

# What's Brewing | 3G Food Pantry

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Food pantry, community, relationships, calling, Mission Prayer, food, serve, volunteers

## SPEAKERS

Tami Enos-Borg, Bob Borg, Blake Smith

### **Blake Smith** 00:27

Hello Project Zion Podcast listeners. This is your host, Blake Smith. And we are here for another episode of What's Brewing. I'm really excited because I'm here with special guests who are really deeply involved in mission, Tami Enos-Borg and Bob Borg, from the Northwest Congregation in Des Moines. And we're going to be talking with them about their ministry in Runnells, Iowa. So hi, Tami and Bob.

### **Tami and Bob** 00:53

Hi

### **Blake Smith** 00:55

What we'd like to do before we get into the heart of the conversation is to have our guests tell our listeners a little bit about themselves so they can get to know you better. So if you don't mind, how about each of you take a couple of minutes to do that?

### **Tami Enos-Borg** 01:07

Well, I'm Tami, just a little bit about me is, I've been in Runnells for about 33 years. I'm a member of the library board in Runnells as well as I hold the office of priest at the Community of Christ Church. I do a lot of things for my work, friends. And, Bob and I have a combined family of six children. And we just celebrated our 15 year anniversary.

### **Blake Smith** 01:34

Well, happy anniversary.

### **Bob Borg** 01:37

Thank you, hey, well, I'm Bob. And I've going to turn 65 this month, and the life i've spent has had ups and downs. I was in a very bad spot when God sent me an angel and Tami picked me up and helped me see the light and and we've been happily working together these past 15 years. And like she said, we have kids, I like to read, I love music. We take care of the house, we take care of the pantry. I'm also on the library board. The most important thing though, is trying to keep up with Tami when she wants to go shopping.

### **Blake Smith** 02:21

Well, of course, I have only known you guys for a brief period, I am really glad that I got the opportunity to come out to Guthrie Grove and share with you guys in a weekend and get to know you a little bit. And just from that little bit of time, I would say probably Tami has her work cut out for her. And 15 years is quite the accomplishment. No... it's just the energy that you guys have. I was just captured by that. And so I'm really thankful for you guys being willing to come and share your story with us here at Project Zion Podcast because I just get so encouraged when I hear people talk about with passion, the mission that they're doing. And it's encouraging for me in the church. I know, we have a lot of congregations across the church who are small and feel like there's not much they can do. And so to hear these stories is just so helpful for them. And as a Mission Center president also trying to encourage our membership to engage in mission, it's encouraging for me to be able to become friends with folks like you guys. So again, thanks for being here. I'm going to give you guys kind of the floor and I don't know how you guys will want to answer this, you know, taking turns about who's going to answer what but if you would tell us about this 3G Pantry that you guys have started and that has been from what I understand, in some ways somewhat consuming in your life but in a positive way.

**Tami Enos-Borg** 04:01

Well, to start off with three G pantry stands for God's generous gifts. And it is as it says it is a food pantry. It's in Runnells its downtown runnels. runnels, I don't know Bob Reynolds is a town of ...

**Bob Borg** 04:19

450 people. So it's a little town.

**Tami Enos-Borg** 04:23

It's a little town. So, you can imagine when I say in this smack dab in the middle of town, it's not a big metropolis. So, it's we have a little building and we serve anyone, everyone. People that come to our door. People that call us regardless of where they're at geographically, we serve, we have no boundaries. There are no boundaries. So now, if it's far, far away, that might be a trouble getting stuff to people, but we would figure it out, because we've done that before. So we don't have any boundaries, we serve anybody and everybody. Let me see, we offer, we offer lots of stuff. We offer, we always have freezers full of meat, we always have items that will make meals. So, in other words, you're not going to just come and get a can of beans, you're going to get something to go with that can of beans, whether it's a meal to make pasta, or it's a meal, where you have fish, we always have meals that you can make from the products and the goods that you get from the pantry. And we usually try to give anybody Oh, in the vicinity of three to five days, [Bob: Three to five days of food] three to five days worth of food. So they're, it's, we're not a grocery store. But we try to get them through to the next through their hardship, that happens to all of us. And we want to be that place that they can go feel comfortable, and knowing that they will get help. No questions asked. We just want to be there for them. Let me see, how often do we operate? That's a tricky one. Because we're 24/7. We both work full time jobs. I work at the hospital, downtown Des Moines. Bob is a warehouse manager and wears a lot of other hats. But we have our banner, it lists our phone number, and we live about a minute away. So if somebody calls and they're in, you know dire straits, they just need a little help. And it's in between dates of the pantry, then we go down and we serve them. The dates of our pantry are two times a month, per se, again, you know, we're available anytime they need us. But we serve on the third Thursday, from 5:30 to 6:30. And then we serve on the third Saturday from 9am to 2pm. And then I'm gonna let Bob talk a little bit about what

