



EXPRESSIONS

The newsletter of the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches

March Campaign expands possibilities for food shelves

PARTER IN THE SPOTLIGHT: BRIAN COYLE CENTER

Five different versions of the food pyramid are tacked to the bulletin board at the Brian Coyle Center food shelf: an African heritage diet pyramid, a vegetarian and vegan diet pyramid, an Asian diet pyramid, a Mediterranean diet pyramid and a Latin American diet pyramid.

Located in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood of Minneapolis, the Brian Coyle Center serves more than 7,200 people each year. Sixty percent of their clients are East African, mainly from Somalia or Ethiopia. In addition to food assistance, the Brian Coyle Center offers a wide range of social services including job training, ESL classes and youth programs. What makes their food shelf unique, says Sarah Denzer, basic needs program manager, is “the heavy focus on nutritious and culturally specific foods.”

“The March Campaign...frees up funds so we can do things like gardening and cooking classes.”

- Sarah Denzer, basic needs manager at the Brian Coyle Center

Denzer, who has worked with the organization for about three years and has a background in ecology and nutrition, says she likes to incorporate

plenty of feedback from clients when choosing which foods to keep in stock. “We have an open door policy for clients to come in and comment,” she says. Some of the most popular items in the food shelf are corn masa, coconut milk, bamboo shoots, dried red beans and cowpeas.

“It is good to help the community and to learn different languages,” says Ganga Acharya, the Brian Coyle Center’s food shelf specialist. Through working in the food shelf, Acharya says he’s picked up key words and phrases in Somali, Hmong and more.

The Brian Coyle Center food shelf is a strong partner during the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign as well as during the Harvest Campaign—an initiative to get more fresh, locally-grown produce into food shelves during “March Campaign...” is continued on page 5



Sarah Denzer, basic needs manager



Ganga Acharya, food shelf specialist

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Focused on helping seniors, empowering urban American Indians and West African immigrants, nurturing families, fighting hunger and mentoring youth, the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches is a nonprofit where compassion inspires action by uniting people of faith to serve people in need. To support any of our programs, go to gmcc.org/donate. Designate your gift to a program of your choosing.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Division of Indian Work

DIW's **Live-It!** program, focused on teen pregnancy prevention, is working with students Katie Cueva and Lauren Schaeffer from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health to develop an evidence-based evaluation system for the program. One of the main goals of developing the evaluation is to move toward making Live It! available to tribal communities nationwide. • DIW youth program participants have been working for the past few months on a multi-stage **cultural art therapy project** exploring identity and self-concept. "There's such natural genius in young people surviving these times," says Terrall Lewis, the local artist and youth worker facilitating the project.

Minnesota FoodShare

The **Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign** is in full swing with food shelves, schools, businesses, restaurants, congregations and stores across the state banding together to fight hunger. The **March Campaign Celebration Luncheon** will be on **Friday, April 29** at the Metropolitan ballroom and clubroom in Golden Valley. Invitations coming soon.

Kinship

Kinship kids and mentors had a blast bouncing on giant trampolines at SkyZone on March 8. Another jump party is scheduled for March 24. • Kinship is offering free birthday bags for parents and mentors to give to their Kinship kids. Birthday bags can be picked up at Hennepin County or Anoka County offices. Contact **Jerod** at **612-588-4655** (Hennepin) or **Penny** at **763-862-6755** (Anoka).

Metro Paint-A-Thon

The program is seeking volunteer teams for this year's Metro Paint-A-Thon weekend, **August 6-7**. Other dates to volunteer can be arranged. For more information about forming a team, contact **Molly Chandler** at **612-276-1579** or mchandler@gmcc.org. To sign up online, visit gmcc.org/paintathon. Team registration deadline is June 1.

HandyWorks

Weather permitting, this year's **Rake, Rattle, and Roll** will take place throughout the month of April in south, southeast and northeast Minneapolis. Volunteer groups can sign up to rake and bag leaves for seniors and disabled adults in preparation for mowing season. To sign up or get more information, please contact **Molly Chandler** at **612-276-1579** or mchandler@gmcc.org. You can also sign up online at gmcc.org/handyworks.

