

2023 IMPACT REPORT



HELPING HANDS FOOD BANK





Thank You Robert & Rebecca Gates!

"A real community is one where people look out for each other, and help friends and neighbors facing challenges. Helping Hands offers daily proof that Skagit County is such a community, where every person is treated with respect and dignity. We are proud to be a part of it."

Robert and Rebecca Gates

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



As we reflect on the past year at Helping Hands Food Bank, I am filled with gratitude for the unwavering support and dedication shown by each of you. Your generosity through donations, tireless volunteering efforts, and heartfelt sharing of our mission have allowed us to make a profound impact on the lives of individuals like Lori and many others in our community.

Helping Hands serves many in the community like Lori. Her story is a testament to the resilience and strength present in our community. Her journey from seeking assistance during her father's illness to facing unexpected challenges with her husband's injury reminds us of the unpredictable nature of life. Despite setbacks, Lori's determination and the support she found at Helping Hands empowered her to navigate through tough times.

In 2023, Helping Hands Food Bank witnessed a 40% increase in visits compared to the previous year, highlighting the growing need for our services. The reality that 29% of Skagit County residents are in a similar situation as Lori, working hard but struggling to make ends meet, underscores the importance of our work. Your continued support is vital in sustaining our efforts to innovate and adapt to meet the evolving needs of our community. Together, we can foster a resilient and sustainable future where no one has to choose between putting food on the table and other basic necessities.

As we look towards the future at Helping Hands Food Bank, I am inspired by the impact we have made together and the lives we have touched. With your ongoing support, we can continue to provide hope and assistance to those in our community who need it most. Thank you for your support in our mission to nourish our community with kindness and respect, without judgment, and work toward a community where everyone has access to the resources they need to thrive. I look forward to seeing what we can achieve together in the coming year.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rebecca Skrinde".

REBECCA SKRINDE

Chief Executive Officer

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Sara Fish Group

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD

Reflecting on the past year as a Board Member of Helping Hands Food Bank



The first thing I tell everyone about my experience here is that no one has any idea the size of the impact that Helping Hands has on the community. I was initially attracted to Helping Hands by the dedication and commitment displayed by the staff members that I interacted with at other community organizations and events. Once I got to see “behind the curtain” I was amazed at the logistics and planning involved in the sorting and distribution of all the food and other donations coming into the facility. When you are contemplating spending your energy supporting an organization like this you want to know that the aid is really reaching people in need and is not just taken up in cycle time and administration and that is clearly evident here. The impact of that distribution is felt throughout the larger Skagit Community and beyond.

Over the last year I have witnessed the impact Helping Hands has had on our community. I rarely talk to someone who hasn’t either been touched by the organization personally or knows someone who has. Helping Hands is literally one degree of separation from everyone in the county. It is so much more than food, but it starts there. The Solutions Team and the entire organization are focused on delivering help wherever and whenever they can. The value add to the community is priceless. When you talk to the folks who have been helped their stories almost bring you to tears.

The impact on me as a person? I know that this group of people and this organization has made me a better human than when I first walked in the door on a tour. I have received way more than I have given. Want to hear what I am excited about? I will tell you about Helping Hands. I am proud to be associated with the Team.

NATE WALLEY

Board Member

MEET OUR TEAM



Rebecca Skrinde
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Amanda Huffstetler
DEPUTY DIRECTOR



Kim Engberg
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Adam Holtrop
WAREHOUSE ASSISTANT



Jonathan Phipps
WAREHOUSE ASSISTANT



Todd Cadwell
WAREHOUSE ASSISTANT



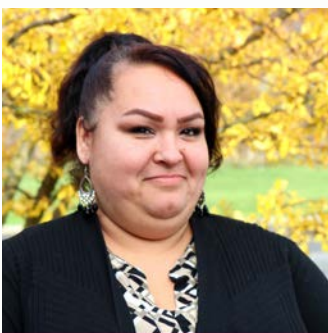
Miranda Wilson
SOLUTIONS MANAGER



Katie Wheeler
SOLUTIONS COORDINATOR



Lisa Niegowski
STREET OUTREACH SPECIALIST



Veronica Cortez
SOLUTIONS COORDINATOR



Janiel Pancoast
SOLUTIONS ADMINISTRATOR



Vanessa Harrington
MARKETING & ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR



