

CSP Reaches Out by Way of On-Campus Food Shelf

By Lance Meyer

A common misconception about Concordia's food shelf is that it only serves the Concordia community. That could not be anymore wrong, however, as about 70% of the people who take advantage of its service are not affiliated with the university.

"I am excited that the Concordia community is becoming more aware of the food shelf and seeing in these tough economic times that it is meeting a need not only on-campus but also in the community," said Service Learning/Leadership Coordinator Kelly Dotson who oversees the campus food shelf.

The food shelf is located on the third floor of the dining hall and is open to the surrounding community on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month or by appointment. In correlation with the dire economic situation facing our nation, the number of individual visitors as well as the amount of food distributed by Concordia's food shelf has gone up substantially since September of 2008. During that time there has been a 75.6% increase in visitors and a 200.6% increase in food output.

According to the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches website and its 2009 Hunger Fact Sheet, "Food shelf usage in the state has not declined since 1999. It is estimated that Minnesota food shelves are serving double the number of people they served in 1999."

Millions of people across Minnesota are struggling to survive after losing their houses, their jobs, or both in the last year, and the last thing anyone should have to worry about is getting enough to eat. Concordia along with more than 300 food shelves state-wide are banding together to try to ensure this does not happen.

March is a big month for food shelves in Minnesota as Minnesota FoodShare launches its annual food drive campaign to raise awareness and get people involved in fighting against the issue of hunger. The March campaign has taken in millions of pounds of food in the past and raised millions of dollars, but once again, given the current situation, Minnesota FoodShare has set its highest goal in the 27 year history of the campaign.

"We raised our goal to address the rising demand at food shelves state-wide," says Sue Kainz, March Campaign coordinator, "The recession and the related job losses are creating a perfect storm at Minnesota food shelves; the need is growing exponentially and many who used to donate are now in need of help."

Concordia is off to a good start in the March campaign as the Lutheran Schools Week celebration held March 3rd on-campus provided the perfect kickoff. The group of nearly 1000 grade school students combined to collect and donate 703 pounds of food for the Concordia food shelf. Now it is up to the Concordia community to keep the momentum going. Several collection boxes have been placed around campus to provide an opportunity for people to easily contribute.

In addition to non-perishable foods donated by individuals and groups, Concordia's food shelf is supported by financial donations which are used to purchase food from Second Harvest Heartland. Donations for the food shelf come from a combination of alumni, current members of the Concordia community, and local LCMS Lutheran churches.

Although it may come as a surprise for most, one's cash donation goes a lot further than a similar donation in the form of food. According to Minnesota FoodShare, a food shelf is able to purchase nine times as much food than an individual is able to with the same amount of money.

As mentioned, the food shelf mainly serves members of the surrounding community who qualify based on their annual income, but students, faculty, and staff members also look to the food shelf for assistance. Students living on-campus do not qualify to use the food shelf because of the university's meal-plan requirement, but those living off-campus are welcome to take advantage of its services. All that is required to use the food shelf is an application showing one's eligibility which can be accessed on-line.

Although March is a big month for food shelves and everyone should take advantage of the opportunity to get involved, Concordia's food shelf has served those in need

for over twenty years and will continue to reach out to the surrounding area in a big way.

"The food shelf might expand its hours next year to better serve those in need, at which time we will be looking for students who are willing to volunteer," said Dotson who is well aware of the recent increase in need.

With no guarantees about when the current economic crisis will turn itself around, Minnesota food shelves may be called upon for assistance like never before. This March and in the months to come, Concordia could play a decisive role in helping the growing number of people in need.



CU Food Shelf

Photos by Lance Meyer

Published Books Piling Up at Concordia University, St. Paul

The Center for Hmong Studies Publishes Their First Book

By David Her

Throughout the 2008-2009 school year, there have been several publications by members of the Concordia faculty. Dr. Michael Walcheski and Dr. David Bredehoff's *Family Life Education: Integrating Theory and Practice*, Professor Eric Dregni's *In Cod We Trust*, and Rev. Dr. Thomas Trapp's translation of Martin Luther's *Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation* by Oswald Bayer are just a few.

Another book to add to the list of ever-growing scholarship is *The Impact of Globalization and Trans-Nationalism on the Hmong*, edited by Gary Yia Lee. Lee's book is the first publication by the Center for Hmong Studies and the second publication on Hmong Studies.

In the spring of 2006, the Center for Hmong Studies hosted the First International Conference on Hmong Studies here at Concordia University. This

publication is a compilation of papers from various scholars who presented their research and understanding of the Hmong during that conference. "The Impact of Globalization and Trans-Nationalism on the Hmong is historical," said Lee Pao Xiong, Director for the Center for Hmong Studies, "This publication is new and relevant on current issues and events."

The Impact of Globalization and Trans-Nationalism on the Hmong challenges individuals to expand their knowledge of Hmong and their culture and continue to be informed about different cultures as American communities become more diverse.

The Hmong has only been in the United States since 1959. "We now have Hmong people, Hmong PhDs, who are able to give great insights



on our own culture," said Xiong. Scholars in the book include Dr. Mai Moua and Dr. Vincent K. Her, wherein they give us information about Hmong leadership development and spiritual rituals that would have otherwise been lost if not for this publication.

Coming in the spring of 2010 will be the Third International Conference on Hmong Studies. Once again, Concordia University will be the center of the Hmong world, awaiting scholars with fresh, global insights on the Hmong.

For more information on the publication and the Conference on Hmong Studies, contact Lee Pao Xiong at 651-641-8870 or xiong@csp.edu.