



A Collection of Interviews
Plus a Resource Guide & Fact Section

**A Hunger Free Community Report
by Will Connors, Emerson National Hunger Fellow
for the Congressional Hunger Center and
Food Bank of Alaska**

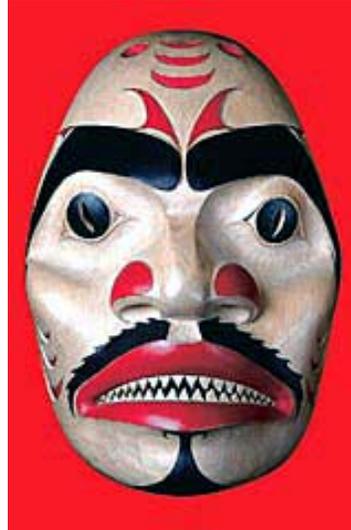


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Introduction

Every autumn, various organizations release data on hunger in the United States compiled from endless hours of research. The information makes for national newspaper headlines and lead stories on network television. The public outcry is palpable - and fleeting. The urgency and need do not go away in between the release of these studies each year, but the attention does. This compilation of interviews is my effort to bring the issue of hunger to the forefront in Alaska and beyond.

Contrary to the beliefs of many, hunger exists in the 49th state. “Hunger? In Alaska? Can’t they just go fishing or hunt caribou?” is an example of comments I heard a number of times before I set out for Anchorage in September of 2004. Whether the person said it half-jokingly or was truly confused, the perception was real. For people who did not recognize that hunger is a problem in most of their communities in the Lower 48, the concept that residents of the “Last Frontier” struggle to feed themselves and their families was wholly foreign.

The interviews collected here will hopefully illustrate that there is hunger in Alaska, and that action to curb this problem is needed. Represented in this collection are five interesting, charismatic, diverse Alaskans who have experienced or are still experiencing hunger. Hopefully, the courage they display in sharing their stories will lead to more awareness in the Alaskan community, and ultimately help put an end to hunger in this state and beyond.

The resource guide will assist those in need find local agencies to support them. The guide lists food pantries, cooked meal sites, food delivery agencies, and other organizations involved in the anti-hunger movement. A fact section on hunger in Alaska is also included.

*Indicates name has been changed

Charles “Chuck” Smeltzer

Chuck runs the Trapper Creek Food Pantry and has been instrumental in getting the newly established Sunshine Food Pantry in Talkeetna up and running. Talkeetna is 50 miles north of Anchorage.

I was born in Arkansas. I grew up in Texas and finished my schooling there. I spent some time in the Air Force and after I got out I became a carpenter. So I went all over the country building houses. Wherever the work was, that's where I went. I've traveled extensively doing construction. I worked on the Super Dome down in Houston and in the shadow of the Space Needle in Seattle. We built salmon cannery warehouses.

That's where I first began to see how the surplus food could be used to help people that needed something. We built a huge salmon cannery warehouse in Washington, and I talked to some of the folks and they said they shipped out thousands of cases to go to food banks, shelters and places like that. Then I worked for a cannery in Kent, Washington, and helped them in their sauerkraut division. They donated a lot of their food as well. I knew that there were ways to help people before I came to Alaska. I wasn't concerned too much for my own need then.

In '84 I became disabled. I was living in Montana at the time, and I was in an accident. That's when I began to really take an interest in what kind of help you could get, because I needed it for myself. I became more aware of the state agencies and how they help people. For the first time in my life I had to go to food pantries, because our income was so low.

When I came to Alaska my total income was \$684 a month. That was the total for me, my wife and two children. We were very low income. I came here to start a church, and I began co-laboring with a pastor in Wasilla. I took over that church as interim pastor when the pastor left. When I took over we started a benevolent fund there to help people in need.

We were in Big Lake for a year before we heard about a church needing a pastor in Trapper Creek. The first year we were there we put in a food bank. We didn't know much about the Food Bank of Alaska at the time, we were kind of new. But we knew another pastor and his wife who had a food pantry over in Talkeetna so we got acquainted with them. They were getting tired of running their food pantry, because they had been doing it for a

long time. So when we started our food pantry up they decided to stop and let us take it over. They introduced us to the Food Bank of Alaska. That was in '94.

People in Alaska seem to have a real giving spirit. A lot of canneries up here donate food; there are food drives. There are a number of places you can get food, but there are a lot of needy people who need food too.

We started by putting Thanksgiving baskets together for our church, and someone said, well why can't we do this for the whole neighborhood? So we did. This year we're going to do about 120 food baskets. And we try to make it a full meal, everything someone might need for the Holidays. And we try to include a toy or two for the kids. Perhaps some gloves or stocking caps for the parents. We've done this every year that we've been a food pantry. The first year we did 10 or fifteen.

