



WINTER 2013

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## IN THEIR OWN WORDS

**Question:** What was a favorite food you've recently received from the food bank?

*"Burger patties, chicken, cake and baby formula. I love all of the choices we have. It makes it easier to come up with meals."*

*"We love the fresh veggies...milk and eggs are also great! Thank you so much. :)"*

*"Favorite? That's hard to say. Fresh fruit and milk are great."*

*"The food is fantastic...but I really love the smiles from the volunteers."*



## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Growing up in my house was a daily lesson in ethics, fighting for what is right, and advocating for your beliefs. Here's why: My older brother, Steve, was born 14 months before me. He was born with Downs Syndrome. In 1966, most kids born with Downs were institutionalized. My parents didn't think that was the right thing to do.

Since the day Steve was born, they fought to make sure he could lead a "good life" — normal, fun, and happy. By all counts, they did a really good job. Steve has lived longer than all MD's predicted. He works part-time at a natural foods grocer and is its longest tenured employee. He has owned his own condo for the past eleven years.



*Mike Cohen - Executive Director at BFB*

**I like seeing people beat the odds.** To me, hunger is unacceptable and part of why I am drawn to this work is to help families beat the odds of being hungry.

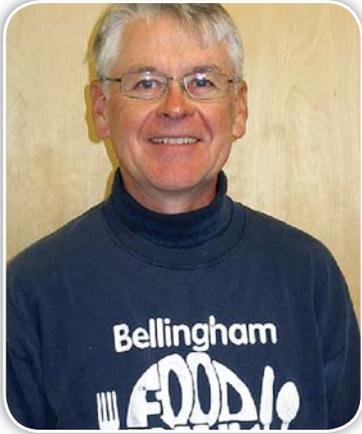
I believe that helping get food to hungry families is the right thing to do. Hunger is preventable, yet more and more families visit our food bank each month. I am deeply committed to our work because I'm honestly outraged that so many in our community rely on our food bank to feed their families. This is why I am so encouraged by your willingness to help us feed our community.

For all my social justice rhetoric, I'd be lying if I didn't say that one of the primary reasons I do this work is that it makes me feel good. Simple as that. **It's wonderful to know that I am helping.** I am inspired each day because I come into contact with selfless, committed volunteers and community members who have also joined this fight against hunger.

I hope you'll enjoy learning more about our food bank and the collective impact we have by working together to end hunger. I look forward to hearing your ideas for how we can do our job better. Thanks for all your help.

**Mike Cohen**  
*Executive Director*

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT



**Dale Gelensye**

*Bringing Cheese to the Food Bank*

Sometimes it's the little things that make a big difference. To Dale Gelensye, one of those little things is cheese.

Dale and his wife have been regular donors to Bellingham Food Bank for more than ten years. Dale became committed to donating to the food bank through his church when he and his wife each selected a local charity to which they would regularly contribute. Dale selected Bellingham Food Bank as his "charity of choice."

In 2004, Dale began volunteering at the food bank. The more he learned, the more he liked Bellingham Food Bank. **"People need food. It's one of the basics,"** says Dale. "We've been blessed in our life and we believe in sharing."

In addition to his generous cash donations, Dale makes an "extra" donation each year. (This is where the cheese comes in...) Dale helps hand out food in the dairy section of the food bank, and he noticed people were always asking for cheese. Dale decided to do something about that. For the past five years, Dale's family has purchased more than 1,000 pounds of cheese near the Christmas holiday. Their donation ensures all families get a block of cheese the week before Christmas—a time when a little something special means a lot. **"It's so nice to see their eyes when we have that cheese. They light up."**

Thanks to Dale and his family for going the extra mile for local families!

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## CLIENT STORY



**Jon J. Deloach**

*Father, Grandfather,  
Veteran and Thankful  
Food Bank Client*

To supporters of the food bank, Jon Deloach has a message. **"THANK YOU for supporting the food bank. You have no idea what a difference it makes in so many people's lives."**

Some of the lives Jon is referring to are his, his wife's and those of his five grandchildren, who they are raising.

**Jon is a father, husband, grandfather, and veteran.** In 2004, Jon suffered a second heart attack and his wife got injured. They were both forced to leave their jobs and apply for disability benefits.

Jon's first impressions of the food bank were positive because of its volunteers. **"You all are over-the-line helpful and friendly."** He describes all the folks at the food bank as "always bending over backwards to help people." In addition to the quality of the people, Jon is also appreciative of the food. "We would be in deep doo-doo without the food bank. At this point we've gone through most of our savings—so much for our golden-age retirement years."

Jon was in the Marines for eleven years and did three tours in Vietnam. The military taught Jon "how to get by and be resourceful." Jon has lost some friends because he uses the food bank. But Jon knows he needs the food bank to support his family. And family is what matters most to him.

Thanks for helping us feed families like Jon's—hard-working, family-focused and looking to a brighter future!

## FOOD BANK HERO



**Eileen Reardanz**

*Her Super Power is Being  
Extra Nice*

“Nine years ago, my church bulletin announced that the food bank needed volunteers,” explains Eileen Reardanz. The rest, as they say, is history.

Eileen believes, “**no one should go hungry,**” and she has showed that conviction by faithfully coming to the food bank two times a week for nearly a decade.

Eileen’s first impression of the food bank was not great. She was volunteering in the old building, which was in pretty bad shape. She is glad it has been improved. In addition to being nicer to work in, Eileen believes the current facility gives a sense of dignity to food bank customers.

Her initial disappointment in the facility was far outweighed by the volunteers who worked in the old facility...and who remain wonderful and committed to this day. Eileen says **they are like a family to her.** “We all look out for each other and do things for each other if we get sick or need help with anything.”

Eileen has two children and three grandkids. She and her kids have always volunteered and she is committed to passing this ethic on to her grandchildren. She believes volunteering at the food bank is a great way to be involved in helping your community.

Thanks, Eileen, for helping us feed families in our community!

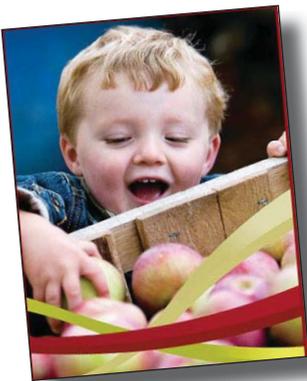
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## WANT TO HELP?

**Host a Food4Tots Food Drive!** For more information visit our Food4Tots page at [http://www.bellinghamfoodbank.org/our\\_programs/food4tots](http://www.bellinghamfoodbank.org/our_programs/food4tots).

**Become an “Emailer for Good”** and join the food bank’s email advocacy team to protect emergency food programs from state budget cuts. Find out how by emailing Mike Cohen at [mike@bellinghamfoodbank.org](mailto:mike@bellinghamfoodbank.org).

**Plan to grow extra food** in your garden and be a Victory Gardener. Find more information here: [http://www.bellinghamfoodbank.org/our\\_programs/victory\\_gardens](http://www.bellinghamfoodbank.org/our_programs/victory_gardens).



**Bellingham Food Bank**  
1824 Ellis Street, Bellingham, WA 98225  
360.676.0392  
[info@bellinghamfoodbank.org](mailto:info@bellinghamfoodbank.org)

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*Feeding our community since 1972*



You  
help  
grow  
hope.

**THANK YOU**