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WHO IS ZESTOS? *More than a food pantry or shelter...*

The Zestos family consists of many faithful volunteers, reaching out in the name of Jesus, living out their faith as they care for needs right here at home. We do this by providing food, clothing, shelter and a variety of other resources, by helping people access the available services they need, and by sharing the good news of abundant life in Christ Jesus.

A key function of Zestos is encouraging believers to step outside their personal comfort zone and experience the joy of reaching out to a lost soul with the love of Jesus. We can still be found knocking on the door of a family in need, armed with nothing more than a willing spirit and a bag of groceries. Although it's not easy to knock on that first door, this kind of faith in action is life-changing for us and our neighbor. What could be more important than this?

I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. John 4:35

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

From the Director

There are few things I enjoy more than a good buffet. Pizza Ranch is one of my favorites. No waiting and no experimenting—just pick out whatever you like and load up! Have you ever wondered what happens to all the left-over food at the end of the day? Zestos is what happens to it...all over Northwest Iowa.

The fate of more and more wasted food is no longer a dumpster. Zestos currently reclaims enough unused food from restaurants, cafeterias and other food vendors to supply a substantial food distribution each month. Our objective is to eliminate waste and hunger by saving perfectly good food from a dumpster or landfill and getting it into the hands of those who need it most. This grass roots effort has evolved right before our eyes from a simple prayer at a kitchen table into thousands of meals each month at "The Shepherd's Table" and other gatherings along with food distribution through partnering churches and Christian organizations. Here are just a few reasons why this work is so important.

- Eliminating waste. America has become a culture of waste, throwing out more than 40% of our food. This is enough uneaten food to feed 25 million hungry people. Meanwhile, surrounded by our waste, more than 49 million Americans struggle to put food on the table. By using food that is otherwise wasted, we are tapping into a virtually endless supply of healthy food for those in need.
- Engaging believers in Christian outreach. The Shepherd's Table and other food distribution efforts increase awareness and compassion for needs (awareness + compassion = action).
- Building relationships. Becoming intentional about

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Thanks for Zestos!

Our family was blessed to have a helping hand in time of need ever since I met Rod in 2011. We were embarrassed to ask for help from a Christian Ministry around the area, because we were afraid of being judged. Ever since we became connected with Zestos, our family has become more aware of God's presence in our lives.

Zestos made us feel comfortable, being provided a place to stay and food on our table. Not being judged really allowed us to breathe and focus more on our relationship with Christ.

Certain circumstances happened that didn't make Zestos look good in our conservative community for making the choice to help us. However to this day, we still felt the Christian love of forgiveness and understanding.

We need to remember that helping someone and showing love, should not be based upon risk or what others may think, but ultimately to spread Christ's love and that is exactly what Zestos did. -Anonymous

We continue to need financial support for our meat processing fund. Could you help?

My Gift for Processing

_____ \$50 - 1/2 pork _____ \$200 - 1/2 beef
_____ \$100 - full pork _____ \$400 - full beef

Name: _____

Address: _____

Zestos Mission:

To feed the hungry and seek the lost as we learn to live by the Master's example of love for one another.

Welcome to the Shepherd's Closet!

by Sarah Hofmeyer

I grew up rummaging through thrift stores for clothes, fun jewelry, or a fresh decoration for my room. I loved it - finding something nobody else could, something that was a little worn, but all mine. All this and more can be found at The Shepherd's Closet and we are happy to announce that we'll be moving to a new location formerly known as The Fashionette, 35 Central Avenue Northwest in Le Mars. The store will officially open in October of 2015. The previous owner, Cliff McMurry, said "I am very pleased the building will be used by a group with such a humanitarian mission. I feel very good about it." The new location will have more space but much will remain the same. There will always be time to listen, to share a hug, a prayer, or just an encouraging word. The coffee is on, and free take home food is always available for those in need.

The history of Zestos' mission to provide clothing and basic necessities has been around for several years. It all began in Orange City and then later in Le Mars with the "Zestos Flea For All" a place where people came for fellowship and to browse donations flea market style. These events provided the startup capital and inventory for both stores. I can remember the flurry of people all day - there were people eating donuts while testing out the couches, checking out the puppies and just exploring a parking lot full of stuff. There were also people like myself who went through each piece of clothing for a good find. The whole time, I can remember the feeling wasn't just a shopping excursion, it felt like there was community coming together for the start of something very special.

After about a year in our original Shepherd's Closet location in Orange City, a new opportunity arose in historic downtown Alton - The OK Cafe. If you're from Northwest Iowa, you undoubtedly remember the hustle and bustle of this Cafe. I grew up getting milkshakes with dad there while listening to all the adults sit around and talk over their coffee. Everyone knew this would be a great new home for The Shepherd's Closet. In no time The Shepherd's Closet had moved to Alton and was open for business, with a freezer that has food available 24/7 for those in need and the office next door providing any additional assistance...and I still get to hear the adults talk over coffee on any weekday morning.

The continued growth of Zestos wouldn't be possible without the motivated, Christlike volunteers we've been blessed to have. Lyda De Jong spearheaded volunteering for The Shepherd's Closet in Orange City and Alton for as long as I can remember, and is now the manager of the Alton store. Lyda's favorite moment this past year was when "a teenage girl was in the store looking for a specific pair of shoes. She found it, and she turned to her mom and said, 'See, I knew God would help me here.' We both started crying." Lyda has had help from many volunteers, but she specifically mentions the wonderful Jean Willett and Mary Pottebaum, who are "like turbos. They

stand out because they work together and you notice what they do." Every time I visit the Le Mars store, Sheri Rowe is hustling around to rearrange furniture and display the latest treasures. She recollected a specific moment with me where a woman came in wanting to donate all of her father's home. She said, "The woman was feeling pretty low, and Lynn (who normally runs the register) suggested we join hands and say a prayer. It was just very peaceful and needed. The woman calmed down, and she felt relieved. The ministry and fellowship at The Shepherd's Closet continues to grow."



The "Zestos Rescue" trailers are located just east of Dollar General in Orange City and behind the new store in Le Mars for convenient 24/7 charitable donation drop-off.

Furniture, clothing, housewares, appliances and other treasures are always welcome. These donations are used to raise money for ministry and to care for needs in the name of Jesus. Zestos provides free clothing and food distributions in partnership with churches throughout northwest Iowa. None of this would be possible without your help. When you get a chance, stop by to shop, drop off a donation or just to say hello. Everyone is always welcome!

From the Director *(continued from front)*

building relationships and caring for the spiritual needs which become apparent as we provide for the number one tangible need of struggling families: food.

Recently, we have discovered regulatory issues that could interfere with this ongoing work. It seems that despite volumes of regulation, there are no common sense guidelines for the gathering and distribution of food on behalf of those in need. This grey area causes "fear to donate" on the part of responsible food vendors, resulting in massive, government mandated food waste daily at a dumpster near you.

We must not look the other way. It's time to find our voice and speak up on behalf of those that are seldom heard. We can build a public awareness that will get this important issue the attention and action it deserves. Together, we can:

- Change the regulatory landscape for compassion centered ministry.
- Provide a choice other than government mandated waste for food vendors.
- Tap into an endless, generous supply of healthy food for those in need.
- Exercise our religious freedom to "love one another."

Zestos is up for the challenge, but as always, we need your prayerful support, your financial support and we need to know that you stand with us! This process will require many prayers, many dollars and many voices. Please consider the ways you can help. Thank you for caring about the physical and spiritual wellbeing of your neighbor. Watch this space! We'll keep you posted!

Love, peace and goodwill, Rod