There are more people coming up in the area but there aren't any jobs. They come up and realize there's not much

work. And whether they don't have the finances to leave or for whatever reason, they start coming to the food pantry needing help. So we make sure we have as good food as we can

We have a lot of natives up here that go hungry. I know there might be agencies out there, but getting the food to them...without highways you can't just drive up there like you can in the Lower 48.

possibly get. The USDA foods aren't the greatest in the world, but they'll fill 'ya up. So that's pretty much what we do.

We get food ourselves, because we are low income. We are three times lower than the poverty level, at our income. We could have three times the income we're getting now and we'd still be in poverty. So, we need it. We benefit from it, and we appreciate it. We know what it can mean, so we want to make it available for as many people as we possibly can.

We cover every thing from Willow, which is 25 miles south of the junction, all the way up to mile 128 of the Parks Highway. We just opened another facility in Talkeetna. Their first month in business they served 57 families.

Sometimes it's a drag, especially driving 120 miles one way to get food, and when you make it roundtrip that's a full day of work. I come at least once a week into Anchorage,

and with the price of gas today it costs about \$60 per trip. We're all volunteers - no salaries involved at all. But it's so much fun doing it this time of year.

In this area there are so many people that live out a long way. The prices in Alaska are a lot different than they are in the Lower 48; they're a lot higher up here. A lot of people live out in homesteads, and they come up with the idea that they can go make a living on the land. And when they get out there they realize it's not so easy because what they're making is not enough to pay for electricity, gas and all that. They find out they don't have enough money. There are extreme conditions up here, and they find they need help. I think there are a lot in Alaska that way, who probably came up here with the idea of making big bucks.

First year we were here in 1984 the rent of a two-bedroom home was \$1500 a month. So we bought a mobile home with a rent lease of \$50 a month. Even then it was pretty hard to get by with what little income we had.

Out in the bush, where the natives are, I've heard some horror stories about how poor some of those villages are. People live without any facilities. They have no toilets, no bathing facilities. It's really sad. There are some "oil-wise" native corporations that have invested in different things and helped their tribes, but there are some that didn't get into those things, and they're suffering. So we have a lot of natives up here that go hungry. I know there might be agencies out there, but getting the food to them...without highways you can't just drive up there like you can in the Lower 48. You got to either fly it or ship it by boat, so the transportation can get pretty expensive.

We don't have a lot of stuff to send out, but if the Lower 48 needs any mosquitoes, we can send them down for sure!

Caesar*

Nunivak Island, Alaska. I was born and raised there. Lived there until I was about 16, 17 years old. There's about 200 people. I went to Chemewa Indian School in Salem, Oregon, from '69 - '71. I stayed in Portland, Oregon for four years before I came back up. In '74 I came back up here and worked for a while. Then I joined the Army for 14 years. I traveled all over the world. It was kind of fun. I enjoyed it, my service. I was gonna retire, but I got booted out.

Then I came back to Alaska in '89. I lived on Nunivak Island for about four years. There's not much work there in the wintertime, but in the summer it's not so bad. I worked for a high school for a while, doing janitorial stuff. I like the island. You can hunt, and you don't have to spend so much in the grocery store.

*Street life is
hard. Very hard.
But I'm doing
okay.*

I came to Anchorage in '99. I've been here since. Here in Anchorage you have to do what you gotta do to survive. I got into a car accident, and ever since I have this cane. My knee is messed up, and I got a scar from my forehead all the way down to my eyeball. I've started to get angry real easy since that accident. I don't like people asking me questions.

I come around here, to Bean's Café, to eat breakfast and lunch. I'm getting food stamps, and they help. When you're 30 days out at the shelter, you don't know where your dinner is comin' from. I get my clothes from the shelter. They treat you nice – I don't have no problem with it. I wish there were more places like this.

Street life is hard. Very hard. But I'm doing okay. I could go home. I've got my own house back home. But there's nothing to do. I like it here in Anchorage. I meet friends; I'm getting a lot of help here. I'm doing okay. I think I'm goin' home in April, when it gets warm.

Cyndye Brower

Cyndye is a pastor (and pianist) at the New Harvest Apostolic Resource Center (ARC) in Palmer.

I was in Michigan and raising a son by myself when I started getting food baskets from a church for Thanksgiving and Christmas and times like that. Back then, in '77 or so, I knew when I got the food, a lot of stuff in there I wouldn't even know what to do with. After a while, at the church, I became the one in charge of the food baskets. I always figured that if I used services and thought they were valid, as I did a long time ago with my son, then you should be part of that. It gave life to you, so you turn around and give life to it.

