The Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) also known as the Farmers to Families Food Box that is part of the CARES Act. It allowed the USDA to start purchasing an estimated $100 million per month in fresh fruits and vegetables, $100 million per month in a variety of dairy products, and $100 million per month in meat products. The distributors and wholesalers have provided a pre-approved box of fresh produce, dairy and meat products to food banks, community, and faith-based organizations, and other non-profits serving Americans in need.

This program gave us the opportunity to team up with Channel One Food Bank to do a Truck to Trunk event that was held on June 26th in our parking lot. It allowed us to give out a protein, dairy and produce boxes to over 450 households from Steele County. There are no income guidelines for this program, so Community Pathways was able to give out nutritious foods to anyone in need during this difficult time.

We would like to thank all the volunteers, board members and staff that came out to help make this event a success and to Channel One Food bank for delivering all this nutritious foods. Also thank you to our neighbor businesses for allowing us to utilize the parking lot.

We know that everyone has been busy spring cleaning and that you are more than ready to get your items out of your car, your garage, or wherever you have been storing them for the past few months. We apologize for not being able to take donations and appreciate your patience with us as we maneuvered our way through this pandemic. We had to make some difficult decisions early on and realized that providing food for our families had to be a priority and Unique Finds would have to take a backseat to the Marketplace and our food programs.

We are finally ready to reopen Unique Finds and look forward to seeing all of you again! With that being said, we will need to take extra precautions as we begin the process of reopening. There are a lot of factors to consider and the safety of our staff, volunteers, and clients are a priority, so we do have some guidelines that we will need to follow and will be reopening in phases.
Re-opening continued....

Phase one: We will begin taking donations on June 29th. We will be accepting donations on Mondays and Fridays from 9:00am-12:00pm and will need to set a limit of 4 boxes/bags for each visit. Due to high volume and space issues we will need to be very specific about the items that we can accept.
What we need:
- Seasonal clothing in good condition
- Kitchen and household items are always needed and appreciated
- Bedding and bath towels
A good rule of thumb when donating it to ask yourself is this something that I would be comfortable giving to a friend or neighbor, if the answer is yes we would appreciate being able to put it in our store. If the answer to this question is no, it could potentially cost us money to dispose of, so please reconsider.

Unique Finds will reopen for shopping on July 6th and we will be limiting the number of shoppers in the store at any given time. There will also be a 20-minute shopping limit in place to give everyone a chance to shop. Only one family member will be allowed in the store to shop and all shoppers will be required to wear a mask and practice social distancing. The Marketplace will remain as curbside pickup for the time being.

Future Phases: Unique Finds will expand donation days to Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays between 9-12, and will continue to limit the number of shoppers in the store. The Marketplace will open to individuals shopping in the store but will also limit the number of shoppers allowed in the store. Social distancing and health guidelines will continue to be in place. Except for phase one we do not have specific dates in place.

Any further reopening plans will be based on the current situation and all phases are subject to change. We are doing our best to provide services to our families in a safe and healthy environment. Our goal of course is to open all programs and return to serving our clients and the community as soon as possible. Once again, thank you for your patience and understanding as we begin the reopening process. We appreciate the support that we receive and our families benefit greatly from your donations. We do our best to provide good quality clothing and household items to our families and with your help this will continue.

Boy, how things have changed in the world today. The Marketplace delivery program is constantly being molded to meet the needs of the clients that it serves. In January through May of 2019 we distributed 16,350 lbs. of food. In that same time frame this year we have distributed 21,618 lbs. That is a 32% increase from January through May of this year compared to the same time frame in 2019. The program is helping to fill the needs of those who find it difficult or impossible to get to the Marketplace for food support.

Since the onset of COVID-19 several changes have been made to conform with the government social distancing guidelines and to accommodate the increase of clients. We have changed the deliveries from twice monthly to only once a month. We have also switched from custom food orders to pre-boxed food. This was done because of the way that our food has been coming from the warehouse. It was also due to the increase of clients switching to mobile delivery that would normally shop at the store but due to COVID-19 they now need to have it delivered. We are looking forward to what the rest of this year will bring. Filling the gap and striving to provide the best service possible.

