

FOOD BANK UPDATE

Agape Food Bank has significantly moved from a project of Agape to a priority. This year, demand for food banks everywhere has escalated due to inflation and cuts to federal SNAP benefits. And as awareness of Agape Food Bank continues to expand among the Spanish-speaking community of Whatcom County, we no longer just see guests who are migratory nor only those who work in agriculture. We are the 2nd largest food bank in Whatcom when we are open for our 11-week season in the summer. Although we planned to serve 350 households weekly, we ended up serving an average of 642 households weekly - a total of 7,067 households and 24,245 people over 11 weeks. We are humbled to encounter this many people.

Food banks should not have to exist, but it is the current reality, so we will always strive to create the most dignified and joy-filled food access point possible. Because ultimately it is not about numbers, it is always about people. This year we leaned into refining what we do to make it better. The new kids play section was consistently full - providing parents the freedom to send their kiddos to burn energy or create art while they “shopped”. The music playing led to dance breaks and sing-alongs - by guests and volunteers. We offered unique items like spices and coffee for the first time - organic and fair trade from local roaster Tony’s Coffee.

There is a deep level of comfort that exists at our food bank. Agape students feel comfortable trying to speak Spanish to participate in building a spirit of hospitality. The kids who visit the food bank feel comfortable running up to the Agape students they’ve come to know during the week and asking them to play. Older kids who visit the food bank feel comfortable volunteering - distributing diapers and taking carts to cars - while their parents wait or “shop”. We work hard to build a spirit of familiarity, known-ness, and joy, and we deeply believe this is what happens when we authentically live our faith.

Providing the quality and quantity of culturally-relevant food items, diapers, feminine hygiene, etc. requires us to purchase almost everything we offer. This is our commitment to dignified food access so that those who harvest the food in our community can achieve their own nutrition security. We are grateful to the many foundations, grants, and group and individual donors who join us in this work and make it possible. Know that you play a critical role.



Students from Christ the King & St. Joe's serve at the taco stand



The busy kids in the play & craft area



Some students with their new backpacks & school supplies



The littlest guests are always welcome



Spice section

HIGHLIGHTS

- Expansion of Operations: Our food bank ran for an additional 4 weeks this summer, critical especially knowing we are serving more year-round residents (vs. migratory).
- Clothing, Books, Toys Provided: Thank you to everyone who donated. These are highly requested & important resources to offer.
- Resource Hub: We strive for our food bank to be a “one-stop shop” for access to various social services. We were grateful to host 11 different organizations multiple times (see list on last page).
- Taco Stand: This has become a staple at our food bank, we have become known as “the food bank that gives you tacos”. Thanks to a grant from Food Lifeline we were able to purchase tables, chairs, and canopies to make the taco stand more of a space of rest and hospitality. This adds to the dignity and culture of joy we strive for. We are grateful to Chispita de Sabor for their delicious catering - visit their taco truck in Ferndale!
- 507 Backpacks: We have never been able to provide so many fully-stocked backpacks before - thank you donors!