Joey Greenwood
COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EVENTS COORDINATOR

BY THE NUMBERS

83,750

volunteer hours dedicated to fighting against hunger

3.4 Million

pounds of food distributed to our neighbors facing hunger

274,000+

visits across our six Skagit County locations

71,387

CHOW bags of kid-friendly food delivered to Skagit children

4,486

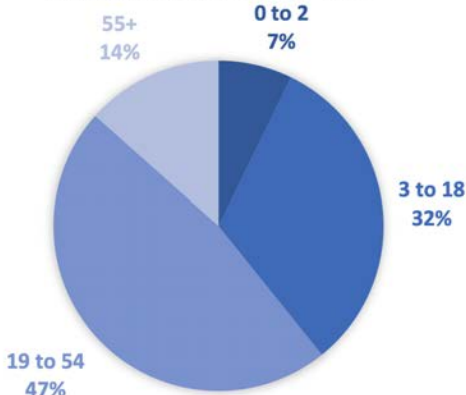
Mobile Food deliveries to seniors and homebound participants

569

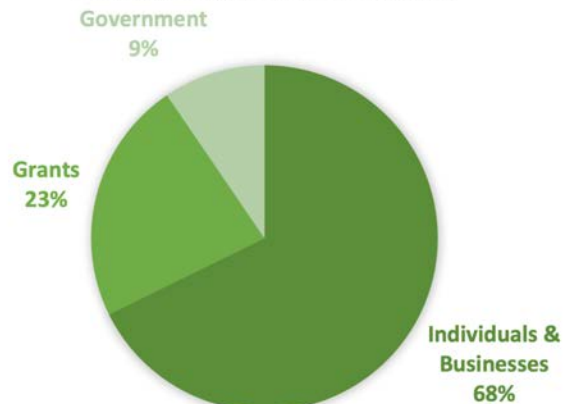
individuals supported through empowering solutions



PARTICIPANTS BY AGE



FINANCIAL RESOURCES



OUR VOLUNTEERS' LEGACY

Founded by a compassionate group of volunteers in a church basement, the heart of Helping Hands has always been our dedicated volunteers. These individuals laid the foundation for what would become an essential pillar of the community, providing nourishment and hope to those in need.

As we reflect on 2023, we are filled with profound gratitude for the unwavering support of our volunteers. Their commitment and tireless dedication enable us to serve our community with compassion and efficiency. Without their invaluable contributions, the vital

work we do at Helping Hands Food Bank would simply not be possible. As we look to the future, we recognize that the role of volunteers remains as crucial as ever. Their passion fuels our mission to nourish our community with kindness and respect, without judgment. To our volunteers, past and present, we extend our heartfelt thanks for being the driving force behind the impact and for creating a culture of community within Helping Hands.

If you are interested in volunteering, contact us at (360) 383-8339 or Volunteer@HelpingHandsFoodBank.org.

"Volunteering at Helping Hands has brought so much good out of 2023. It was important for me to incorporate serving into our homeschool stuff for many reasons and being able to do so there has meant more to me than I could even put into words. It teaches my children so many life skills being part of the volunteers there. Seeing how Helping Hands is incorporated into the community with different outreaches and events just shows the compassion and love of the organization."

Mindy

"The volunteers have built a supportive community here.

It reaches so many different areas of our community, the impact [of volunteering at Helping Hands] is more."

Anne, Volunteer of 10 years

"It's always nice to meet new people, and there's great community outreach. We're not only having fun but doing good for the community.

There really is no barrier; everyone is welcome. There are all kinds of people, languages, cultures. Everyone is welcome no matter what. It's great to meet people who even only come for a couple of days and, sometimes, those guys who were only supposed to come for a couple of days keep coming back because they like it so much."

