

Best Charitable Organization

THE RIVER FOOD PANTRY

2201 Darwin Rd., Madison WI 53704
(608) 442-8815

www.riverfoodpantry.org

The River is South Central Wisconsin's busiest food pantry. Services include free groceries and freshly prepared meals for pickup or delivery, online grocery orders, mobile meals, and emergency food lockers. The River also redistributes rescued food and resources to local partners to increase access while minimizing waste. Since 2006, The River has grown to serve over 2,500 people every week in pursuit of its vision: a fully nourished community.

How long have you been in business? 17 years.

What makes you stand out from the competition? Chris Tuttle has been The River's Meal Manager since 2019. With 30 years of kitchen experience, Chris works very hard with our Meal Coordinator, Rachael Maynes, and volunteers to lead the production of over 2,000 freshly prepared to-go meals each week. These meals are offered at no cost for our clients to take home for each of their household members. To satisfy a wide array of preferences, Chris and his team create a new menu every week that includes meat and vegetarian options, along with a side salad and fresh fruit. The menu is determined based on what The River receives through food recovery and donations, as well as purchased food. The finished products are healthy, well-balanced, diverse, and delicious. And yes, these restaurant-quality meals are being prepared and distributed at a food pantry!

What's something your customers may not know about your business? More than a food pantry, The River does so much more than provide food:

- We offer other essentials that people need to be fully nourished, including hygiene items, cleaning supplies, diapers, formula, pet supplies, and other extras, like socks, depending on the donations we receive.

- We rescue food that would otherwise go to waste to feed more people. In 2022, The River recovered nearly 1.5 million pounds of food to nourish our community from over 50 local food retailers.

- We organize special community events every year, including Curbside Breakfast with the Bunny and a holiday gift program for hundreds of client families who cannot afford gifts for their children.

What brings customers back to your business? The top reasons clients come back to The River:

- Quality: In addition to nonperishable items, we focus on always providing fresh, healthy food, including fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy, special dietary items (e.g., gluten-free), culturally inclusive foods, and more.

- Frequency of services: The River invites households to receive groceries once a week and pick up to-go meals up to 4 days a week. For extra groceries, Pantry Express is also available on select Saturdays, which doesn't count towards weekly visits.

- Choice: We do our best to provide variety and to allow clients to choose their own groceries.

- Customer service: Our staff and volunteers have built meaningful relationships with our clients. Each day, we live out core values: respect, compassion, community, caring and generosity. Our clients know that they will be treated with respect and dignity at The River.

What makes your business a good place to work? Working at The River makes a difference in our community. Our team of 24 employees believe in The River's vision of achieving a fully nourished community. Benefits include group insurance plans, a retirement plan, paid holidays, paid wellness days, and paid time off (including birthdays and work anniversaries!). Bonus: employees receive free lunch every day prepared by our professionally trained chefs, like Chris, and volunteers!

What do you love most about having your business in this community? What we love most are the people we get to serve every day. Our clients come from all walks of life and for all reasons. It is a privilege to provide nourishment to our neighbors and their families.

What can customers expect when they walk through your doors? Our clients have the option to receive groceries from the comfort of their vehicle or from their home if they do not have transportation. Whether they use delivery or curbside pickup, our clients can expect excellent service with a smile. We listen and do our best to accommodate households' different needs because we realize that 'one size fits all' does not apply to hunger.

What does it mean to be voted Madison.com's People's Choice? The River has been voted Best Charitable Organization for the past three years, which has helped us in several ways. This award has significantly increased our visibility. It has helped solidify our reputation as a trustworthy local nonprofit for those who are seeking nutritional assistance, as well as those who wish to donate their time, resources, and/or dollars. The more support we receive, the more we can do to nourish our neighbors in need throughout Dane County. We are grateful that so many people in our community voted The River for the 2023 awards in the categories of Best Charitable Organization, Best Customer

Service, AND Best Chef (Chris Tuttle). By shining a positive light on a food pantry, we believe these awards can help break down the stigma surrounding using food pantries, which is something we continuously fight for.

What are you most proud of? We are most proud of the dedication of our supporters, including volunteers, donors, partners, and clients who help so much to raise awareness of The River as a reliable resource. With the community's generosity, The River has grown from serving a handful of families to over 2,500 people every week in 17 years. By continuing to adapt, we have become a staple in the community for anyone facing food insecurity: children, seniors, veterans, families, people of color, people with disabilities or those who are homeless. We are nourishing Dane County together.

What are some of the things you do to give back to the community? One way we give back to the community is by providing the opportunity to serve others. We focus on providing our volunteers a meaningful experience that is fun and accessible for individuals and groups. Also, The River is the first and only redistribution organization (RDO) of Second Harvest Foodbank. As an RDO, The River can redirect food sourced from the food bank to other local organizations in need of support throughout Dane County. Our redistribution community partners receive regular donations of excess food and essentials (e.g., fresh produce, ready-to-eat meals, nonperishables, hygiene items) to reach those who do not access our pantry's services for various reasons. This initiative helps to increase access and to minimize waste.

How do you build trust with clients, patients, or customers? We build trust with our clients, volunteers, donors, and partners by treating them with respect and transparency. We believe feedback is a gift and we regularly ask for feedback so that we can continuously improve to better meet our stakeholders' needs. By listening and responding, we have been able to overcome obstacles to help more people in need. People also trust us to do the most with their donations. With only 5% in administrative costs, 95 cents of every dollar donated goes directly to those we serve.

