



Hastings Family Service

Providing HELP and HOPE since 1970

301 2nd Street East
Hastings, MN 55033
651-437-7134
hastingsfamilyservice.org

NOVEMBER 2020



A 50th Year to Remember



Details inside on page 7

2020 Board of Directors

Debbie Grimm, President Pam Oeffler, Secretary

Tony Bolstorff David Fransen Melissa Freiermuth Katy Lindberg
Tim Stanley Michael Swanson Dave Wilske Mike Woog Caleb Wyre

50 years... Unexpected and Impactful!



Chris Koop
Executive Director

From our humble beginning gathering and distributing children's clothing out of the basement of a home, Hastings Family Service has provided many different services over the past 50 years. In 1975, HFS and a group of community members assisted an immigrant family in purchasing a home. In 1976, financial and mental health counseling was offered through Dakota County. In 1988 on a beautiful Sunday morning, Oakridge Manor Apartment Complex burned to the ground and HFS provided food, clothing, and household goods to victims of the fire.

50 years of growth and change still could not have fully prepared us for 2020, but experience and ongoing community support allowed HFS to quickly respond with virtual appointments over the phone for financial assistance, and modified no-contact services including food shelf and school supplies distribution via the drive-thru and Meals on Wheels door-drop delivery to over 60 seniors.

Although COVID-19 has impacted our 50th year, it has not defined it! We are putting what we heard from our neighbors into action.... providing more food and greater access to easily receive that food. This month we are launching our new Market Express, a quick food pick-up on designated Fridays, and very soon, the HFS Market food shelf will go mobile with Market on the Move! Thanks to a grant from the Katherine B Andersen Fund for a refrigerated vehicle, HFS will be able to transport food safely out into our area communities.

I miss seeing the people we serve, but I still got to witness a little girl's excitement when she picked out her Unicorn backpack for school; I've heard the relief in a father's voice over the phone when I told him we would be able to help with holiday gifts and food for his children; and I've seen the passion and purpose our volunteers express when they are able to return to their volunteer roles.

While we can't celebrate this 50th year as we'd hoped, I can't imagine a year that has been more impactful. We are so grateful for the unfaltering support of this community. It is that generosity that allows HFS to be creative and nimble in response to a fire, a pandemic, and to whatever comes next. Stay well!

Chris Koop

Project Share Registration is Now Open!

In response to COVID-19, this year gifts will only be available to children ages 18 and under through the Adopt-a-Family program. The North Pole gift room will not be available. Food will be available to all households.

Families with children ages 18 and under are encouraged to register early by completing the online registration form at www.hastingsfamilyservice.org. After completing the online registration, families will be directed to sign up for a time to complete registration over the phone with a Project Share volunteer. If you have questions or unable to complete any part of the registration process, please call 651-437-7134. Adult only households requesting food for the holidays may do so by calling 651-437-7134 beginning Monday, November 30.



Hastings Family Service

Staff:

Chris Koop
Executive Director

Joannie Becker
Meals on Wheels Assistant

Jessica Bierbrauer
Office Manager

Kelly Carter
Development & Community Relations

Sue Hill
Meals on Wheels Coordinator

Mary Kells
Rivertown Treasures Store Manager

Mary Kocak
Market Food Shelf Director

Maddie Milliren
Programs Coordinator

Annette Moynihan
Meals on Wheels Assistant

Desirée Olson
Programs Manager

Kathy Prange
Rivertown Treasures Assistant

Maria Slavik
Volunteer & Communications Coordinator

Amy Sutton
Associate Director



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Find Us Online:

www.hastingsfamilyservice.org

A 50th Year to Remember

A look inside Hastings Family Service
 during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Market Food Shelf Provides Help and Hope During Pandemic

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March, HFS quickly pivoted to a no-contact drive-thru food shelf, allowing HFS to continue providing a good quantity and quality of healthy food while keeping our neighbors and volunteers safe.

Volunteers pre-pack each grocery pick up, which includes fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy, meat, bread, dry goods, and frozen foods, as well as a variety of personal care and household items. Neighbors safely pick up the groceries or use a delivery option in partnership with Transit Link.

A grocery pick up from the Market food shelf allows families to free up resources for other bills or basic needs. If a grocery pick up could help you, call 651-437-7134.

One morning, a father was picking up a food order with his young daughter, and while they were waiting in their car for the volunteers to place the food on the shelf for pick up, the volunteer heard the little girl ask with wonder, "Daddy, is all that food for us?" When the father responded that it was, she exclaimed, "Oh Daddy! We'll never run out of food again!"



Market food shelf volunteers Ron Toppin (above) and Pam Sorenson (left) pack food for a grocery pick up.



Above: a typical grocery pick up from The Market food shelf for a family of four.

HFS Expands Market Programs with More Options & Accessibility

In October, HFS introduced Market Express, an express food pick up option. Market Express is a 3-4 day supply of food and includes meat, bread, dairy, fresh produce, and dried goods. It is a great option for those who have already visited the food shelf during the current month as well as those who might not need a full grocery pick up. Market Express is distributed

on scheduled Fridays through our safe and confidential drive-thru. A quick call reserves an express pick up.