Urban Immersion Service Retreats

Church youth groups, school groups and others are invited to join Urban Immersion this summer for weekend, half-week or full-week retreats. Housing, service projects, meals and interactive programming are provided with each retreat. See gmcc.org/urbanimmersion for open dates, pricing and details or contact **Gennae Falconer** at **612-276-1564** or gfalconer@gmcc.org. **Retreats are 10% off for first-time participants.**

West African Family & Community Services

Since November 2015, the West African Family & Community Services food shelf has distributed **6,218 pounds of food** to **159 households**. • **Thirty-seven students** have graduated from the career development class and **22 of those students now have jobs as a result.**

Metro Paint-A-Thon homeowner applications due April 14

At the age of 94, Agnes had lived in her house for 67 years and managed most of the upkeep herself. In 2007, at the age of 86, she repainted the whole garage on her own. But in 2015 she decided it was time to ask for assistance. Agnes applied to have her garage painted free of charge by Metro Paint-A-Thon volunteers. "I did it myself eight years ago," said Agnes, "but this time I needed help."

A group of youth from Collegiate Presbyterian Church in Ames, Iowa was assigned to the task. Agnes was very grateful for the team's excellent work and even baked peanut butter cookies for them as a thank-you.



Agnes and the Collegiate Presbyterian team

Metro Paint-A-Thon has made a difference for so many seniors like Agnes. For most clients, the free house painting service comes at a time when they are no longer able to do the maintenance on their own and cannot afford to hire a contractor.

Every summer, more than a thousand volunteers scrape, prime and paint homes in Hennepin and Ramsey counties and neighboring cities at no cost to the homeowner. The program helps low-income seniors and people with disabilities continue to live independently in their own homes, enriching their lives and their neighborhoods.

This year, volunteers from companies, congregations, civic groups and schools will paint homes throughout the summer, with the primary focus coming the weekend of August 6-7.

To qualify for Metro Paint-A-Thon, homeowners must:

- Own and occupy a single-family home (no two-story homes, please) in need of painting but not major repairs.
- Live in Hennepin or Ramsey counties or neighboring cities.
- Be 60 years of age or older, or have a permanent physical disability (if under 60).
- Meet monthly income guidelines.

If you have a neighbor, friend or family member who could benefit from this program, or if you yourself are an eligible homeowner, call the Metro Paint-A-Thon office at **612-276-1579** for further information or to request an application. You can download an application or complete it online at www.gmcc.org/paintathon. The deadline to apply is **April 14**.

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SAVE THE DATE

March 30 - WCCO-TV will host an **on-air telethon** from 6 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. in support of the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign. Stories of Minnesota FoodShare's impact on hunger will be aired all day during local segments and viewers can call in to donate. Contact sshatila@gmcc.org if you are interested in volunteering during the telethon.

April 6 - Kinship's third annual **Mentoring Matters** luncheon will be held at Thrivent Financial, 625 S. Fourth Ave., Minneapolis, from noon to 1 p.m. Please RSVP to **Gennae Falconer** at **612-276-1564** or gfalconer@gmcc.org.

April 29 - The **Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign Celebration** will be at the Metropolitan ballroom and clubroom in Golden Valley this year. Registration begins at 11 a.m. with lunch and a short program starting at 11:30.

April 29 - Minneapolis American Indian Month kicks off with a parade through the Phillips neighborhood.

May 4 - American Indian students who attend Minneapolis Public Schools and have 95% attendance or better will be honored with a dinner at the **Minneapolis American Indian Month Celebration** at the East Phillips Park Community Center.

May 7 - The Division of Indian Work is once again supporting the American Indian Cancer Foundation's **"Powwow for Hope: Dancing for Life, Love & Hope."** To support the DIW Two Steppers team with a donation, contact **Chiffon Potter** at cpotter@diw-mn.org.

May 23 - GMCC's annual **Report to the Community** luncheon brings together volunteers, clients, board members and staff members to share stories of what GMCC means to them. Stay tuned for more information and invitations.

FINNEGANS Brew Co and local chefs team up to fight hunger

Throughout March, chefs in the Twin Cities have been facing off in a "Chef Food Fight" to benefit the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign. Each participating chef has developed a new menu item using FINNEGANS Beer. A portion of the proceeds from each of these special menu items is donated to the March Campaign to support 300 food shelves across the state.

Entries include:

- Irish Amber Battered Shrimp from Chef Ozzy Amelotti of Le Town Talk.
- Pub Pretzels with Hoppy Shepherd Beer Cheese from Chef Sammy Gonzalez of Green Mill in Lakeville.
- Finnegans Beer Mussels from Chef Ryan Mott of Pat's Tap.
- Hoppy Sriracha Wings from Chef Eric Heidelberger of Green Mill in Uptown.
- FINNEGANS Trinity from Chef Vincent Francoual of The Local.
- FINNEGANS Dead Irish Poet Cake from Chef Danielle Puhle of Green Mill Eagan.
- The Dead Lucy from Green Mill in Albert Lea.
- Steamed Mussels with Beer and Bruschetta from Chef Dinesh Jayawardena of FireLake Grill House & Cocktail Bar.
- FINNEGANS Sliders from Chef Chris Oxely of Jake O'Connors.
- Beer Cheese Soup from Chefs Brian Couch and Andrew Ernst of Red Stag Supperclub.
- Minneapolis Club Pork and Finnegans from Chef Hakan Lundberg of the Minneapolis Club.
- FINNEGANS Beer Cheese Burger from Chef Joe Bennett of Bennett's Chop and Rail House.