What makes your business popular with families? In 2022, The River served 2.9 million pounds of food to 5,216 Dane County households. Families are able to access the food they need in a way that works best for them through our growing list of free services—curbside groceries, deliveries to the homebound, to-go meals for entire households, mobile meals for low-income neighborhoods, an online ordering system, an express pantry session on select Saturdays, and our new emergency food lockers.

FAVORITES:

Dane County Humane Society
St. Vincent De Paul

happiness and satisfaction. It makes me feel like my hard work is being noticed by the people I want to take care of. Thank you SO much!

What are you most proud of? I started selling cars "Black Friday" of 2010, and worked in one of our service departments starting April of 2006 prior to that. It's been an incredible experience and I cannot believe how quickly it has gone! When my family, friends, and repeat customers call me to help with a vehicle purchase, it shows that they trust me and put their faith in me to make sure they get what they want. I am proud that they believe in me!

What is your secret to good customer service? By putting myself in the customer's shoes, it gives you a perspective on how people would like to be treated when making such a large and important purchase. I am an incredibly empathetic person, (almost to a fault!) and live by the golden rule of "treating others as one wants to be treated." I have also been blessed with an incredibly strong memory that helps me remember even the smallest details of each transactions. When you remember people, they feel valued. I like to feel valued too!

How do you build trust with customers? Treating customers with respect and honesty not only helps sell cars, but it's the right way to do things! Following through on promises, timely follow-up, and showing genuine care, concern, and respect are a big part of how I do things on a daily basis.

What makes your business popular with families? I come from a big family. My wife and I also have three small children and we are always on the go! When a young family comes in, I immediately see myself, my wife, and our kids in those people. Putting someone in a car that they plan to drive their family from here, there, and everywhere, requires a car that is not only safe, but reliable. Working for Zimbrick allows me to check off both of those boxes immediately!

FAVORITES:

Brian Olson - Zimbrick VW Middleton
Renee Gonzales - Zimbrick Honda

Best Chef

CHRIS TUTTLE THE RIVER FOOD PANTRY

2201 Darwin Road, Madison WI 53704
(608) 442-8815

www.riverfoodpantry.org

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Local: Best Charitable Organization

FAVORITES:

Sam Millan - Buck & Honey's
David Heide - Ollie's Madison

Best Chiropractor

JIM SPENNETTA SPENNETTA FAMILY CARE CHIROPRACTIC

6810 Watts Road
Madison, WI 53719
(608) 273-2225

www.ImFeelingGood.com

We provide Chiropractic and Physical Therapy combined together to provide a better and faster recovery from auto accidents and work injuries. We also provide treatment for anyone with neck, back arm or leg pain as well as provide relief from headaches and dizziness. No referral is necessary

How long have you been in business? 29 years - Spennetta Family Care and 32 years - Dr. Spennetta.

What makes you stand out from the competition? We provide the therapies and chiropractic in the same clinic so patients do not have to travel to multiple clinics. We get people in right away because nobody should have to live with pain. Dr. Spennetta has been selected as America's Top Chiropractor in spinal trauma numerous times and won the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Whiplash Resource group. He has personally treated over 1500 auto accidents.

What's something your customers may not know about your business? My passion for helping people comes from my own experience with chiropractic helping when nothing else did.

What brings customers back to your business? We treat all of our patients like family. Also, we are not afraid to take on the difficult cases.

What makes your business a good place to work? We are friendly and fun. Healthcare should never be scary or boring.

What do you love most about having your business in this community? I was born and raised here and always considered this home.

What can customers expect when they walk through your doors? Honest answers about how to get rid of your pain

What does it mean to be voted Madison.com's People's Choice? It is a great honor to be recognized. There are a lot of great Chiropractors out there, so to be selected as a favorite is something very special to me.

What are you most proud of? All the patients I have helped over the years. Not many doctors can say they get invited to weddings, graduations and family get togethers. This is why we treat patients as family.

What is your secret to good customer service? Be friendly. Always over deliver.

What are some of the things you do to give back to the community? Time, energy, good health and I volunteer at free clinics when I can.

How do you build trust with clients, patients, or customers? Under promise but over deliver. We never set unrealistic expectations

What makes your business popular? We keep it fun and friendly here. Doctors should not be robots in white coats, they should be caring, funny and help people.

What makes your business popular with families? Our patients have ranged from 2 weeks old (with colic) to 96 and highly active.

FAVORITES:

Dr. Michael Presser - Pure Wellness
Chiropractic

Brett Hoeft - LSM Chiropractic

Best Dentist

DR. WILLIAM GRAF - FIRST CHOICE DENTAL MIDDLETON

7780 Elmwood Ave #108
Middleton, WI 53562
(608) 836-1020

www.firstchoicedental.com

FAVORITES:

Dr. Rob Bradley - First Choice Dental
Madison West

Dr. David Gundersen - First Choice Dental
Fitchburg

Best Dermatologist

KEREN WELTMAN - SSM HEALTH

<https://www.ssmhealth.com>

FAVORITES:

Apple Bodemer, - UW Health
Deborah Marble - UW Health

Best Esthetician

MELISSA HOEFLING KNEADED RELIEF DAY SPA & WELLNESS

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