Back then, we set up tables and people walked around and took what they wanted. So after I came here, my church wanted to start a food program, and I had already done that in Michigan. And when they were talking about giving clients choice, I wouldn't have it any other way. When you give boxes out to seniors and kids, some things they use and some things they don't. When I was given food in Michigan, they probably thought they were giving me a lot, but I only used around 50 percent of it.

There's a lot of need out there that people don't know about. It's easy to overlook.

I moved from Michigan to Alaska, because the Lord told me to move here. I came here in 1999. I am the resident pastor at New Harvest ARC. On Sundays and Mondays I go to a prison and interact with people there. In the church, we have homeless people living in the back, our food pantry, a walk-in closet for people to get clothes and different things, services like that.

We also have soup or some kind of warm meal on those days when the pantry is open so clients can eat while they're there. Right now, because it's winter, we have a drive-up. We load the vehicles with the food they want so they don't have to worry about sliding or slipping in the driveway. We also have a school there, junior high and high school, so I open the doors in the mornings for that.

It's tough here in Alaska for a lot of people. It's tough as a single parent. There are a lot of homeless people. Seniors, too. There is some subsistence living up here, but there are also a lot of people who can't get around in vehicles - they're not likely to go kill a deer and bring it home when they can't even get around normally. A lot of limitations on

transportation. There may be places to get food or services, but people can't get to 'em. There's a lot of need out there that people don't know about. You got to find 'em. Maybe the husband drinks or he's too proud to ask for help. You got to network and know who's who – connect with schools. It's easy to overlook. In today's society everybody lives their own life - very few interact with each other.

I have a guy who comes to the food pantry, his name is Monte, and we've built a relationship. One day the food pantry was supposed to be open but I had to leave and I had no one to help me. He says, "Well I know the routine, so let me help." So I let him help. What has basically happened now is that the Lord wakes Monte up in the middle of the night. He comes to the church and the Lord tells him how many food boxes to fix, and if the people are vegetarian or if they need lots of meat and things like that. He fixes the boxes and the Lord even tells him where to place the box. Here's an example, this happened less than two months ago:

The backdoor to the shelter is always unlocked because you never know when someone might need to come in. This particular day it was windy, and the door blew open. So instead of coming in through the front door like he normally would, Monte came in through the back door. He went in and fixed a box and the Lord said to put it on the washer by the back door. So he put it on the washer by the back door. After this, he was ready to leave and started to walk home, but before he got past our building the back door slammed open. He thought he should shut it so he went back to close the door. The box was already gone.

You should have seen him the first couple of times that happened. He was in the pantry with his wife and kid, and I hear all this slamming. He's yelling, "Where is it?! Where is it?! Where is it?!" He used a particular box to pack with, and he comes to me and asks if I had put the food back. I told him no. He wanted to believe that I had put it on the shelf or someone else had come and got it or whatever, but the point was the box was gone. I could tell by the look on his face that he was panicked. He thought he was losin' it. God delivers the boxes. Does that on a regular basis. No explanation. Because how could the box disappear that fast?

Lindsey Johnson*

I grew up here in Alaska. We did a lot of the subsistence lifestyle as far as fishing goes, not hunting. My dad realized when I was one, maybe two, when he was out hunting – he had a moose in his sights and realized that we were still gonna survive the winter, even if he didn't shoot that moose. So he didn't shoot it. My dad made sure that we always had food. It didn't matter where we lived – we lived all over Alaska and camped a tremendous amount. Hunger was never an issue when I was a kid. There were school programs, so we had lunch at school.

When it really hit me was when I was an adult. My husband and I went through a period of time when we both had multiple medical challenges, in and out of hospitals,

I was very prideful; I was not willing to get help... that was saying I was poor and I refused to acknowledge that.

emergencies. My husband almost lost his life through a spleen injury and an emergency surgery saved his life. I had pregnancy issues. Just before my daughter was born my husband's elbows went out because of tendonitis, so he could no longer work doing the things he knew how to do. So that's when our issues

really began. I have this new baby and my husband can't work.

I was very prideful; I was not willing to get help. Partly because I felt like at that point that was saying I was poor and I refused to acknowledge that. By then I had realized I had been very poor growing up. You deal with what you have.

During that year I can remember they were harvesting onions, and they hadn't fixed the road in front of our house, and the onion trucks would hit a pothole and leave us onions. I can remember going out there the very first time that happened and just weeping, because I was gonna have something to put in my soup that was flavorful. I was very thankful for it. That was a real significant moment, realizing where we were. We never went hungry, but we definitely were very close. I finally decided to ask for help, with the electric bill and all of that. I went down to a place that was gonna help with the electricity and also give us some food. They were able to help with the electricity, but what they gave me for food was in a food box, and the only thing we were able to eat was the butter. Everything else was full of

bugs, or we couldn't eat because of an allergy. Your heart just sinks because you're finally willing to go ask for help, and it's not there.

