



# NEWSLETTER

FALL 2020

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## SAVING GRACE ADDRESSES FOOD NEEDS DURING PANDEMIC

Saving Grace has been on the forefront of community efforts to find creative ways to distribute more food to neighbors who are food insecure during the pandemic.

### New Ways to Connect Food to Those in Need

"We are trying to stay open to this ever-changing environment and how we can be effective," said Beth Ostdiek Smith, CEO. In addition to providing its normal food rescue services, Saving Grace has relied on its unique distribution and logistics services to address emerging needs for food by:

- Rescuing over 42,000 pounds of food in March and early April as restaurants, event venues, casinos, bars and other food vendors closed and emptied their kitchens because of COVID-19.
- Delivering USDA Farmers to Families Food Boxes of produce and dairy:
  - Assisting Catholic Charities by distributing boxes of produce and dairy each week to other nonprofits. Nearly 208,000 pounds of food have been distributed through this partnership.
  - Working with the Food Bank of the Heartland and Millard Public Schools during summer break to pick up food boxes at Millard South High School. These were delivered to nine schools that served as distribution locations, providing more than 115,000 pounds of fresh produce to local families in need.
- Partnering with the COVID-19 Garden/Farming Response group, Seimbra Nebraska and several community gardens that are providing produce to address food insecurity. Saving Grace handles the logistics/distribution services that connect this fresh produce with local nonprofit partners.
- Stepping up efforts to recruit additional food vendors to meet the increased need for healthy food.



Saving Grace drivers load food from Village Inn into the trucks after the restaurant shut down its kitchen this spring.

### Supply Chain Affects Food Rescue

Before the pandemic, Saving Grace picked up excess perishable food from 58 food vendors and delivered it to 41 nonprofit partner agencies. With some businesses still closed and others experiencing disruptions in their supply chain, normal pickups have temporarily decreased. This provides an opportunity to add new food donors and look for opportunities to use our refrigerated trucks and drivers to respond to changing community needs for perishable food.

Project Hope's refrigerated case is full after a delivery from Saving Grace.



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# SAVING GRACE EVOLUTION

**OCTOBER**

Saving Grace began operations with one truck



**2013**



**2014**

**DECEMBER**

264,424 pounds of food rescued in first year of operations

**JUNE**

Second refrigerated truck added

**2015**

**OCTOBER**

Saving Grace hosted Feeding the 5000 Omaha

**MAY**

Greater Omaha Chamber's Business Excellence Award for Innovation

**2016**

**DECEMBER**

Lifetime total of food saved from landfills was 661 tons

**JULY**

Total amount of food rescued reached 1 million pounds

**2017**



**DECEMBER**

Number of food donors reached 38

**JANUARY**

Third refrigerated truck added

**2018**

**DECEMBER**

Number of nonprofit partner agencies reached 40

**APRIL**

Fourth refrigerated truck added; number of drivers now five

**MAY**

FBI recognized Saving Grace with the Director's Community Leadership Award

**2019**

**NOVEMBER**

Saving Grace partnered with the Stephen Center to host the Omaha Hunger Experience



**DECEMBER**

Lifetime total of food rescued exceeded 4 million pounds

**JULY**

Lifetime total amount of food rescued nears 4.7 million pounds

**2020**

**SPRING**

42,000 lbs. of food are picked up from businesses closing their kitchens because of COVID-19

**SUMMER**

Saving Grace works with the Food Bank, Millard Public Schools and Catholic Charities to deliver USDA Farmers to Families Food Boxes

## REFLECTIONS

**Beth Ostdiek Smith,  
CEO AND FOUNDER**



My heart is full reflecting on how our community has risen to the challenges from COVID-19, both locally and around the world. This spring, the media showcased the extra need for food – along with the horrific stories of food waste that happen daily and were elevated as processing plants closed. Saving Grace's operations to feed the hungry by rescuing the heartland's bounty that would otherwise go to waste are more important than ever.

During these challenging times, I want to send our best wishes to our food donor partners whose businesses and staff have been impacted by the pandemic. I also send my thanks to our frontline team - Judy, director of field and logistics, and our five food ambassador/drivers - who have continued their daily routes, ensuring we get healthy food to even more who are in need.

When you see our trucks driving around, please wave a thanks to our lead driver, Randy, and his team, Mike, Jay, James and our recent hire, Tony.



It also became clear to me and our board of directors that with our fast growth, this is the time to build our capacity and infrastructure to ensure we can fulfill our mission and remain flexible with operations. Thanks to generous funders, we will replace two of our four refrigerated trucks that are out of warranty, and we will add our first refrigerated van.

We know there is more we can do to feed the hungry and combat food waste, and that is what we will continue to do – with your support. Thank you so much. Be and stay well!

Beth Ostdiek Smith



# RESPONDING TO CHANGING FOOD NEEDS DURING THE PANDEMIC



Saving Grace transported USDA Farmers to Families Food Boxes from Millard South High School to nine elementary schools.



Produce from a local farm was one of several special pickups. Others included yogurt, See's candy and sack lunches.



Healthy food from Costco was delivered to Notre Dame Housing.



Saving Grace provides about one-third of the food Project Hope distributes during a drive-up pantry.



**Autumn Taddicken**

## DEPUTY DIRECTOR ADDED TO STAFF

Autumn Taddicken has joined Saving Grace's staff as deputy director. Her 30 years of nonprofit experience include leadership roles with National Audubon Society and Omaha firm Paul J. Strawhecker Inc.

"I am delighted to join the amazing team at Saving Grace," she says. "This is a hard-working, nimble organization doing important work every day. More than ever, we need to find solutions that prevent food from ending up in our landfills and provide equitable food systems for everyone in our communities."

# Saving grace

Perishable Food Rescue, Inc.

4611 South 96th Street, Suite 112

Omaha, NE 68127



**Feeding  
hungry bellies,  
not landfills!**

[www.savinggracefoodrescue.org](http://www.savinggracefoodrescue.org)

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### October 8 - Drive-in Movie Fundraiser

Join Saving Grace on Thursday, Oct. 8, for "Wasted! The Story of Food Waste" at Falconwood Park in Bellevue. Tickets are \$50 each and include movie snacks. The event, which allows attendees to be socially responsible while social distancing, also celebrates Saving Grace's seventh birthday. Gates open at 6:30 p.m. and the program begins at 7:15 p.m. Tickets are available at [www.savinggracefoodrescue.org/events](http://www.savinggracefoodrescue.org/events). The movie, produced by the late Anthony Bourdain, aims to change the way people buy, cook, recycle and eat food.

### October 5-10 – Virtual Food Days

Saving Grace will be part of Food Day Omaha's virtual event Oct. 5 to 10 that will highlight what our community has done to respond to COVID-19 and celebrate our local food heroes. Find out more at [www.fooddayomaha.com](http://www.fooddayomaha.com).



### November 19 – Omaha Hunger Experience

The second annual Omaha Hunger Experience, presented by Saving Grace and the Stephen Center, is going virtual. Registration will include a gourmet meal suitable for four that can be picked up at American National Bank's 90th and Dodge location. Attendees can join the virtual Omaha Hunger Experience event at 7 p.m. for videos, conversation and updates on how Saving Grace and the Stephen Center are tackling these issues. Registration information will be available in October at [www.savinggracefoodrescue.org/events](http://www.savinggracefoodrescue.org/events).

A Part of Hunger &  
Homelessness Awareness Week