Nick



FARM TO FOOD BANK

Helping Hands Food Bank is proud to share the exciting news of being selected as a recipient of the We Feed Washington grant through the Washington State Department of Agriculture. This grant will provide \$250,000 annually for the next two years to purchase local food from farmers, supporting both the community and local food producers. With a focus on fostering economic vitality among producers and increasing access to healthy foods for low-income individuals across the state, this initiative aligns perfectly with Helping Hands' mission to ensure everyone has access to fresh, nutritious produce.

underscores the commitment to enhancing food security and promoting a healthier lifestyle for all community members. Through strategic partnerships with local food producers, Helping Hands Food Bank is dedicated to bridging the gap between food availability and nutritional requirements. The grant's allocation towards fresh fruits and vegetables aligns with the preferences of food bank participants, as revealed in a CDC study showing a strong desire for healthy foods that are not consistently accessible. By prioritizing the procurement of locally produced foods, Helping Hands continues to uphold its vision

"Connecting with local farmers and food producers has been so educational and inspiring. The passion, commitment, dedication, and knowledge it takes to produce a single head of cabbage or a ripe red apple amazes me. It is a pleasure to see participants get the high-quality, healthy produce we can offer by supporting local farmers." - Sherry, Food Procurement & Inventory Manager

Helping Hands CEO Rebecca Skrinde emphasizes the importance of offering dignity and choice to those seeking assistance from the food bank, highlighting the significance of providing fresh and healthy foods to all. By utilizing 70% of the grant funding to procure locally grown produce from FDA-approved farmers, Helping Hands aims to not only meet the needs of our participants but also support local farmers and food businesses. This collaborative effort with We Feed Washington

of ensuring every citizen has access to high-quality food and resources to help them thrive.

To learn more, contact us at (360) 856-2211, Development@HelpingHandsFoodBank.org, or scan the QR code to read more in our blog.



FEEDING OUR FUTURE

In the heart of Skagit County, Helping Hands Food Bank is collaborating with the Population Health Trust to address the critical issue of food security through its Food Security Workgroup. The vision of this workgroup is to establish a resilient local food system that offers fair and inclusive access to nutritious, sustainable, and culturally fitting food for all residents. Recognizing the fundamental role of access to nutritious food in physical and mental well-being, the partnership aims to improve health outcomes, boost immunity, reduce the risk of chronic illnesses, and promote longevity across all age groups.

In response to the challenges highlighted by the 2020-2021 Community Health Assessment conducted by Skagit County Public Health and the Population Health Trust, the Food Security Workgroup was established to tackle the issue of food insecurity in the community. By

focusing on enhancing nutrition security and ensuring consistent and fair access to food, the collaboration aims to build a more robust and resilient food system that supports individuals' health and overall well-being. This initiative benefits individuals by improving their health and productivity and contributes to positive economic outcomes for the community. The dedication and commitment of Helping Hands Food Bank and the Population Health Trust in working together exemplify the power of collective efforts in creating a healthier and more sustainable future for Skagit County.

Scan the QR code to view the full Population Health Trust 2023 Food Security Report.



STUFF THE BUS FOOD DRIVE

Helping Hands Food Bank is thrilled to share the incredible success of our bi-annual Stuff the Bus Food Drive in partnership with Skagit Transit. In February 2023, our community came together to donate the equivalent of over 215,000 pounds of food, making a significant impact on those in need. The Burlington Morning Rotary was crowned the Community Champion for their outstanding support. A special shoutout goes to the Dick's Drive-In Food Truck for bringing their delicious burgers to Skagit County for the event.

In August 2023, we joined forces with Marathon Petroleum for another round of the Stuff the Bus Food Drive, resulting in an astonishing donation of the equivalent of over 872,000 pounds of food. This event specifically benefited the Cutting Hunger on Weekends (CHOW) program, ensuring that children across Skagit County receive nutritious meals during weekends. Marathon Petroleum and its dedicated

employees went above and beyond by raising more than \$32,000 for the CHOW program, showcasing their unwavering commitment to fighting food insecurity.