our, what our, what we call what our pantry week looks like. And first of all, before I let Bob take the floor, how large is our team, we have myself, Bob, and my son, Justin, who are our three core people. And we have a nice group of volunteers that love what we do just as much as we love what we do. So, it's very easy for us to call upon them and say, Hey, pantry is Thursday night. Do you want to come and hang out? Kind of a joke is, "it's a party at the pantry." You come, and we have a really, really good time. So, I'm gonna let Bob take over and talk about our pantry week.

**Bob Borg 08:21**

We spend the the weeks prior to our open days collecting we watch the food bank, we have a 501(c)3 corporation. So we have a relationship with the Iowa Food Bank and we Tami religiously, watches the menu and we will spot, here's the time. We'll create an order. We can add to that order and usually, pantry week, we'll go collect something. We've picked up loads as much as 1200 pounds on the Wednesday before pantry. Then so we'll show up in the pantry, we'll put that away we'll stock the shelves. That's kind of an ongoing process through the month. On Pantry Thursday, we're open, we usually get about half of our clientele come through. We create a menu of items. We don't want people to take a can of baked beans if they don't want make beans. So, that the menu is laid out so that people can look at that and, well I need the green beans, and I want the spaghetti, and I want the hamburger. And that way I can make a spaghetti meal and there'll be pasta sauce and the other things that go with that. So, people can select what they want. Not everybody likes everything. So we give people a chance to take what they want.

**Tami Enos-Borg 09:40**

And those menus that he's talking about, I create those every time because it's always different. because we get such a variety that from month to month it's going to change. And so, I have those printed up and in the post office the pre, like the Wednesday of food pantry week. So, people can go to the post office, pick up a menu, fill out what they want, and then show up Thursday and right Thursday with either menu in hand, or they could take a menu, we have menus at the pantry as well. So that gives them like kind of a kind of, you know, an idea of what we're offering this month. So maybe if they're going to go to the grocery store, and you know, they need other things, they don't have to worry about picking up hamburger because they're going to get it from the pantry, or spaghetti sauce because they can get that at the pantry. So that's always a preliminary thing before they come to the pantry on Thursday or Saturday. Okay, take it away Bob.

**Bob Borg 10:48**

So Tami gives a lot of thought to that. And, we present that out ahead of time. Thursday, we'll serve the clients. We have, usually two or three volunteers come in. And, as Tami says, it's very busy, we have a senior apartment, three or four blocks away, and they don't always have the ability to drive around. So for that particular group of people, we take menus up and deliver them to their doors. So they have an opportunity to fill them out. We'll drop those off on Thursday. One Thursday, we had enough people helping Tami that I ran up. And when I came back, there was standing room only in the pantry. There were so many people inside I was just floored. And so that was a good thing that the crew and front, Tami will spend time talking to each individual finding out a little bit of history, working with them. She remembers everybody's name and what's going on. And there's lots of fun and conversation and laughter. It's a real, sociable environment. Friday, when pantry is done, we'll go home exhausted.