Market Cart, a monthly produce delivery for seniors has increased the number served by 57% during the pandemic. Grocery-quality produce is delivered by an HFS volunteer to eligible seniors enrolled in the NAPS (Nutritional Assistance Program for Seniors) and Meals on Wheels programs as well as seniors living at Mississippi Terrace, Oakridge Manor, and Rivertown Courts senior buildings.



Market Cart

Monthly Produce Delivery for Seniors from Hastings Family Service



Market Express
 Express Food Pick Up at Hastings Family Service

1970 **50** 2020
Hastings Family Service
 50 YEARS OF HELP AND HOPE

A 50th

A look inside Hastings



Above: HFS Volunteer Receptionist, Diane Smith assists neighbors in need of food and financial assistance.

Help Begins with a Phone Call to HFS

Although the HFS building is closed to the public, HFS is very much open for business during the pandemic!

All food and financial assistance requests are being completed over the phone or online.



Left: Signs in the windows of the HFS building remind the community we are here to help.

HFS Volunteer Receptionists and staff complete the intake process over the phone, making the process confidential and safe.

The HFS website is updated regularly to provide visitors with up-to-date information on programs and services and online forms are available to make the process easy and more accessible.

We are here to help and will walk you through each step of the process. If you've never had to ask for help before, it's okay to ask for help now!

Meals on Wheels Delivers Nutritious Options

Meals on Wheels delivery has grown by 50% over the past few months. The program quickly adapted to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the stay-at-home order, delivery was modified to once a week, with a small group of volunteers delivering a week's worth of fresh, frozen, and grocery style meals, including a meal from either Emily's Bakery and Deli or The Onion Grille.

In August, Meals on Wheels returned to delivering hot meals 5 days a week and is now offering the frozen meals as an ongoing option for recipients to have on hand. Meals are delivered in a safe, no-contact drop delivery. The program is a nutritious option

for those who are most vulnerable or who aren't comfortable going out into public spaces yet.

The increased interest also created the need for more volunteers. At a time when many HFS volunteers are unable to volunteer in their usual capacities, volunteers have stepped in to deliver Meals on Wheels. More than 20 new volunteers were added to help with the program in August!



Above: Meals on Wheels Volunteer Steve Strauss loads meals into his vehicle for delivery.



Left and below: Staff and volunteers prepare a week's worth of meals for delivery during the Stay-at-Home order.

Below: HFS Meals on Wheels volunteers pose for a socially-distanced photo on Memorial Day before delivering a week's worth of meals to recipients during the Stay-at-Home order.



Year to Remember

s Family Service during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Volunteers Find Creative Way to Celebrate HFS's 50th Anniversary



Many of the plans to celebrate HFS's 50th anniversary were put on hold in 2020, but that didn't stop us from finding creative ways to celebrate!

On April 21, 2020, the 50th anniversary of HFS's incorporation as a nonprofit, volunteers lined up their vehicles for a 50th anniversary parade. Many

volunteers decorated their vehicles with signs, balloons, and even a few costumes before parading down 2nd Street past the HFS building and the local senior buildings HFS serves.

It was not the celebration anyone had planned, but it was heartwarming to see the love and support from HFS volunteers and the Hastings community.



Left: HFS Volunteers celebrate 50 years of Help and Hope in Hastings with a parade.

Right: Residents at Park Ridge, including HFS co-founder Lew Linde and volunteer Gretchen Studenski, line up outside to watch the parade.



Rivertown Treasures Offers Sidewalk Sales & Assistance

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted many small businesses including Rivertown Treasures (RTT). The thrift store, operated by HFS, provides revenue to support HFS programs as well as clothing and household goods to our neighbors. The entire HFS building continues to be closed to the public to reduce exposure to the virus. It is our top priority to keep the Market food shelf open and ensure food is available to the community.

RTT offered Sidewalk Sales on a few weekends this fall, and continues to help neighbors in need of clothing. A gentleman called needing "decent clothes" for a family funeral. Rivertown Treasures was able to help with a shirt, tie and dress shoes, and to provide him what he needed to say a difficult but dignified goodbye. So things look different right now, but RTT is still here to help!



Rivertown Treasures staff and volunteers brought the thrift store outside this fall.

Project Share Preparations Begin

HFS staff started preparing for Project Share early this year in order to address the challenges of serving a large number of families amid COVID precautions.

Project Share registration began in late September for families with children ages 18 and under. Registration begins with a visit to the HFS website to complete an online registration form.

Neighbors are then able to sign up for a phone call with a Project Share volunteer to complete the registration process and provide their children's wish list.

The sign up to Adopt-a-Family is available on the website. Because gifts will only be available for children ages 18 and under through the Adopt-a-Family program, churches and businesses that typically host gift trees and donors are encouraged to Adopt-a-Family in lieu of general gift donations this year.

Up-to-date Project Share information can be found on the HFS website: www.hastingsfamilyservice.org.



Volunteer Carolyn Gronquist completes Project Share registration over the phone.