During that time what really impacted me tremendously was God's word. In Matthew he talks about the birds, and God's going to take care of them, even in the pitch of winter. And there are three things, food, shelter and clothing, which He will provide us with if we but seek it. That became a tremendous hope for me. My pride started to break down. He works through people, and how can people give if there's no one to receive. I had done lots of giving, but it hadn't been quite in the spirit that God wanted it to be.

And then we went through it again. We had started a new business, and I was pregnant with my son, and realized that it was a high-risk pregnancy and I needed to get help. I got food stamps, and went through that very humiliating process. Because we owned a business, they somehow discredited us for needing the help. People should not have to go through rigmarole to prove they're poor. Then I was in the hospital for two months. My husband was able to provide for our daughter while I was in the hospital. As soon as we were able to start paying for our food again, we went off food stamps. It took us a year. It was an important year. I can see where people need three or four years to get back on their feet.

I had more money on food stamps than I had ever spent on food in months. Having food stamps opened my eyes to eating better. If you do tuna and pasta, health problems ensue. Different problems need different foods, proteins, and I didn't know that.

One of the things that helped me a lot was WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children). They made you feel human. You could buy milk, and cheese and cereals, and those were staples. So that was a really powerful time. Was I ashamed? Yeah. I still went to a different town to shop, and I shopped early in the morning or late at night. But I was still thankful. I would take 10 percent of my food and take it somewhere for other people.

There's alcoholism in Alaska, and there are darkness issues. Drugs were a huge issue when I was growing up, in every community. Even though it's a big state, you can't get out easily. There's not an easy way to leave. They have a tendency to isolate themselves. Alaskans tend to be independent; they often don't know how to be a part of the community. There's no freshness.

Donell Polk

Donell is the Manager at the Saxton Youth Shelter in Wasilla, a subsidiary of Kids Are People, Inc.

I first came to Alaska in 1974. My uncle gave me a ticket, what I thought was a round-trip ticket but was only a one-way ticket. He told me that if I wanted to go back to that rat-hole down there in California, find a job. So I found a job. Came up here right after high school. Thought it'd be good to come here, turn my life around comin' from the projects, comin' from Oakland. Low-income housing, knowing what it is to be on food programs down there - my mom received food stamps.

My first job in Alaska was with a telephone company. I was just a janitor at that company in Anchorage. I worked for them for approximately a year. Then I went on to other things, different custodian jobs, barely making it. And then I got unemployed and ended up on the street in Anchorage. That was in '84.

I was too proud to go to shelters to eat or sleep. I didn't want anybody to know I was living in a shelter. I met these native kids bout my age, young adults, and they taught me how to build a tent out of black spruce, tying them together, making flooring. So I camped down there with four other natives, two other whites and my wife. We built this tent out of materials we would take from other

buildings downtown, we took palettes and put them down, and rug foam and carpet, and we made a bed out of milk crates. For heat during the wintertime,

We have a lot of homelessness in Alaska that's unseen. We have a lot of kids that go hungry every day, but it's not shown.

we kept a homemade stove, a burner you go campin' with. And before we went to bed at night, we would turn that on and close the door and let it warm up in there. We had 10 or 15 blankets on the bed; it was a cozy little place, you would have to see it. It was our safety, our shelter. We would wake up in the morning and go snag some fish out of the river. It got old after about six months. Summer rolled around and I finally went to the shelter.

I started volunteering there first. That wasn't enough. My attitude, my addiction, my drinking, started to show where I started to forget what I was there for. I was there trying to get back on my feet, but I became what Archbishop Hurley told me at one time: I became a

taker. Archbishop Hurley, here's a man who travels all over Alaska. This powerful man took me aside and told me I needed to do something with my life, that my life needed to change. They took me in; they told me I needed to stop being a taker and learn how to give. 'Learn how to give, Mr. Polk, and your life will be so much better.' It was the most positive thing that had happened in my life.

He told me that my drinking had got out of hand. I had hit someone at the shelter and that I was gonna be put back out. And that meant that I was gonna have to sleep on the floor again, sleep at the camp again, on the street again. And I did. I went back to the camp. I would sleep at the camp and go up to the shelter to shower.

They took me back in. So I started volunteering at the shelter again. Watching the people come in at night, giving 'em blankets, helping serve the food. I did that for about three to four months. And then a job opened up at the shelter, as a monitor, I think it was about \$7 an hour. So I monitored them, brought 'em in and gave 'em clothes. I saved up money, my wife went back to work and we moved out. Out of the shelter, off the street. We moved into a beautiful, beautiful apartment by the airport. I had saved enough money and bought a car, so I had wheels to go find good work. But I didn't want to leave that job. So I stayed at the shelter. I worked from a monitor, then to supervisor, and then the manager of the shelter, all in seven years. I had stayed there, and I had become clean. I found out what I needed to do: I had to start giving, and giving, and giving. I had to redo my life, and help people. There were some ups and downs, but I stayed strong.

