

Charity Spotlight: *Feed My Starving Children*

BY ANDREW WYLIE



Volunteer or donate, it all helps ensure more and more children around the world won't go hungry.

See how you can help at www.fmsc.org

LENDING YOUR TIME TO VOLUNTEER is not only a good and admirable thing to do, but it is also good for you! A study done by the Harvard School of Public Health found that people who volunteer spend 38% less time in hospitals, and have mortality rates that are 24%-47% lower than those who don't. Finding a good organization can be difficult and so is knowing where to start. Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) in Eagan, MN is an organization worthy of your time and resources, and they make it easy to participate.

FMSC was founded by late Minnesota businessman Richard Proudfoot in 1987. He said that he heard God speak to him during a mission trip to Honduras a few years earlier. He heard, "If you've seen my starving children, feed them." In 1993, with the help of colleagues from Pillsbury and General Mills, as well as scientists from Cargill, FMSC developed a vitamin and mineral fortified rice pack specifically designed for children suffering from malnutrition. FMSC has named these "manna packs". There have been over two billion of these meals



Photo by Andrew Wylie

provided since. The goal for this year, is to reach 365 millions meals.

Everything you need to complete in order to volunteer at FMSC can be found and filled out on their website. There are five available time slots to work and their Eagan location is open six days a week.

These volunteering sessions last for one and a half to two hours. Volunteers can work at a table with thirteen to seventeen other people and hand-pack meals, or they can work in the warehouse doing a little more of the heavy lifting. Volunteers that prefer or need to sit can label bags. There is a job suited for everyone!

The employees at FMSC are top notch and are there to help. The Assistant Site Manager and Concordia graduate Alyssa Burdett volunteered at FMSC while enrolled at CSP. After graduating in 2013, she started working full-time and has loved her experience at FMSC. Burdett stated that she had the opportunity to, "see the inner workings, when I volunteered; it was all about the impact that we are making around the world. But now, as staff, it's the impact I'm making here with the people that come and serve. We are feeding God's starving children, hungry in body and spirit. The body part, is easy to see. But,



CSP Alum Alysa Burdett and Coworkers

Photo by Andrew Wylie

feeding people in spirit is what happens here."

There is also a marketplace in Eagan (as well as a page on their website) that sells handmade goods from skilled and hardworking artisans in the many countries that FMSC serves. Purses from Nicaragua, coffee cups from Haiti, and jewelry from Uganda are among the many incredible items available. These purchases help the communities where they are made, and all the profits go back into fueling the program.

FMSC has a four out of four star rating from the website Charity Navigator, and gets a 100% rating for accountability and transparency. More than 90% of donations are spent directly on meal production. After volunteering, donating, or purchasing an item in the marketplace at FMSC, the employees will immediately tell you how many meals you have provided for people around the world so that you know your actions are having a real impact. One meal cost only twenty-two cents to make!

FMSC needs volunteers just like you. There is a tremendous need for volunteers at all times, but especially in January and February. Give it a shot, and chances are, you will go back time and time again. †