Friday, we'll come home from work, stop at the senior apartments, pick up the orders that they have, from their menus, go down to the pantry, and fill the dry goods and stage them. So that Saturday morning, when we show up an hour before opening, we can pull the frozen goods together, refrigerated goods, set them together so that later after the initial rushes come by I and usually Justin or sometimes other volunteers will, will take that food up to each apartment and give it to those individuals. That the when things calm down or back and forth from the back to the front bringing up stock and and it's just a real flow that we've established over the three years that we've been doing this. And when we're done, we're exhausted. But it's a really good kind of exhausted, we feel very full of love and blessing. And we try and open each pantry with a prayer. We thank God for the opportunity to serve other people. And he gives us the gift of sending people to us so that we can bless them with our service and we really see it that way. We're trying to extend the blessings of our own love out in the society.

**Tami Enos-Borg** 13:37

That's good. Yeah, we, you know, we we do. It is it is a lot of work. And it's a lot of organization. And it's a lot of fun.

**Bob Borg** 13:49

It's labor of love.

**Tami Enos-Borg** 13:51

It truly is. It truly is. Um, we started the pantry.

**Blake Smith** 13:57

Yeah, Tami, I'm sorry. Before you get there. I want to follow up on a couple things. I'm just in awe of some of the things that you're doing. And just want to ask a little bit about that. Well, first of all, I appreciate that you said that there were no boundaries, because that would be one of my questions, kind of what are the, what are the expectations? Do you happen to know like, what's the farthest somebody has come to get served, to be served by the pantry?

**Bob Borg** 14:23

We've had a couple people from over 50 miles away. Usually there are our sign is right on the center of town. They'll be coming through town we've had people come through, go up, come around the block and come back and say hey, I'm in dire need. I'm on my way home. We don't have any food. Can you help me? And of course we can. We have had people come we have some regulars that come from 30-35 miles away. There's a pair of sisters, one who lives locally and her sister lives out about 30 miles away and she comes picks up her sister and brings her, and so, there's family connections. So, yeah, distance, distance is not is not a problem. We just if, if you were from anywhere from California to New York, and you needed to stock up your cooler, and you stopped, and we would help you.

**Blake Smith** 15:14

That's, that's fantastic. That's fantastic. I really, really love hearing that. The other thing that captured me that I just I think, you know, the depth of thought that you guys put into this is really exciting for me. So the menus at the post office, being thoughtful about how people can plan for their week when they

know this is coming up. Is that your primary source of advertising as well? Or is it word of mouth? Do you ... how do you get the word out to new folks?

**Tami Enos-Borg 15:44**

Well, usually, I mean, we have a Facebook presence. And so everybody knows, because on the banner on the building says, who we are when we're open, and then again, my cell phone number, my personal cell phone number. And then so people driving by whether it's, you know, like Bob said, coming home from work, going to work and they drive by and they go, Oh my gosh, there's a pantry there. So that helps. It is word of mouth. We have a lot of people that, like the senior citizens center is not too far from the pantry. It's kind of across the street. And so I'm sure there's, I'm sure there's a lot of talk about, oh, hey, did you go to the pantry this month? You know, so a lot of stuff is word of mouth. And then again, my I would probably say the Facebook presence is probably ...

**Bob Borg 16:37**

For advertising really, we push out posts on Facebook, they it's pantry day, remember to come visit us, that type of thing. In terms of gathering new people, we've found our church family, there are connections with people that go from all over the metropolitan area. And, and when a friend at church recognizes a friend of theirs in need, they'll recommend us, and we've had several people referred to our organization through the church family, there are a couple of instances I'm aware of where somebody who's been to our pantry, liked it went back to their part of town, and one person came to me and said, "Well, we have a little pantry but it's never very good. And they've been closed. I heard you are a good pantry we came out is that okay?" Yes, that's okay. We love you. We want you to be here. That is all right. And we found we were concerned when we started that people would feel conspicuous. I don't want to have to use the pantry I'd rather go without. They said that they would feel uncomfortable and and I've been to pantries where it's like, formalized, take a box, pick one off the shelf, one off of that shelf and, and that just didn't fit our vision of taking care of people. We want people to have the opportunity to be people, to have preferences, to make choices, to... we have some people that like the dry beans and they want those. We have some people that ate the dried beans and they don't want those and, and so they have an opportunity to select what they want. And we listen we try to listen we have gathered...So, toiletries we don't get to do a lot. We don't get that at a discount. But we've heard you know I this there's a particular gentleman that always needs razors, and shaving cream. So we always make sure we have that on hand we have an old soaps and shampoos and toothbrushes and some of those basic needs, we try and stock toilet paper and sometimes we get paper towels and wipes and things. Occasionally we have access to diapers. We'll bring those in. Most of our clientele are older. But every now and then we get a young family that just needs everything. And so we try to be prepared for whatever comes our way. And sometimes when the Animal Rescue League has the opportunity we get down there and pick up dog food and cat food.