I left the shelter in '92. I had started working there in '84. The reason I left the shelter is that I felt I couldn't do anything with the adults anymore. The people that I was trying to help were the same people I was drinking with, that I was partying with. I would wake up and find that the friend sleeping next to me is dead because he had frozen to death, or had hypothermia, or alcohol poisoning, or he's been killed. My native friends, who had saved my life and helped me build that tent, were drinking on their way to Kenai in a back of a van with no seat belts. They went over the side of an embankment. Stan died, Adam died and Stan's wife died. To go to their funeral and see those people lying there, I figured there was nothing else I could do at the adult shelter. I was their buddy, and they would come to the shelter and get money from me. I gave it to em, knowing what they was going to do.

But to lose friends like that...it was hard. Realizing I couldn't do it anymore. Realizing that if I stayed in Anchorage I would start drinking again, get back on the street again, things would fall. I decided to move out to the Valley. I had a little Mazda pick-up truck and I loaded everything I had into that truck. I told my wife she could stay, but I was leaving, because I couldn't do it anymore.

I started working little odds and ends jobs again. I worked at Wal-Mart, but it wasn't for me. It was like an assembly line. It was not what I wanted to do. So I was unemployed, and I said, 'You know, I want to do something with my life again.'

I've been given a chance to start giving. I need to do that, know that I'm giving every day.

I wanted to be in public relations or social work, but didn't have a degree. I just had a high school education. And I have, what they call, dyslexia. How could I get to do these things that I felt so good at the shelter? I went to this program where they retrain people who are unemployed. I met some beautiful people there. There was this guy with an accent, Mark.

What a motivator! This guy could speak to you, man, and I was unemployed. I could see myself going down again. And I went to the class this guy gave. And he was telling stories about Russia and coming here with his family, and I started feeling this inside of me. He said *anybody* can get a job, anybody. You just do it; I don't care what it is. They helped me build a resume.

That very same day, I walked into a building on the parks highway, a greenhouse. Never done that type of work in my life, but that day the guy hired me. At \$7 an hour. This is 1997, what am I doing making \$7 an hour? Two weeks later he paid me \$9 an hour. Three weeks later he gave me \$11. I said I like this kind of work. But I left that job, because it wasn't what I wanted.

While I was working that job, I put in an application at Kids are People, Inc. I was waiting for the opportunity to do social work. That's what I wanted to do; I wanted to work with kids. I got the golden opportunity to work with them in the year of 2000. When I first put in my application, they asked me if I knew anything about social work, case management. 'No,' I said. 'But I have worked in shelters for the last ten years.' All this time I always had all these callings. I didn't know what these callings were.

When they hired a case manager, they hired me. And that was cool, I was doing the things I wanted. I started working here, and watching the kids come to the shelter. The reasons for coming to shelter were the family wasn't getting along, or there was a divorce and the family had separated the kids, or the kids were homeless. And I didn't know kids were homeless at that age. Twelve and 13 year olds, their parents living in cars, so they come to the shelter for a while.

So I started working with all these people, building relationships, I started to learn how to give again. I got to watch these kids smile. You gave 'em a safe haven, a safe place to be. You have given them a reason to live again. I tell 'em about my story, tell em about livin' on the street. What it did for me. Giving them a different way to look at life.

Sometimes a kid comes back, three or four years later, and says thank you. Things like, 'Me and my mom are getting along fine. I've been placed back with my family. Things are awesome. Thank you, Donell.' And those are the rewards you get. Those are the rewards that I had been told about years and years before.

This is my fifth year at the shelter, and I wouldn't give it away. I work long hours. And even when I go home, I feel that something's not done. I've been given a chance to start giving. I need to do that, know that I'm giving every day. We're here to save lives; we're that safety net, the net that catches all the loose kids. Make sure they go to a safe home.

We have a lot of homelessness in Alaska that's unseen. We have a lot of kids that go hungry every day, but it's not shown. Many native families up north don't have food. They don't have resources. I remember being homeless. I remember not eating. I remember snatching fish illegally out of the water and eating them. Imagine how many other people there are like I was.

