

Food bank announces match challenge success



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A recent Feed My People fundraiser has gone a long way towards providing food to hundreds of children in the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District.

Beginning on Oct. 1 and running for six weeks the B.A. Mason Trust, a philanthropic branch of Mason Companies Inc., pledged a dollar-for-dollar match of community donations up to \$10,000.

“The community really responded,” said Emily Moore, executive director of Feed My People.

In all, area businesses, churches and individuals donated \$16,394, exceeding the Trust’s match challenge. The challenge ended on Nov. 15.

The money will go to help fund the food bank’s Weekend Kids’ Meal Program. According to Feed My People, over 40 percent of students in Chippewa Falls qualify for the federal free or reduced lunch program. Many of these students rely on school lunches as their main source of nutrition.

But school lunches aren’t available on weekends.

So to bridge the gap, Feed My People provides bags of food to more than 500 children in the school district every Friday. The bags contain food for two breakfasts and lunches along with two pieces of fresh fruit.

The combined fundraising total for the effort was \$26,394. Moore said that will go a long way towards reaching the weekend meal program’s price tag of \$40,000 annually.

“It’s huge,” she said.

Chippewa Falls School District Superintendent Dr. Heidi Taylor-Eliopoulos also expressed appreciation for the way the community has stepped forward.

“We are grateful to have Feed My People supporting the needs of students in the Chippewa Falls School District,” Eliopoulos said. “Our partnership with their organization is invaluable.”

The Weekend Kids’ Meal program originated at Parkview Elementary in 2007. Recently the program expanded to include all elementary schools (public and private) in the district along with the Chippewa Falls Middle School and High School as well as Chippewa Head Start, the Boys and Girls Club and Agnes’ Table.