**Tami Enos-Borg 19:16**

Our furry friends, our furry family.

**Bob Borg 19:19**

We've got pets that need food too. We try and meet all the needs that we that we reasonably can.

**Tami Enos-Borg 19:25**

We one of an instance just real quick is there was a lady that one of the girls from church saw that there was a need there. And this lady came out with her daughter. And she said, there's just so much stuff I can't eat and I said, Well you tell me what you can eat and we'll see what we can find for you because it's a lot easier to do that than to go through the gamut of what we have and her you know so. So we found out what she liked to eat, we were able to meet her needs. And then I placed an order of stuff that she could eat. Not that she would be the only one that would be able to eat that stuff. But with her in mind, knowing that I probably maybe wouldn't have ordered a case of ground chicken. But I know that she can eat that. And she, you know, she'll make chicken tacos and whatever. So, you know, it's those kinds of things that you do have to listen, you do have to pay attention. And, shoot, there's been times when people have come and they've given me their list, and it's got like, five items on it. And I really give them a hard time. I'm like, come on, you mean, you don't want any of this awesome tuna? What about this salmon, you know, so a lot of times they come in thinking they're gonna have maybe a little box, and they go out with a sack and a box, and usually an ice cream bar in their hand or something. But I want people to know, there is no shame, there is no judgment. We're who we are. And we want that we want to meet them where they're at. And we don't want them to feel negative.

**Bob Borg 21:20**

The goal. My goal is to hug everybody that comes in. Some people don't like to be hug, so I just ...well. But the I want, I want people to feel like family. And just last month, we had a gentleman come in, he'd never been there before. And you know, he kind of stood in the corner, and he spoke softly. And by the time he left, I helped him carry his goods out and, and he thanked me for making him feel so comfortable. And we shared a great big hug. It was just part of the resonance of loving community, loving people, letting people. There are, people seem to want to join the community, they're afraid of being hurt, emotionally and being talked down to we try not to we consciously try to love everybody and to treat them as though their family and, and make them our family. We consider our pantry clientele our congregation, if you will. [Tami: that's our congregation] that's our church, we take care of people, and you don't have to be in dire need. If you broke your arm, and you had to lay off work, and so you only get 60% of your pay for eight weeks, you might have a hardship, you may have had an unexpected bill come up' your car might have blown up. So where are you... Where do you get... you're robbing Peter to pay Paul? Well, we can help fill in, we can take care of some of the food part of it. And that's, no shame, that happens to everybody, that happens to us. Things happen. And we want to be there for everyone and in all classes of society. That's important.

**Blake Smith 23:09**

Well, I can certainly testify for our listeners that Bob and Tami are loving people and that Bob does love to hug. And as a hugger myself, I think that's wonderful. But I, for the listeners who can't see Bob, as we're talking here, he did a very hesitant air hug for those who don't like to hug so you can feel safe, he will love you no matter what you might want to really, really, really want to hug you. But I appreciate that, you know what I hear through you guys sharing, and that I so deeply appreciate having volunteered at a number of pantries is just the holistic way you guys look at this, that it's it's not just about giving them a bag of food and sending them on their way. There's, there's a relationship and there's deep care and concern. There's listening to the needs of the individuals, even a willingness to

provide pet food when necessary. I hear so many people say well, they're if they don't have money to feed themselves, why do they have pets. But, as a pet owner, knowing how much joy having a pet brings to me, I couldn't deny that to anybody. So, I just want to pick up on that and acknowledge my appreciation for what you guys do in that, because it sounds like just a great place to go and be, even if you think you don't need food or even if you are ashamed or feel like you should be ashamed for needing food, it sounds like you guys just create an incredibly comfortable place. And so, thank you for that. I want to ask one real quick question before we move on to how you guys got started. You mentioned a Facebook presence. What is the name of the Facebook page? We'll make sure we put that in our show notes as well. In case people want to go look you up.