RESOURCE GUIDE

ANCHORAGE

Food Pantries:

Abbott Loop Community Church – 2626 Abbott Rd. – 349-2005

Anchor-Age Senior Center – 1300 E. 19th Ave. – 258-7823

God's Place (Mother Lawrence) – 272-0989

Lutheran Social Services – 1801 W. 48th Ave. – 243-0316

Mabel T. Caverly Senior Center – 325 E. 3rd Ave. – 276-1496

MLK Shiloh Food Pantry – 928 Juneau St. – 276-6673

New Hope on the Last Frontier – 1220 E. St. – 274-2745

SCF Elder Program – 9131 Centennial Circle, #302 – 729-6500

St. Francis House (of Catholic Social Services) – 3710 E. 20th Ave. – 276-5590

The Salvation Army Family Emergency Services – 4611 Gambell – 277-2593

The Salvation Army Older Alaskans Program – 401 W. Int'l Airport Rd. #19 – 349-0613

Meal Sites:

Anchorage Gospel Rescue Mission – 2823 E. Tudor Rd. – 563-5603

Bean's Café – 1021 E. 3rd Ave. – 277-1731 (breakfast, lunch)

Brother Francis Shelter – 1021 E. 3rd Ave. – 277-1731 (dinner)

Cook Inlet Tribal Council – 670 W. Fireweed Lane, Suite 200 – 265-5900 (natives only)

Downtown Soup Kitchen – 434 E. 4th Ave. – 277-4302 (lunch)

Food Box Delivery:

FISH – 277-0818

Hope Christian Fellowship – 8110 Jewel Lake Rd. – 349-4331

EAGLE RIVER, PALMER, TALKEETNA, WASILLA, WILLOW

Food Pantries:

Chugiak-Eagle River Food Pantry – 12836 Old Glen Hwy. – 694-4518

Eagle River Church of God – 17108 Hanson Dr. – 694-9395

Food Pantry of Wasilla – 501 Bogart Rd. – 357-3769

New Harvest ARC – 2722 Gulkana St. Palmer – 745-2722

Palmer Food Bank – 2215 Valley Way – 746-3565

Trapper Creek Community Food Bank – 733-1776

Wasilla Area Senior Center – 1301 Century Circle – 376-3104

Meal Sites:

Mid-Valley Seniors – 11975 W. Mid-Valley Way, Houston – 892-6114

Willow Area Seniors – Community Circle Center – 495-6633

FAIRBANKS

Fairbanks Community Food Bank Service

Fairbanks Community Food Bank, in partnership with Food Bank of Alaska and the following agencies, helps feed the hungry in Interior Alaska. For more information contact Fairbanks Community Food Bank at (907) 452-7761.

Badger Road Baptist Church	Hospitality House
Bingle Camp	ICC Soup Kitchen
Boys and Girls Club	Ice Alaska
Breadline	Interact Ministries
Camp Fire Boys and Girls	Intercultural Assembly of God
Camp LIWA	Interior AIDS Association
Center for Non-Violent Living	Literacy Council of Alaska
Christ is the Answer	Love, Inc.
Corinthian Baptist Church	Miracle Crusade
Covenant Church	Mission Bautista Hispana
Crossroads Baptist Church	Moose Creek Baptist Church
Crossroads Counseling	New Hope Community Church
Cultural Heritage & Ed. Inst.	New Jerusalem Church of God
Deaf Community Services	North Star Council on Aging
Door of Hope Church	Open Door House of Prayer
Fairbanks Resource Agency	Pentecostal Church of God
Fairbanks Shakespeare Theater	Plack Road Baptist Church
Fairbanks Weaver's & Spinners Guild	Play 'N' Learn
Fairhill Community Church	Red Cross
Faith Baptist Church	Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ
Father's House	Rescue Mission
FNA Assisted Living	Resource Center for Parents and Children
FNA Diineegwahshii	Salcha Baptist Church
FNA Early Head Start	St. Jude's Jubilee Center
FNA Family Focus	St. Nicholas Catholic Church
FNA Graf	The Salvation Army Fairbanks
FNA Life Givers	True Victory Baptist Church
FNA New Hope Center	Two Rivers Baptist Church
FNA Parents As Teachers	Valley of Blessing Church of God
FNA Ralph Purdue Center	Vet Center/Stand Down
FNA Women & Children	Wellspring Revival Ministries
Freedom in Christ Ministries	Whitestone Farms
Friends Church	Women Veterans of America
Gaaleeya Spirit Camp	World Wide New Testament Baptist Missions
Girl Scouts	Youth with a Mission

KENAI

Kenai Peninsula Food Bank Inc.

Kenai Peninsula Food Bank, in partnership with Food Bank of Alaska and the following agencies, help feed the hungry on the Kenai Peninsula. For more information contact Kenai Peninsula Food Bank at (907) 262-3111.