During this very strange and unfamiliar time, we are finding that our organization has so very much to be thankful for. We have been graced with amazing monetary donations which are allowing us to purchase the prepackaged boxes from Channel One, our food bank in Rochester. We were also able to purchase many canned items from our local grocers to help supplement the contents of the boxes.

While we truly miss our dedicated volunteers, we had asked them to stay home and stay safe around the end of March. Our courageous (and healthy) staff has taken on all the responsibilities and have done an amazing job with keeping the organization running smooth. We are definitely ready to have a few volunteers come back as we open Unique Finds.

Our clients, customers, and friends have been very understanding and supportive through all the changes that have taken place. When we think back on the early days of the pandemic, we have to laugh at how often we made decisions to do things differently. Some days we literally made procedure changes every hour. We anticipate more changes as we open Unique Finds, but if history can be repeated, we will get through just fine.

Most importantly, we have been able to continue providing monthly food packages and emergency clothing to our clients. While we have had to cut back on a few things and change how we do our distribution, we are so happy to provide Steele County residents with much needed necessities. We are dedicated to continuing our services.
With reopening on the horizon, we are looking forward to welcoming back our dedicated volunteers at a limited capacity. Our volunteer opportunities have been reconfigured to maintain the safety of our volunteers, clients, and staff members. These opportunities are likely to change as we continue to move forward and aim for normal operations.

We currently have three volunteer positions available. We will be looking for help with our Marketplace curbside delivery process. This position will entail our volunteer greeting clients outside, taking orders, and placing client’s groceries on the table outside for them to pick up. We will also need a volunteer to help at the Unique Finds door. We will be limiting the number of shoppers in the store at any given time. So, this volunteer will keep track of the order that shoppers arrive and let them know when it is their turn to shop. They will also inform shoppers of our current policies that require shoppers to wear a mask while inside the store, maintain social distance, and sanitize their hands upon entering. In addition, we will need help sorting through the donations we receive. This position will be similar to the sorting position in the past. We will go through the items received and sort them by size and use. All donations received will be isolated for 72 hours before being sorted and we encourage those sorting to wear gloves while they work.

To maintain safety for all, our volunteers and staff will be required to wear a mask inside of the building, maintain social distancing, and frequently wash/sanitize their hands. Everyone's temperature will be taken, and you will be asked to sign in at the beginning of your shift and to sign out before you leave. If you are interested in assisting us in any of these positions, please give us a call at 455-2991 and speak with Kylie.

What crazy times we're going through, but here we are still smiling. I'm so proud of our community, staff and volunteers for continuing to work hard towards our mission.

We are excited to announce that we are participating in the Open Your Heart Summer Challenge Grant again this year. This grant is a fun way to raise funds for Food Shelves across Minnesota. Every dollar donated in the month of July will be matched by Hunger Solutions up to $4500.00. Last year we did "Dine Out To Help" fundraiser, but with COVID-19 restriction we have found a way to do it in a safe manner. Get ready to call Bingo! This year we’re teaming up with Owatonna Live to do a Virtual Bingo Fundraiser. Bingo cards are $5.00 each or 5 for $20.00 and can be purchased at Community Pathways, Tri M Graphics, Owatonna Shoe and online at www.owatonnalive.com. For every $5.00 card purchased $4.00 will go to Community Pathways. Have some fun while supporting a great cause! This event will be on July 26th at 6:00pm, go to Owatonna Live website or their Facebook page to play along.

We are now accepting donations on our website at www.communitypathwaysSC.org or www.facebook.com/communitypathwaysSC
If you would like to have your name removed from or added to our mailing list, please contact us by calling 507-455-2991 or email us at Admin@communitypathwaysSC.org

July 26th @ 6pm
www.Owatonnalive.com
www.Facebook.com/owatonnalive