**Tami Enos-Borg** 25:05

3G Food Pantry.

**Blake Smith** 25:07

It's under three G food pantry.

**Tami Enos-Borg** 25:08

Yeah, it's under 3G. Yep. And it's I think it's probably the only nonprofit in Runnells, Iowa. So, there's a couple others. But yeah, it's under 3G Food Pantry. Yeah.

**Blake Smith** 25:22

Well, that'll be easy to find great, easy to find. Well, I interrupted you earlier, you're going to talk about how you got started. And I'm just really interested to hear you know, how you got started. And what was the sense of call, because I know that you guys have done, obviously, with your team, being the two of you and your son in terms of your full-time people, but then your volunteers, this is something that you guys I know, felt called to do and have made significant sacrifices. So tell us that story.

**Tami Enos-Borg** 25:52

Well, okay, um, we started it in April of 2021. The ball was kind of rolling before that, quite a while before that. But when I went to Bob, and told him that I wanted to start a pantry, he wanted to know if I was insane [Blake: What?!] He wanted to know if I was insane. So, and to be honest, it was an idea that came to my mind. But it came to my mind through a lot of prayer. A lot of, you know, meditating on just what I really wanted out of this. And it's not really, and it turned into not what I wanted out of it. But, it turned out to what can I give others by serving them. The mission prayer was so instrumental in, in getting the wheels in motion. Talk about granting me courage to risk something new. You know, that was just an eye-opening part of the prayer. Becoming a blessing of, of God's love and peace. It just spoke to me. So, it went off. And it just is what we're doing. And I started off with, and of course, this was during the pandemic. So this was during COVID. And we, at first, we did kind of the pre made boxes, just because people could not really come in to the pantry. And so we lined boxes out on the curb, and then when people came up, we would ask them, you know, for the perishables Do you want hamburger? Do you want, you know? And so then we would pull that for them? Yeah, we had gloves and masks, and there wasn't a lot of hugging going on, because that was not a good thing to be doing. The desire was there. But it wasn't to kind of, you know, it wasn't good to be really doing that. But that's when it all started was, we gave out Easter boxes. Around early April, early April, we gave out Easter

boxes and had a little ham and some green beans and just brownie mix, just a cute little Easter meal that would serve a nice, a family, not a huge family but a family. And that started the ball rolling. But I will tell you we have, and Bob will attest to this, we have a cement slab that's outside of our building. And for the longest time, Blake, you're gonna think, oh my gosh, you guys are absolutely insane. We would sit on this slab and wave to people because they didn't know what we were there for. You know, we would wave to people and they would wave and like look at us like what are you people doing, but it now we don't have time to even go out to even look at the slab anymore. We're that busy. So, April of 2021 was our kickoff. And we just celebrated our third year anniversary at the pantry. [Yay]. Yay. So that's exciting and we're still going strong. So that was my draw. I don't even know it was a draw Blake. That was my... that was very, a very deep desire for me to help those in need because I had been helped in the past from food pantries, and I knew there was need out there and I knew that people needed a different way of looking at going to the pantry. I mean I, so it is, it is a party at the pantry. I mean we have fun. We do birthday club. We do gifts at Christmas time. We've got ladies at the church that will crochet little scrubbies for your pans. And that's a big hit, by the way, I'm telling you right now, but we give out gifts and we do, last month, well in April, we had a bunch of cake mixes that we did for a group project because people didn't celebrate their birthdays. Everybody who came to the pantry in April got a cake mix of their choice and frosting of their choice and they celebrated the pantry's birthday. And that was fun. That was a big hit. So we try to make like I said, people feel that we want people to feel the value that they really are. And we don't want them to be diminished by coming to visit our pantry. One little girl last month got an ice cream bar, a Haagen Dazs ice cream bar and some fun stuff. And she was just she was in heaven. You know, because she was I mean, I just singled her out and made her feel special. And that's what we want everybody to feel when they walk through our doors is a special

**Blake Smith 31:16**

I would feel very special if you got me a Haagen Dazs bar Tami

**Tami Enos-Borg 31:19**

Well, I would give you one in a heartbeat.