The overwhelming generosity and support from the community, organizations like Skagit Transit and Marathon Petroleum, as well as the hard work of volunteers, have truly made a difference in the lives of many Skagitonians. As we eagerly anticipate the upcoming Stuff the Bus Food Drives in 2024, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone involved for their continued dedication to alleviating hunger in our community. Together, we can make a meaningful impact and create a brighter future for all.

If you would like to host a fundraiser or partner with us on a Stuff the Bus event, contact us at (360) 982-1445 or Development@HelpingHandsFoodBank.org.



Special thanks to the Jerry H Walton Foundation for their continued support!

RESCUING SURPLUS FOOD

We are often asked where our food comes from, and one significant source is through our Grocery Rescue program. Through collaborations with stores such as Costco, Food Pavilion, Fred Meyer, Haggen, Target, and Walmart, we rescue perfectly good food that would otherwise go to waste and redistribute it to our participants. By rescuing surplus food from our generous store partners, Helping Hands has been able to provide nutritious food and non-food life essentials to those in need while reducing the environmental impact of food waste.

Through the Grocery Rescue program, over 600,000 pounds of food were rescued in 2023 alone, a testament to the dedication of the volunteers and the generosity of the partnering stores. This food, which would have otherwise met a fate in the landfill, finds its way to the tables

of our participants. What cannot be utilized in our food distributions is redirected to pig farmers, creating a sustainable cycle where nothing goes to waste. These powerful partnerships not only alleviate hunger in Skagit County but also promote environmental consciousness and community cohesion.

As we reflect on the profound impact of the Grocery Rescue program, we are reminded of the transformative power of collaboration and compassion. We are incredibly grateful for our Grocery Rescue partners and believe the success of the program illuminates a path toward a more sustainable and supportive future for Skagit County and beyond.

If you would like to learn more about partnering with Helping Hands, contact us at (360) 856-2211 or Development@HelpingHandsFoodBank.org.



EMPOWERING SOLUTIONS

The approach taken by The Helping Hands Solutions Team in addressing participants' needs stands out for its uniqueness. Navigators within the team engage with participants on an individual level, offering personalized pathways, creating tailored plans, and tackling the barriers they encounter, with the ultimate goal of shifting participants from merely surviving to thriving.

Covering a vast area from **Marblemount to Anacortes** in Skagit County, the Solutions Team prides itself on genuinely meeting people where they are. Recognizing challenges such as rising fuel costs, lack of transportation, and an increasing number of homebound individuals, the team understands the importance of delivering services directly to those who require assistance.

In 2023, the Solutions Team made a difference in more than **560 households**, extending support beyond traditional food distribution. The impact of their efforts is felt throughout the community, fostering a sense of hope and empowerment among those they served. As we see the need continue to rise, the innovative approach of the Solutions Team, in collaboration with our incredible partners and the generous support of the community, remains steadfast in addressing the evolving needs of our participants.

To connect with the Solutions Team, reach out at (360) 856-2211, extension 17, or Navigators@HelpingHandsFoodBank.org.



At Helping Hands, we know that food is essential for survival, and we understand that many of our participants have needs that extend beyond food. Our organization is committed to offering aid and support to help individuals in need access the resources necessary for their well-being and growth. Our Solutions services include:

- DSHS Assistance
- Notary Services
- Street Outreach
- Resource Navigation (Services relating to disability, housing, employment, education, medical care, mental health, veterans, etc.)

Empowering Our Community Through Street Outreach

Helping Hands Food Bank has partnered with Janicki Industries to make a significant impact through our Street

Outreach program. This initiative focuses on reaching out to unhoused individuals in our community to provide essential support and ensure their needs are met. Our dedicated Street Outreach Specialist serves as a vital link between the community and our neighbors experiencing homelessness, offering a range of services to address immediate needs such as food, hygiene products, application assistance, and resource navigation. By working closely with Janicki Industries, we have been able to expand our outreach efforts and make a positive difference in the lives of those most in need.

For assistance or to learn more about our Street Outreach program, please contact our Street Outreach Specialist at (360) 618-2049 or Lisa@HelpingHandsFoodBank.org.