A 50th Year to Remember

A look inside Hastings Family Service during the COVID-19 Pandemic

School Supply Assistance for In-School and Distance Learners

Back to School looked very different for students in Hastings this year. Whether students were headed back to the classroom, getting ready for distance learning, or a hybrid model, HFS provided assistance with essential school supplies for about 250 children.

Volunteers pre-packed backpacks with school supplies based on grade level, and students were able to choose their backpack out during a no-contact drive-thru pick up. There were still plenty of excited smiles as students received a backpack with their favorite characters or colors, as well as a token for a free custard from Hastings Culver's!



Volunteer Peg Baringer prepacks backpacks with school supplies, while Volunteers Neil Johnson, Kathy Pearson, and HFS staff member Maddie Milliren provide students with backpack choices during the drive-thru pick up.



HFS staff member Mary Kells and volunteer Kathy Palmer sanitize high-touch surfaces in The Market food shelf.

Many changes have been made to the HFS building itself. Extra space in the store and sort area of the warehouse has been utilized for overflow storage of food and supplies to support the Market food shelf. A secure donation drop box was installed at the entrance to Rivertown Treasures to allow donors to safely drop off donations. More flexible and mobile shelving and storage has been added, allowing shelves with boxes of food to be easily moved around the warehouse.

Additional signage has been created and technology investments were made to safely serve neighbors virtually and to allow staff members to work at home as needed.

Many of these investments were made possible by the

Increased Flexibility and Creativity Needed in 2020

Extra precautions to keep our neighbors, volunteers, and staff safe are needed during the pandemic.

Volunteers have gone above and beyond to incorporate additional cleaning and safety protocols into their volunteer shifts and have helped come up with creative solutions to the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has presented.

generosity of HFS donors and special COVID-related grants. Many generous donors provided HFS with a permanent home a few years ago during our capital campaign, not knowing how significant this would be in a year like 2020. The building provided HFS the flexibility and space to implement creative solutions that allow staff and volunteers to safely continue to serve our neighbors.

HFS continues to work closely with the county and other resources to provide assistance for area families. People who are struggling to make ends meet are encouraged to schedule a food pick up through the HFS Market and utilize those food dollars for other bills. The food shelf has seen a steady increase in numbers this fall and about 24% of those utilizing the Market are receiving services at HFS for the first time.

Right: overflow food shelf storage inside Rivertown Treasures Thrift Store



Above: mobile shelving in the drive-thru food shelf

Hastings Family Service is having some fun this year with our version of Give to the Max day!



Please consider a donation to HFS during Give to the "Mask" day and have your donation **MATCHED!**

Drop off your donation at HFS on November 19th or visit hastingsfamilyservice.org to SCHEDULE your online Give to the "Mask" day gift starting November 1st!

Stay tuned on Facebook to meet some of our HFS family "behind the mask!" There will be chances to win HFS 50th anniversary or Gobblegait masks! Watch for fun updates throughout the day!

Your online donation could help HFS win golden tickets of \$500 every 15 minutes or \$1000 each hour throughout the day!

Online and in-person donations will be MATCHED by generous HFS donors up to \$??,000!

Gobble Gait: Let's All OutRun 2020!



Gobble Gait has been a tradition for over 20 years in Hastings, and while we won't be able to gather in downtown Hastings on Thanksgiving morning, you can keep the spirit of Gobble Gait going at home this year. It might look different, but you can still Get Your Gobble On!

Gobble Gait has created an online store at www.gobblegait.com with a variety of Gobble Gait 2020 merchandise, that if ordered by November 15, will be delivered to your door by November 25, just in time for Thanksgiving

morning! We're asking you to make the most of it! Wear your shirts, do a run and/or walk in your own neighborhood, ring the cowbells, fill your hearts with the same joy knowing you're supporting Hastings Family Service during a time of critical need.

Thank you to Gobble Gait organizers and the community of Hastings for your continued support!

Support Hastings Family Service by ordering your Gobble Gait gear at www.gobblegait.com.

Then post photos of your at-home version of Gobble Gait this year with #GobbleGait and tag HFS so we can share your photos on social media!



**We are all experiencing different struggles because of the pandemic, but
WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER!
THANK YOU for the many ways you continue to support Hastings Family Service!**



Your donation of \$30 will cover the cost of a holiday meal and spread help and hope this holiday season!



**Keep the tradition going
at home this year!**

Order your Gobble Gait gear at
www.gobblegait.com

All proceeds benefit Hastings Family Service



Hastings Family Service

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Hastings, MN 55033

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Need help with gifts for your children or food for the holidays?
Want to share help and hope in and around Hastings this holiday season?
Project Share provides help for the holidays to families
and individuals living in ISD 200.

Receiving Project Share Holiday Assistance

- ... Registration for families with children ages 18 and under is now open!
Registration begins online at www.hastingsfamilyservice.org
- ... Adult only households may request food for the holidays by calling
651-437-7134 beginning Monday, November 30
- ... Food and gift distribution will take place the weeks of December 7 and 14

Supporting Project Share

- ... The sign-up to Adopt-a-Family is available at www.hastingsfamilyservice.org
- ... A \$30 monetary gift covers the cost of a holiday meal
- ... See page 5 or www.hastingsfamilyservice.org for more information