**Bob Borg 31:24**

Can I speak to this too? When we started, I was puttering around the house and my wife came to me and said, I think we're gonna, we're gonna start a pantry. And it was like, but okay, I knew Tami had been stewing around about something. And she had mentioned this desire and, and I watched her pray and reflected. And then so I decided, okay, you're my wife, I'll follow through. And I'm absolutely convinced that God spoke to her, that her inspiration came from the Divine. The gift to me, by participating in this have been totally amazing. I, I felt I've had felt for many years. I grew up in a Presbyterian Church I, I kind of moved away from going to church. Churches were, I didn't need that. There is a place for a church but not really for me. And when Tami picked me up from near death, actually and brought me into her life and, and through her into our church's life, I discovered that there really is a path in a church that makes sense that it is important for me to be able to leverage that knowledge to go do something. I was one of the people in the pews that would go, Well, I can throw 20 bucks in but what can I do? Right? You know, I'm not, I'm not gonna walk around the block and hand out flyers and, and dragging somebody into the church really didn't make sense to me. If you want to



come you're calm. If you don't, you're not going to, whether I bring you a flyer or not. And but to be a Christian, to be Christlike, requires, What did Christ do? How can I be like that? And Christ service. And he served without boundaries, he didn't care who you were, what your color was, what you thought, what religion you were, he served everyone. And this lesson has taught me that I can do that, too. I don't have to be rich. I don't have to be smart. I don't have to be anything but willing to take the steps to move forward and act on behalf of other people to love other people. That that the start, I was very cautious. And now I'm a holy body. And this is this is part of my life, this experience. So that's my little take on how we started. Wherever.

**Blake Smith 31:24**

I bet you would. Right, thanks, Bob. Tami, I want to just ask a question. For clarification. You mentioned part of this being part of a grow project. Can you just real quickly tell us what grow is?

**Tami Enos-Borg 34:45**

Um, we do GROW projects at church and I don't know what GROW stands for other than we do projects that will help others and I know what they like, for instance, we're doing a GROW project to where we do, we help with meals for one of the shelters in Des Moines, and this GROW project with the cake mixes where we were building birthday kits. So you got a cake mix, frosting, candles, and a card. And then you gave those out for people for their birthday so that they could have a birthday cake for their birthday that they might not be able to have if we weren't there to give them that. And so we had, we got together. We had, like a spring a Fall Retreat. We had a retreat last year. And we did. Everybody brought like, cake mixes and stuff. And so we built these little kits. And so that's what that GROW project was for them. Okay,

**Blake Smith 35:58**

All right, great. Great. Well, you guys are kind of peppered in a couple of stories from the time do you have a favorite story? Something that just really I mean, maybe when you're frustrated or tired and exhausted, I know the whole thing is, is incredibly empowering and gives you energy. But is there a story that stands out for you that you can reach back to and say, This is why, like, this is why we do it?

**Tami Enos-Borg 36:26**

Well, I've got a beautiful example. There's that Bab was talking about the sisters that come, and the one sisters initials or D.R. And so we call her doc, she's not a doctor, I would not go to her. But we call her doc. And there were times that she would come and I'd say, look, there's some, you know, chocolate chips, or there's this or there's that and she'd say, shoot, if I take those, that means I have to make something. And so we got on this kick of, well, yeah, you should make some cookies, and then bring them to the pantry next month. And we can have cookies. And so for, I don't know, probably three or four months straight, she would come in with a little box of goodies that we would eat at the pantry. And she had her DR on the on her little container to take home and she'd say, Now, this is my container. Don't let anybody take it. And I'd say, Okay, Doc. And so then the next month, I'd say okay, well, I'll hold on to it. Next month, what are you going to bring me I'll just exchange containers. So we did that for several months. And she and her sister have become like, family, a staple that I look so forward to seeing them. Because we laugh and we joke. And it's just, you know, it's just hard to explain when you find somebody that you just are happy to be around all the time. And Bob is right. I know,

everybody that comes into that pantry. And if they don't come, I'm worried. I want to know why I want to know, are they? Are they okay? They don't need to come? Or is something going on. And they need us to find you know, like, go out and find them. So that's my story, my dark story. I love cheese. I love all of them. But there's something crazy about that quirky lady and I just love her. I just love her.