Diners can vote on their favorite menu items at finnegans.org/cheffoodfight/. The entry with the most votes at the end of March will be announced on WCCO in April, and the winning chef will win a weekend at the Chase on the Lake in Walker, Minn.





Photo credit: Jonathon Charpentier

New 5K event gives March Campaign a running start

Spirits were high on Saturday, March 5 at the first-ever “Eat & Run 5K, No K and Afterparty” developed to benefit Minnesota FoodShare and their 300 partner food shelves during the March Campaign. Runners and walkers traveled a 3.1-mile loop along Marshall, Lowry, 2nd and Broadway before joining the “No K” participants at FOOD BUILDING for good conversation, fresh FINNEGANS and music spun by DJ Lori Barbero, the drummer for the band Babes in Toyland.

Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign Honorary Chair Jason DeRusha gave a pep talk at the start of the race, highlighting the importance of supporting our state’s food shelves and encouraging participants to contribute to the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign throughout the month. Sunny skies and spring-like temperatures contributed to the event’s upbeat atmosphere.

“We’re so grateful to everyone who came out to help fight hunger in this fun and inclusive way and to the sponsors and partners who made it all possible,” said Suzanne Shatila, director of Minnesota FoodShare.

March Campaign...from page 1

August and September. A garden behind the building provides plenty of fresh produce for the food shelf during growing season and gives youth a chance to learn how to grow their own food.

“The Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign is our food shelf’s largest source of funding,” says Denzer. “It really helps secure our budget throughout the year. It frees up funds so we can do things like gardening and cooking classes.”

Like the Brian Coyle Center food shelf, food shelves across Minnesota rely on the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign to make it through the year. As the state’s largest grassroots food and fund drive, the March Campaign brings together businesses, organizations and community groups across the state to support 300 food shelves. Supporters can get involved by collecting food and funds for their local food shelf as well as donating directly to Minnesota FoodShare. Every dollar donated to Minnesota FoodShare during the month of March is distributed to 300 food shelves in a proportional match based on the number of clients served during the year and the amount of food and funds that food shelf raised during the campaign.

In 2015, there were 3.2 million visits to food shelves in Minnesota. One in 10 Minnesotans faces hunger on a regular basis. In order for food shelves around the state to continue meeting this persistent need in ways that are responsive to their communities, turnout for the March Campaign needs to stay strong.

“The March Campaign is huge for us,” says Denzer.

Last year, the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign raised \$8 million dollars and 4.7 million pounds of food. This year, Minnesota FoodShare Director Suzanne Shatila is hoping to surpass that amount. “As successful as it was, that amount only meets a portion of the annual hunger need in Minnesota,” she says. “We can and must do more.”

There’s still time to join Minnesota FoodShare in **A Different Kind of Food Fight** to help food shelves like the Brian Coyle Center food shelf thrive. Choose “Minnesota FoodShare” on the enclosed donation envelope or visit gmcc.org/mnfoodshare to find more ways to get involved in this last leg of the campaign.



Auctioneer Chi Woodrich Photos by Jonathon Charpentier



Ojibwe Rapper Tall Paul

DIW food shelf benefit surpasses expectations

On February 29, Leap Year Day, the Division of Indian Work's food shelf Horizons Unlimited hosted the "LEAP Into the Fight Against Hunger" benefit at Hell's Kitchen. The evening featured a lineup of acclaimed musicians including Butch Thompson; SOPRANORAMA! featuring Molly Sue McDonald, Janis Hardy and Dan Chouinard; Connie Evingson; Tall Paul; Dennis Spears; and Peter Ostroushko. The event was emceed by Stacey Thunder, producer, television host, actress and attorney.

Auctioneer Chi Woodrich (brother of our president and CEO Noya Woodrich) led the crowd in a spirited live auction, calling bids on vacation stays in Brazil, Mexico and New Mexico as well as on a platter of fresh-baked cookies from DIW board member George Soule.

A selection of unique silent auction items also contributed to the event's success. Supporters bid on everything from autographed Louise Erdrich novels to a gorgeous star quilt crafted by Agindaasodaa! (Let's Read!) program coordinator Marisa Carr.