From Service to Stability

Upon discovering the individual's status as a veteran, we facilitated a connection with Skagit County Veteran Services, a pivotal moment that enabled the individual to finally obtain their long sought-after DD Form 214, kickstarting the process of securing veteran benefits. Their journey then saw them transition to the First Step Center, eventually becoming a resident at Martha's Place with our continued guidance and support. Throughout this experience, our organization offered services ranging from transportation, benefit renewals, and warm meals to ensuring safe shelter during critical periods. Despite the adversities faced, the individual's unwavering optimism, dedication to personal growth, and efforts to rebuild familial relationships have been truly inspiring.

Perseverance & Triumph

Facing the challenges of working multiple jobs while living in their vehicle with a service animal, this individual struggled to make ends meet. Helping Hands was able to provide them with temporary housing, offering a safe and stable environment to rebuild and plan for a better future. Through collaboration with the SSVA program for veterans in Skagit County, they received rental assistance, guiding them toward securing permanent housing. Additionally, Helping Hands facilitated the certification of their service animal, ensuring ongoing support. This individual's dedication led to stable employment, housing, and a commitment to humanitarian work, illustrating the impact of community support and the resilience of the human spirit.



LEADERS INSPIRING LEADERS

In 2023, Helping Hands hosted another memorable Leaders event featuring former Seattle Mariner and baseball legend Jay Buhner, who shared his unique perspective on leadership as a "player's player." The event at the Heritage Flight Museum was a grand success, drawing attention and support for the food bank's vital programs. Before the evening festivities, Jay Buhner took the time to visit the food bank in Sedro-Woolley for a special event aimed at bringing joy to children and their families, showcasing his commitment to making a positive impact both on and off the field.

The community's generosity and enthusiasm were truly remarkable, with over **\$180,000** raised during the event. A special highlight of the evening was local artist Jay Bowen auctioning off some of his remarkable paintings, with a portion of the proceeds benefiting Helping Hands'

programs. The outpouring of support and the collaboration with our partners and sponsors to make Leaders happen each year exemplifies the power of coming together to make a meaningful difference. Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to the success of this impactful event.

This event relies on the generous support of community donors to make it possible and truly impactful. A heartfelt thank you goes out to Dimensional Communications for their contribution of time and equipment, which played a crucial role in ensuring the smooth operation of the event's technology aspects.

If you are interested in supporting Leaders 2024, contact us at (360) 982-1445 or Development@HelpingHandsFoodBank.org.



In case you missed Leaders 2023, we created a playlist of the videos shared during the event, highlighting the impact of our programs and partnerships. To watch, scan the QR code!



SAVE THE DATE!

Leaders 2024
September 28, 2024

SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

Our Job Skills Training program, in collaboration with organizations such as WorkSource, is transforming the lives of young adults, the handi-capable, and individuals facing various barriers by providing them with invaluable training opportunities. Participants are equipped with essential skills in computer literacy, customer service, forklift operations, box truck driving, and basic warehouse functions, setting them on a path toward sustainable employment.

The partnership with WorkSource, which started in 2021, was particularly impactful, as it enabled Helping Hands to support individuals affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many beneficiaries of this program had lost their jobs, faced challenges securing employment during the pandemic, or sought to re-enter the workforce after a hiatus. Despite the grant funding concluding in 2023, the legacy of this collaboration continues to resonate. Not only did the program provide a vital source of income for interns, but

it also injected **\$1.3 Million** into the local economy of Skagit County, showcasing the ripple effect of investing in skills development. The success stories emerging from the Job Skills Training program are truly inspiring. Participants transitioned into diverse career paths post-program, ranging from law enforcement to entrepreneurship, and even secured permanent positions within Helping Hands itself. The impact of this program extends far beyond individual success stories, demonstrating the power of community-driven initiatives in fostering growth, resilience, and opportunity for all.