**Blake Smith** 38:46

That's great.

**Tami Enos-Borg** 38:47

Bob's got a good story.

**Bob Borg** 38:49

My story... at the Senior Center, where we take our goods, there's a couple up there. And it was Thursday, we were delivering the menus and I parked the car and jumped out of the car. And all of a sudden one of them, she came running out of her apartment and said, Bob, Bob, Keith's in the hospital. And and so I was able, she came to me and she said, You're my pastor, I want I need you to pray for me, I need your help. And so I was able, I was thrust into the position of calming her down and talking about realistically about you know what, this is what's going on with Keith that you can express this you can hope for that. God doesn't magically fix things with Harry Potter's wand, but your love and faith can support that and we stood there and prayed and it was, it just floored me that somebody thought of me like that. And so through that period of time, where they had these struggles, I communicate with them every day, and, you know, we traded texts and phone calls and, and support and they're, they're fine now. They're, they're wonderful and carrying on. But the reward to me was learning that I, I can fill that role, and have been asked to fill that role. And it was a tremendous honor. And just, it almost scared me, it was just amazing. And so the blessing is that I've been called in and actually been called on. And it was nice.

**Blake Smith** 40:53

So how about lessons that you've learned? Are there any lessons that if we, with our listeners that they're considering doing something like this, that you've learned?

**Bob Borg** 41:03

We found that we have to be willing to change, when we first started, we had things, and we wanted people to come in and pick and then that yielded the menu idea. And so then we started making the list that people could pick from and then we found out that it was hard to pick the list if it was arranged in a certain in a certain manner. So we figured out a better way to arrange the list, so that we can fulfill the picking of product easier. We learned about some communication things we learned about how to have a 50(c)3,

**Tami Enos-Borg** 41:48

We learned about the expiration dates, if something says it's good until that, that's just a recommendation. And we've got a little cheat sheet that says, you know, like, if pasta says it's good, you know, from December 10th, 2023, it's good for like, maybe six months after that. So you know, all

these things that you don't think about that you need to think about when you have a pantry, because you know, you you don't want to get rid of things that are still usable. You know.

**Bob Borg 42:26**

We found out through the food bank, that a lot of times some of the stuff you get a store will have donated because they won't sell it beyond the use by date or the sell by date. However a canned good is good for two more years. So we learned how to read Julian codes on cans and to be conscientious about going through donations that people give that are our food products to go through. And was this person cleaning out their cupboard and this can's been there for five years? Or is it something more reasonably dated. We learned, I learned a lot about Tami's effort to watch the food bank and to plan out meal combinations. This and this in this go together to make a meal. This and this and this can be put together to make a meal. We've had to, we've found things at the food bank that we didn't know about. So we would take them home and try them. So that we can say oh, well, this bread. If you bake it like this that will come out. Well. If you bake it like that it won't be so well, unless you like crusty. And so we can relate. We'll use well, sometimes we need it too. So we'll use the products. So we can speak with authority that this is how this is how this can work. We have found the ability to find and accept the help of volunteers. There are people who will come out of the woodwork to help you we've had we had people show up and say you just need to call me you. You unloaded 1000 pounds. We were home. We shouldn't call us we would have come home. It's I can only be there on Saturday from nine to 11. Is that going to be enough? Yes, please come. One pantry, Tami was called out of town with a granddaughter to go to the hospital and I was all alone. And Thursday night, it's like, I don't know what to do. How can I do this? And so I called Shannon. Shannon said, Don't worry, we'll all be down. She has six members in our household. They all came down and we took care of everybody's needs and we restocked the shelves. The very next night, they came back and said you're doing you're rebuilding boxes for tomorrow. Right? Well, yeah. Okay, tell us what to do. And so they were assigned. And, we have others from church and people in town and from other churches and people from work that have come and helped and to be able to find the courage to say, Yeah, I don't know what I'm going to do this weekend, because I don't think we have enough people. And then to say that out loud and give people an opportunity to say, I can help. Let me come help. And, and then to be able to do that, that, in our lives, we go to McDonald's, it's the store and that service is paid for. This service is not. This service is a gift of the heart, and learning how to recognize that and appreciate that, and to call upon that, giving other people the chance to serve as well. Because our people that work with us walk away feeling like we do, full of love and joy, and happiness, even though they may be tired at the end of the day. It's been amazing. Those are unexpected blessings. I knew I would give people food when I started this, but I had no idea, the social impact, the friendships, and the relationships that would come from it.