The space was packed with about 200 people in attendance. Horizons Unlimited far exceeded their fundraising goal, raising a total of about thirty thousand dollars to keep the food shelf stocked with high quality food all year long.

We are so grateful to our many sponsors for making success of this magnitude possible. We hope to make this event a yearly tradition.

FREE LEGAL CLINICS INTRODUCED FOR WEST AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS

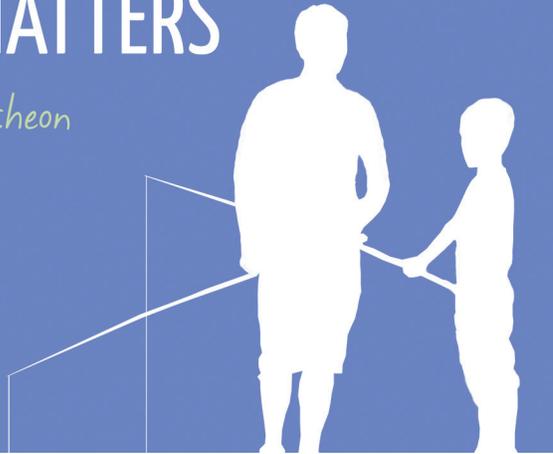
In collaboration with Volunteer Lawyer's Network, West African Family & Community Services has added free legal clinics to their array of programming. These free clinics provide eligible clients the opportunity to speak with a volunteer lawyer about legal questions and receive advice on how to solve them. All information is treated confidentially.

Clinics provide brief legal advice and services in most civil (non-criminal) areas of law such as immigration, family, consumer, licensing, debt, bankruptcy, housing, employment, etc., as well as criminal expungement. "This is very helpful," said one of the clients. "These legal services will help us with the high cost of legal fees by immigration lawyers."

The first free legal clinic was held on March 4 with future clinics scheduled for the first Friday of every month. All clinics take place at the West African Family & Community Services office at 7200 Brooklyn Boulevard, Brooklyn Center from **2-4 p.m.** Contact **Edmund Ocansey** at **612-276-1527** or **eocansey@gmcc.org** if you or someone you know could benefit from these services.

MENTORING MATTERS

A Kinship fundraising luncheon



According to MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, youth with a mentor are 55% more likely to go to college and 78% more likely to volunteer in their communities. "Through sharing our love, guidance and support, we are helping him grow into the successful young man he is meant to be," said Robyn, a volunteer with Kinship of Greater Minneapolis who, along with her husband and daughters, is mentoring a nine-year-old boy.

Kinship matches kids ages 5-18 who are in need of additional support with caring individuals, couples and families. Mentors and mentees are carefully matched based on common interests, aspirations and, when desired, faith connections. The average Kinship match lasts more than four years, well above the national standard of one year for mentoring relationships.

Please join Kinship at their third annual Mentoring Matters luncheon, a celebration of the strong friendships formed through mentoring and Kinship's 62nd year creating meaningful matches.

The luncheon is on **Wednesday, April 6** from noon to 1 p.m. at Thrivent Financial, 625 S. Fourth Ave. in Minneapolis. This event is free to attend. Please RSVP to **Gennae Falconer** at **612-276-1564** or **gfalconer@gmcc.org**.



Kinship kid Nasier delivers a speech at the 2015 Kinship luncheon

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Dining together is an important part of many evening programs at the Division of Indian Work. The meals prepared and served in Dakota Lodge create a comfortable, hospitable environment for participants in the Youth Leadership Development Program, Women of Traditional Birthing and Healthy Transitions programs.

"It's essential that the participants get fed, and that what they are served is healthy and filling," said Marie Rainey, youth worker with Healthy Transitions. "But it is time consuming for staff to prepare all the food in addition to facilitating groups."

In an effort to streamline the meal preparation process and offer a meaningful service project for DIW supporters, we have created **Wotapi! (Let's Eat!)**, an opportunity for volunteer groups to provide evening meals for our program participants.

We welcome groups of three to six people from colleges, congregations, businesses, families and others. Volunteer groups are responsible for buying groceries, preparing the meal at DIW (cooking supplies provided), serving participants and cleaning up. Volunteers are asked to arrive at DIW between 3:30 and 4 p.m. for kitchen orientation. Volunteer shifts wrap up by 5:30 or 6.

Visit gmcc.org/diw/wotapi to view available dates and sign up or contact **Rica Rivera** at **612-279-6323** or **erivera@diw-mn.org** for more information.

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Minnesota FoodShare
Urban Immersion Service Retreats
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A DIFFERENT KIND OF FOOD FIGHT

100% of donations go toward feeding the hungry



**Minnesota
FoodShare**
March Campaign

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