"When I was at Helping Hands I worked with people from all ethnicities, cultures, races, people who were unhoused, people who had chemical dependencies, people who had special needs. My experience [at Helping Hands] was instrumental to my success in becoming a police officer." – Tyler

"This program helped me acquire new skills, establish new connections, and build my confidence in this field of work." – Adam

"As a stay-at-home mom for 12 years, I thought I would never get the opportunity to have my dream career. Helping Hands gave me a career that I get to take pride in every single day!" – Katie

POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Community partnerships play a crucial role in Helping Hands' ability to reach more individuals and families in need, ultimately making a greater impact on food insecurity in the county. By working together with local businesses, organizations, and volunteers, we can amplify our collective efforts and create a stronger, more sustainable support system for those facing hunger.



Our transformative partnership with United Way of Skagit County is

making a significant impact in our community. Through a strategic alliance with the Diaper Bank of Skagit County, we have significantly enhanced access to vital necessities such as diapers, wipes, and formula for families in need across Skagit County. This collaboration not only expands our combined outreach but also fortifies our capacity to deliver essential

resources to those in need.

By joining forces with United Way of Skagit County, our collective impact is multiplied, enabling us to better address the urgent needs of vulnerable families in our county. This partnership exemplifies the spirit of cooperation and shared purpose at the heart of our organizations' missions. Together, we are able to reach more individuals, provide critical support, and foster a stronger, more resilient community for all. As we continue to work hand in hand, we are committed to making a lasting and positive difference in the lives of those who rely on our assistance the most.

If you would like to learn more about partnering with Helping Hands, contact us at (360) 856-2211 or Development@HelpingHandsFoodBank.org



LOCAL ADVOCACY

In February 2023, the dedicated staff of Helping Hands Food Bank embarked on a journey to Olympia for Hunger Action Day. This event brought together more than 150 individuals from various hunger programs across the state, all united in their mission to combat hunger and advocate for change. Hunger Action Day serves as a platform for these passionate individuals to raise awareness about food insecurity, share their experiences, and urge policymakers to prioritize solutions to this pressing issue.

Advocacy plays a crucial role in the work of Helping Hands Food Bank. By advocating for policies and initiatives that address the root causes of hunger, we can create lasting change and amplify the voices of donors and participants.

Our participants, who courageously share their stories of resilience and perseverance, are at the heart of our advocacy efforts. They navigate through challenges, balancing work and school while striving to make ends meet. At Helping Hands, we are privileged to elevate their voices and advocate for a future where hunger is eradicated and communities thrive. The journey to Olympia for Hunger Action Day was a powerful reminder of the impact of advocacy and the importance of coming together to create a brighter future for all.



Interested in partnering with us in future advocacy efforts?

Sign up to be on our Advocacy Email List by scanning the QR code!



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

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Constance Cameron
Cook CPAS & Consultants PLLC
Corinne Story
Corrin Cowen
Costco
Costco employees via front stream
Country Meadows Village
Craig Klien
Craig Mohler
Craig Nelson
Craig Romano
Crawford Garage Doors
Crissy Anderson
Crumbi Cookies
Crystal Mayer
Cynthia Hosick
Cynthia Mailliard
D Bennett Construction LLC
Dan Fisher
Dani Hodge
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DiAnn Sager
Dianne Watts
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Don Nelson
Don Power
Dona Lea Cowan
Donald Davis
Donald G Wick
Donald Jonasson
Donald Odegard
Donald Ptolemy
Donald Zorn
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Donna Moody
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Eden & Rhonda Twaddle
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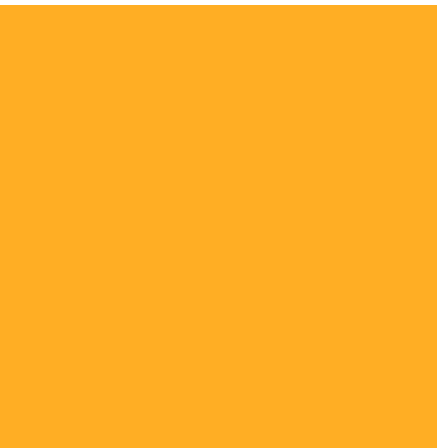
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