Abundant Life Assembly of God	Kenai United Methodist Church of the New Covenant
After the Bell – Soldotna	Kenai United Pentecostal Church
Anchor Point Senior Citizens	Kenaitze Indian Tribe
Boys and Girls Club of the Kenai Peninsula	Lighthouse Community Church
Central Peninsula Counseling Services	Ministry of the Living Stones
Child Evangelism Fellowship	Mt. Redoubt Baptist Church
College Heights Baptist Church	New Frontier Vo-Tech Center
Creative Play & Preschool	New Life Christian Fellowship
Disabled American Vets, Chapter 5	Nikiski Church of the Nazarene
First Baptist Church of Kenai	Nikiski Day Care Center
First Baptist Church of Soldotna	Nikiski Senior Citizens
Frontier Community Services	Ninilchick Full Gospel Assembly of God
Homer Community Food Pantry	Ninilchik Senior Center
Independent Living Center	North Kenai Baptist Church
Inlet Faith Assembly of God	North Star United Methodist Church
Kalifonsky Christian Center	Peninsula Christian Center
Kasilof Four Square Church	Peninsula Grace Brethren Church
Kenai Church of God	Reflection Lake Chapel
Kenai Grace Brethren Church	Soldotna Bible Chapel
Kenai New Life Assembly of God	Soldotna Church of God
Kenai Peninsula College Learning Center	Soldotna Church of the Nazarene
Kenai Peninsula Community Care Center	Soldotna Senior Citizens
Kenai Senior Center	Soldotna United Methodist Church
Kenai Seventh Day Adventist Church	Solid Rock Bible Camp

KODIAK

Kodiak Island Food Bank

Kodiak Island Food Bank, in partnership with Food Bank of Alaska and the following agencies help feed the hungry in Kodiak. For more information, contact Kodiak Island Food Bank at (907) 486-4126.

Crisis Pregnancy Center
Brother Francis Shelter
Living Room Ministries
Kodiak Baptist Mission
The Salvation Army of Kodiak

SOUTHEAST ALASKA

Southeast Alaska Food Bank

Southeast Alaska Food Bank, in partnership with Food Bank of Alaska and the following agencies help feed hunger Alaskans throughout Southeast. This food bank is based in Juneau. For more information, call Southeast Alaska Food Bank at (907) 789-6184.

AWARE Shelter
Boys & Girls Clubs of Juneau
Catholic Community Services
Dreams Inc
Echo Ranch Bible Camp
Gastineau Human Services
Glacier Valley Baptist Church
Gold Creek Child Care
Juneau Adventist Community Services
Juneau Alliance of Mental Health Inc.
Juneau Christian Center/Bethel Christian
Juneau Friends Meeting Church
Juneau Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Juneau Youth Services
NAMI of Juneau/Polaris House
Northern Lights United Church
REACH
Resurrection Lutheran Church
SAGA
The Salvation Army of Angoon
The Salvation Army of Juneau
SIMS Foster Group Home
Southeast Alaska Independent Living/ORCA
St. Brendan's Episcopal Church
St. Vincent de Paul
The Glory Hole
Zach Gordon Youth Center

HUNGER in ALASKA

In 2003, more than 70,000 (almost 12% of the state population) Alaskans went hungry or were food insecure (did not have regular access to enough nutritious food for a healthy, active life). 1 in 5 Alaskan children was hungry, and 1 in 10 adults. Here is a compilation of more facts, from various sources, illuminating the need.¹

- Likely total annual food assistance need (lbs.).....13,104,000
- Number of eligible persons NOT receiving Food Stamps.....23,853
- Annual amount Food Stamp non-participants could receive.....\$30,913,107²

Just like the rest of the country, Alaska’s rural and Native populations are often the hardest hit, as shown below.

- 37% of rural Alaskan women are concerned about not having enough food, and 15% of rural Alaskan women reported that they did not have enough food.³
- Fifty-two percent of nonmetro (rural) Native Americans who are poor have incomes that are less than half of the poverty line.
- Poverty rates for non-Hispanic Blacks and Native Americans are more than 10 percentage points higher in nonmetro areas than in metro areas, the largest gap among minority population groups.⁴
- Regionally, food insecurity was reported highest in the rural West (15.5% of households).
- Poverty and unemployment rates are higher, and earnings growth lower, in rural America than in metropolitan areas.
- Child poverty rates are higher in rural areas (18.9 percent) than in metro areas (15.4 percent).⁵

¹ Food Bank of Alaska. www.foodbankofalaska.org

² Arnold, John. Second Harvest Gleaners Food Bank of Western Michigan, Inc.

