Quincy WA Community Food Bank Story

Brent Dowlen: [00:00:00] Interview Teri Laney, director of Quincy Community Food Bank. Teri, for those who don't know the history, Quincy Community, community Food Bank started 40 years ago in Cameron, Carmen Taylor's basement. Been here a long time. How long have you been director of the food bank and how do you feel like it's progressed in those years?

Teri Laney: I started in 2013. Um, it's changed quite a bit. It's grown quite a bit. Like we have a lot more volunteers. Um, we get a lot more clients. Um, I've been able to make some changes for the, um, for the better. Um, we've had the community support. Be a great support. Um, data centers have come in and built cabinets and, um, put things in like [00:01:00] that that helps, um, with the, the client line.

And because we used to have shopping carts that held, um, the food and that's all we had out there. Uh, so the community's been a great support.

Brent Dowlen: How many individuals or families are you currently serving in a typical month?

Teri Laney: Well, we opened a third distribution time that is Tuesday afternoon and so on. Just a Tuesday, we'll, um, usually get 300 families.

They can come twice a week, but, but on, just on Tuesday they come once and usually get about 300,

Brent Dowlen: about 300 families. Wow. That's. A significant resource for the community. That's a whole lot. You said the space has improved over time, but, and I'm, I'm gonna get ahead of myself. I stopped looking at [00:02:00] my notes here.

Here's what happens, right? Uh, are you seeing an increase in demand or decrease lately?

Teri Laney: Definitely an increase. Um. We get the migrant workers all summer, but um, and then we usually go down in the winter, but we really didn't this year. Um, it's, it's continuing to increase. Hmm. So I'm expecting more than, than 300.

Once the, um, migrant workers, um, get back in.

Brent Dowlen: Wow. What is the biggest need you're facing at the moment? Is it food funding volunteers? What is the biggest need that the community Food Bank has?

Teri Laney: Uh, probably just the funding. I mean, God's providing well, and it, it's going great. It's coming in. Um, we're maybe close to halfway to our goal.[00:03:00]

Um, but, uh.

But that's the immediate need at the moment. Um, we'll possibly break ground next week and, uh, have the shell up by the 1st of May is their goal. Um, and then just have to get the funding to continue the inside. And then phase two, remodeling this right here, the client area.

Brent Dowlen: What do you wish our community.

Better understood about the food bank.

So who uses it, how it operates, how it fits.

Teri Laney: I think just understand, um,

knowing that we're here and available to people that, um, that need us. [00:04:00] 'cause I don't feel like it's used. Um, to the capacity that it could be. Um, it's sub, it's supplemental, um, for people, but the,

sorry. Looks like you do.

Brent Dowlen: Yeah,

Teri Laney: I guess just understanding that we're here and what we do and, and why and that, um. You don't have to be prayerful, but they can just come and supplement their household with what God provides.

Brent Dowlen: It's okay. Being on the spot is hard. I, I've been on that side of the interview many, many times as well over the years, and that's the benefit of being on my side of it.

I get notes and I get time to prep. You guys kind of just get put on the spot, so you're fine. Don't worry about it. You're doing great. So let's talk about the expansion project. You said you are hopefully [00:05:00] breaking ground pretty soon. Uh, the new 3,200 square foot building. What problem does it solve?

Teri Laney: Um, ultimately it's going to make this enable us to expand and grow this area in here and make it better for the clients.

Um, the warehouse area that we have. That there is, um, is pretty full all the time. There's, um, sometimes the freezer and the cooler is, um, maxed out and so the warehouse on across the alley will, um, have space for most of the food and it will have a large drive in cooler and freezer. It gives us more, um, more space, more area for God, provide food to.

To meet the needs of the clients. Um, [00:06:00] the several years ago we tried to build, um, get going on the property over there and, um, there was too many city codes, so we were not able to, so we put on the back burner. Obviously it wasn't God's time for that yet. So, um, we, so we can't, we couldn't move the client area over there.

To the, the new building. So we have to, um, move the most of the food over there and then remodel this plant area here. So that was, I think that was the main, the main purpose.

Brent Dowlen: I understand that the cooler slash freezer is gonna be large enough to actually run a forklift in and out of, so that will span this space a lot.

Just walking by the one in here. Um, why does that benefit? You guys so much to be able to load with a forklift. Actually,

Teri Laney: the vol, um, [00:07:00] most of the workers here are volunteer. The, um, the drivers that pick up the food, um, the one that gets our commodity food outta Moses Lake. The Moses Lake Food Bank is our contractor. And the, the gentleman that picks up our food, um. Does it primarily by himself, he has to hand unload it, um, off of the pallet and into the freezer or the cooler.

The, the dry stuff obviously doesn't, but in the freezer cooler, he has to unload it by hand, as do the rest with our other, um, unknownly paid employees. Um, and. Everybody else is volunteer and they have to, they have to work hard to get everything unload. The, the Walmart, the Aikens, the um,

uh, [00:08:00] Northwest Harvest or some of the main, um, places that we get from. And it all has to be, um, unloaded here.

Brent Dowlen: Pause here. So how much funding is still needed to actually make this project come all the way through, you know, off the top of your head?

Teri Laney: Well, our goal is 600,000 just for phase one. And I, I think that was, um, generous.

