut from seniors on fixed incomes to working families struggling to make ends meet. We ask our clients what other expenses they have to cover that make it difficult to afford buying food, and we hear rent, utilities, and medical bills. Most of our clients have jobs or are retired, and need a helping hand. CSS and the larger community of Anchorage, are here to help. We are open Monday through Thursday from 9 AM to 1 PM, and the last Wednesday of every month from 4 PM to 6:30 PM.

Our pantry is stocked with food items mostly bought at a reduced rate in partnership with the Food Bank of Alaska or with business partners in town. We also receive federal support for specific programs and generous donations from local parishes, organizations and individuals to supplement what we purchase. These donations allow for healthy and fresh food choices. St. Francis House Food Pantry is staffed by three people, and relies on numerous and amazing volunteers to serve the large number of people whom we help. Volunteers stock items, as well as serve as personal shoppers for our clients.

In addition, we have students from ASD's ACE/ACT program working in St. Francis House to acquire life and work skills. St. Francis House is truly an example of the community working together.

We can demonstrate great success, but still we face the question that we have faced since the beginning:

"Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?"
John 6:5

Food security is an issue that we have been dealing with throughout history. Thinking about the story of the loaves and fishes brings to mind how St. Francis House makes small miracles happen every day --in partnership with all of you in Anchorage-- to have enough food to support those in need. Every day, in every season of the year, there are hungry people in our community. By all of us coming together and joining our resources, we can feed our community.

Summer food service programs are available to youth age 18 and younger throughout Anchorage. If you'd like more information about those programs or St. Francis House Food Pantry, or if you would like a tour, please go to www.cssalaska.org.

Thank you to those original Holy Family parishioners who began this beautiful institution in Anchorage, and a big thank you to our long-time St. Francis House Food Pantry Director, Linda Bond. Linda is retiring in June 2015, and we will miss her very much. Best of luck in everything, Linda!

UNITY

COPPER RIVER SALMON Lunch Clare House Style

Yum! Thank you Copper River Prince William Sound Marketing Association, Copper River Seafoods, Inc., Executive Chef Drew Johnson with Kincaid Grill, and Cordova fisherman Sara Parker for coming out to Clare House on May 16th to cook up and share some of the first Copper River reds of the season.

It was an awesome and tasty lunch that was enjoyed by clients and staff. We appreciate you and look forward to the next delicious round of fish!



Kincaid Grill Chef Drew Johnson preparing Copper River Reds



Chef Drew Johnson & Cordova fisherman Sara Parker

CLIENT success

Linda came to Alaska from Florida eleven years ago after leaving an abusive marriage.

With limited funds, food was scarce so a friend told Linda about the resources at the St. Francis Food Pantry. Linda used the food provided by St. Francis House to survive.

With times tough, Linda says she became a victim of depression. A doctor advised her to do some volunteer work.

Linda says that St. Francis House Food Pantry was an easy choice because without the Catholic Social Services

PATHWAYS *to* INDEPENDENCE

program, she would not have made it.

She has been volunteering since Jan 2015 and it's helped her immensely.

Linda says she is able to help inspire other clients that there is hope and that someone cares about them.

One day a single mom came in who couldn't afford a birthday cake for her child.

Linda was able to find a donated cake to go along with the emergency food and she says the mother and the child were overwhelmed with happiness.



We are very happy to say that the Walmart Foundation will donate \$40,000 to Saint Francis House Food Pantry. Walmart funds will be used to supplement the generous donations already received at the food pantry and replace the food items in jeopardy due to funding cuts, which are always looming. This funding will purchase—at a reduced rate—basic nutritious foods such as fresh produce, meat and dairy products.

Food assistance from St. Francis House provides a critical safety net for families living on the edge of or in poverty. This year 93% of our clients report that by receiving food, it allowed them to pay a bill that would have otherwise gone unpaid. Our food assistance alleviates that difficult decision of whether to pay the rent or buy food.

Each year approximately 15,000 low-income Anchorage-area residents receive nutritious food from St. Francis House Food Pantry to bridge the food insecurity gap.

We would love for you to get involved! If you would like to arrange a tour of St. Francis House Food Pantry, or to volunteer, please contact **Kara Casanova at 222-7335**.

Stay Tuned! **We are REBOOTING!**

CSS's exciting, new website launch is coming this fall!

www.cssalaska.org



Mark your Calendar

Wednesday, June 17th

Marie's Beauty Supply Insomnia Night
570 East Benson Blvd. 6pm to 10pm

Friday, June 19th

World Refugee Day
Lions Park Mt. View Drive & N. Pine St. 4pm to 7pm

Fri-Sun, July 11th-13th

RAIS Youth Soccer AK Fugees Far North Tournament
Location and Time TBA

Saturday & Sunday, July 25th-26th

Plein Air Painters of Alaska
5801 Barry Ave. 10am to 6pm each day

For more information, visit our website at cssalaska.org and click on the events page

VOLUNTEER Opportunities

This summer please consider volunteering at CSS. You can enjoy the sunshine AND garden with RAIS or help Clare House turn an empty lot into a recreation area for residents! You can also be a personal shopper at St. Francis House food pantry or serve dinner at Brother Francis Shelter. For more information please contact Kara Casanova at 222-7335 kcasanova@cssalaska.org

RAIS clients with the Fresh International Gardens project are gearing up for another summer of fresh Alaskan crops that will be sold around town.



If you have a story to tell or information to share with our community please contact Corey Allen-Young at cyoung@cssalaska.org or (907) 222-7324.