³ The 2001 WIC Healthy Mom Survey by the Institute for Circumpolar Health

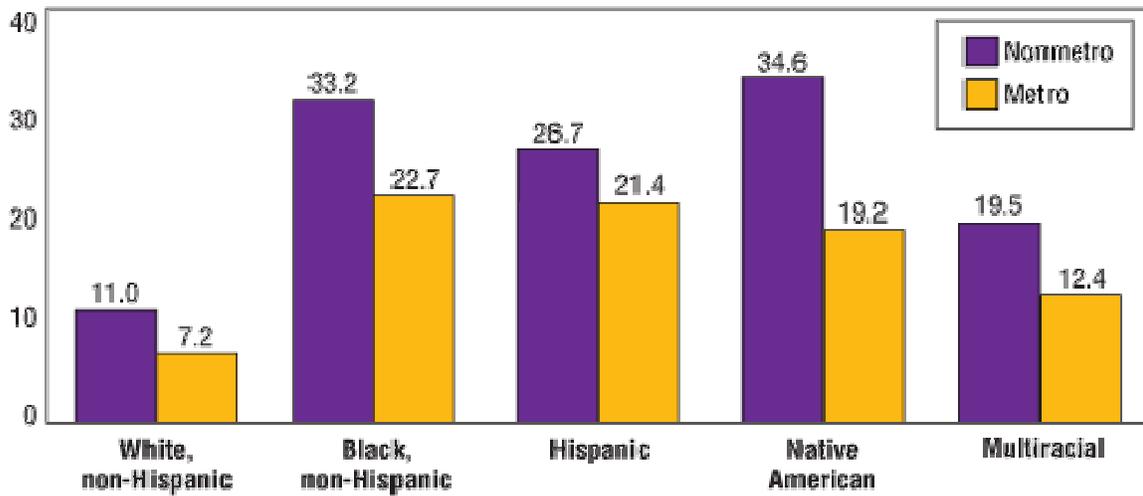
⁴ Economic Research Service of the USDA. ers.usda.gov

⁵ America’s Second Harvest. www.secondharvest.org

Poverty rates by race and ethnicity, 2002

Nonmetro Blacks, Native Americans, and Hispanics have highest poverty rates

Percent poor



Children are often the most ill-affected by food insecurity and hunger. These numbers help illustrate that need (numbers for Alaska residents).

- Number of children under age 18 who receive food stamps 19,073
- Percent of eligible persons who receive food stamps 74%
- Number of children in School Lunch Program 51,231
- Number of children in School Breakfast Program 9,614
- Average daily attendance of children in Summer Food Program 687
- Average daily attendance of children and adults in the Child and Adult Care Feeding Program 9,598
- Number of women and children receiving WIC (Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children) 23,625⁶

⁶ Children’s Defense Fund. www.childrensdefense.org

There is also a significant participation shortfall in feeding programs for children in Alaska which, if reversed, could drastically help stem the number of hungry children.

Ratio of Students in Free and Reduced Price Breakfast for Every 100 Students in Free and Reduced Price School Lunch

Ratio of Children in 2002 Summer Nutrition to Children in Free and Reduced Price School-Year School Lunch⁷

Lowest 10 States

N. Hampshire	34
New York	34
Connecticut	33
Nebraska	32
Colorado	31
Alaska	31
Illinois	28
Utah	28
New Jersey	24
Wisconsin	24

Lowest 10 States

Colorado	10.5
Indiana	10.2
Nebraska	9.6
Arkansas	8.4
Alaska	7.8
Wyoming	7.6
Iowa	7.5
Kansas	7.2
Texas	7.1
Oklahoma	6.1

14,000 families in Anchorage visit food pantries each month (FBA phone survey 2002). A study done in 2002 at Alaska’s largest food pantry, St. Francis House, displayed some startling results. People who are hungry in Anchorage:

- **Are predominantly children.** Almost half of those served by St. Francis House are younger than 18 years old.
- **Have been in Alaska for a while.** Two thirds of the people seeking food assistance have been in Alaska for five years or more.
- **Come from all ethnic backgrounds:** 26% are Alaska Native, 23% are Asian, 22% are Caucasian, 13% are Hispanic, and 9% African American.
- **Tend not to have any higher education.** 78% of those receiving food assistance have no college level education.
- **Are likely (40%) to have at least one member of the family who works.**
- **Have very low household incomes.** 80% of families using St. Francis House make less than \$20,000 per year.
- **Have to struggle to find food. 51% of families use other food pantries in addition to St. Francis House and 34% state that they and their children sometimes skip meals due to lack of food.**⁸

⁷ Food Research and Action Committee (FRAC). State of the States.

⁸ Food Bank of Alaska website: www.foodbankofalaska.org

Many thanks go to all the staff at the Food Bank of Alaska for their support and assistance, and my utmost appreciation goes to the five interviewees who were gracious enough to give of their time and share their stories.

Will Connors is a participant in the Emerson National Hunger Fellowship, a program of the Congressional Hunger Center in Washington, D.C. The fellowship selects twenty participants a year for a six month field placement with grassroots agencies across the United States and a six month policy placement in Washington, D.C. For more information on this program and the Hunger Center, visit www.hungercenter.org



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