Um, because some of the work is going to be volunteered, it sounds like, and come off of the bid, but, um. But I think we're pretty close to halfway. I, I think we just have just about 300,000. Um,

Brent Dowlen: what happens if it doesn't come through in the next fundraiser or two?

Teri Laney: I don't have any worry that it's not gonna get [00:09:00] here by the time we need it. The, um, it sounds like we have enough for the. Um, we're getting the building up and getting the, the trusses and the, the roof on.

Brent Dowlen: Mm-hmm.

Teri Laney: And then, um, we're, we've applied for a grant that will, um, hopefully enable us to get the freezer and the cooler and, um, if we have to wait a little bit for the.

Rest of the inside then, then that's fine. I'm not worried that we will, but if we need to, that's fine.

Brent Dowlen: So the critical structure is we're, we're pretty confident in that. It's just finishing touches that is pushing through. You said y'all got a grant for the freezer and stuff?

Teri Laney: We applied for one.

Brent Dowlen: Okay.

We'll pray that that one works [00:10:00] out.

Teri Laney: Thank you.

Brent Dowlen: God is good. So he'll. Take care of those needs for the Golden Giving Night. It's come, coming, that's next week, right?

Teri Laney: Yes.

Brent Dowlen: Sorry, I have to, I run through a lot of announcements in my head every day, so, uh, I wanna make sure I got that right. So that's next week.

What can people expect at the Golden Giving dinner night And, um,

Teri Laney: fun music, good food, lots of. Great donated items.

It, um, it's a silent auction. Um, the community, including Alfreda, has been, um, very generous and helpful.

Brent Dowlen: Okay,

Teri Laney: well, Moses Lake too, I should say The Harold has a part, um, in the auction as well.

Brent Dowlen: So [00:11:00] what's with the Irish thing?

Teri Laney: It's getting close to, um, St. Patrick's,

Brent Dowlen: St.

Teri Laney: Patrick's Day. So, yeah, that's all we missed Valentine's Day.

So, um, and originally it was gonna be Christmas and then it got pushed a couple times, so now it was closer to St. Patrick's Day.

Brent Dowlen: Okay. I, I was curious when it landed on the Iris team was like, huh?

Teri Laney: Yeah. No, that's it.

Brent Dowlen: And so I see there's Live Entertainment by Harvey. Carmen, is that correct?

Teri Laney: Um, I think it's just a dj. I think that was misinterpreted, but, but yes. That's

Brent Dowlen: okay. I, I was gonna ask, I was like, I, I don't know the name. So

what, how directly does the fundraisers for the new building fund. Are we filling the leftover gaps? Is that the whole goal?

Teri Laney: [00:12:00] Um,

I don't know. I leave that up to God. All of the, all of the funding that comes in, it's been, um, it's been really good. It's been great. I, I. Really haven't had to work very hard for any of this. I haven't done hardly anything. Um, so between the, the community

and, and God, it's, it's just coming in.

Brent Dowlen: That's awesome. What would you say, someone who's on the fence about it attending event?

Teri Laney: Um, just come anyway. You wouldn't be disappointed.

Brent Dowlen: What keeps you motivated to keep doing this?[00:13:00]

Teri Laney: Um.

The Lord brought me here, handed me the job when I needed it, needed something to do and has enabled me to do everything I needed to do from, um, the difficult things. To caring and loving homeless people to a great volunteer support. His favor and blessing has been through each and every part of it,

so it's just been a great blessing. The whole thing for 13 years.

Brent Dowlen: So it's clearly the right [00:14:00] place for you to be. What keeps you on?

Teri Laney: Yes.

Brent Dowlen: If you could ask the community for one thing right now to help with the work here, what would it be?

Teri Laney: I think it would be to come to this event so that the, the, the volunteers and the, the support and the people that have given to it and worked.

Hard for, it would feel blessed and like their work was worth something. The energy and the part that they put into this event would, um, that they would feel like it was worthwhile.

Brent Dowlen: It's validation for that,

Teri Laney: yeah. For the,

Brent Dowlen: all the hard work people are putting into it.

Teri Laney: Yeah. Yeah,

Brent Dowlen: I can see that. That would, that would be it. When, when you put in that much effort on something, it's, it's nice [00:15:00] to see that people respond to it.

Teri Laney: Mm-hmm.

Brent Dowlen: And are behind it. So that makes a lot of sense. How can, besides just attending the event, so obviously everybody needs attend the event, we'll cover that.

Besides just sending the event. How can people take action now? Help out.

Teri Laney: If they see a need, then they refer people to, to us, to the food bank. Uh, we're on Facebook, um, we have email. I respond to all of those, all the messages, Facebook and the emails, and our phone works most of the time.

Brent Dowlen: Teri, let me wrap it up with this. If every [00:16:00] household in our community gave just $10, what would that do for helping the community field food bank?

Teri Laney: That's a big question. I am. I am not.

I'm really sure. I already feel pretty blessed and supported by God in the community.

So maybe I would dream bigger as far as what I can give them. And, um, I already buy fresh produce. Maybe I could give them more fresh produce or maybe I could make, um. So remodel on the inside better, um, make an, an area here for them to get in out of the weather, um, [00:17:00] a little bit bigger.

Brent Dowlen: So we need to push this idea, get everybody to give $10 so you can dream bigger and see what I can do.

Teri Laney: Sure.

Brent Dowlen: Yeah. I like that idea.

Teri Laney: Sounds good.

Brent Dowlen: Let's dream bigger. Alright.