**Blake Smith 46:18**

Absolutely, I want to ask you, you talked about the expiration dates/best by dates. And I know that conversation I've heard in other manners, is there a source of that information that you're aware of? Did you get that through the food bank? Or is there ...

**Tami Enos-Borg 46:32**

I got it. Yeah, I got it from the food bank of Iowa. Yeah. And, in fact, I've had, I've had people you know, from the food from the food pantry, say, you know, hey, I want to donate stuff, I just don't want to

donate bad stuff. Do you have you know, information, and we're very, very, very rarely turn any donations away, because if we are just happy that other people want to share in the joy that we feel, you know, that we have found. So [Blake: Absolutely]

**Bob Borg** 47:02

We've also found that through the food bank, our buying power is tremendous. So if you have a choice between giving me five cans of green beans, or \$5, please give me \$5. \$5, I could buy five cases instead of five cans, that really goes a long way. And some people are willing to do that. And others that kid's softball teams, they do a food drive, they do a toiletry drive. And that is also greatly appreciated. One thing that we found is, boy \$1 really can't get scratched when you're working through the right organization like the food bank of Iowa.

**Tami Enos-Borg** 47:43

Well, and something I always tell people too, Blake, is I try to make meals. So, I always have hamburger, pasta, sauces. You know, I always have things to make meals. Like I have a tuna, now I have a Tuna Helper. And so there's always a way to make meals. And I buy for 60 families. So if someone you know donates three cans of corn, that doesn't really help my 60 families, where I can go again and buy a case by three cases and you know, have an adequate supply to serve our clients. So that that kind of is in the back of my mind when I when they say well, what can we do to help? What can we, you know, can we donate? And I always say, I'm not really money hungry, but my dollar goes so much further at the food bank than what you bring me as in canned goods. Yeah.

**Blake Smith** 48:46

That's, that's a great advice for our listeners. So you guys listening to us here at Project Zion Podcast, if you're looking to help your pantry, maybe the best thing to do would be to go and ask them what they need rather than assuming. Not that your gift wouldn't be helpful and appreciated. But if you really want to make a difference, it sounds like there might be different ways based on what the pantry's needs are. So that's very helpful.

**Bob Borg** 49:13

Yeah, we found that a lot of times when we have a buy for 60. And if we have 50 families come through, we'll have some leftover. So we have two sets, really, there's the list set, which we conscientiously buy for and then there's we have a onesie-tvosie shelf, which is if you come in, we'll fill your list. But while you're here, go over there and take what you want. And so all that all that special, individual can type donations is used and appreciated by our clientele. And we have a way of effectively getting that out, other than through our menu. Yeah.

**Blake Smith** 49:54

I know I had several other questions that I proposed in the beginning, but we're running kind of short. One time, and I want to one of the things that I did not put in ahead of time, but I just really feel like it would be important to lift up. And that is, what are your sources of funding or resources for the pantry?

**Tami Enos-Borg** 50:17

Well, at first, it was the Tami and Bob Show. You know, and now, we've gotten some people that donate regularly. And on Facebook, if you ever see Facebook, well, anybody who sees Facebook, I will do a fundraiser for 3G Pantry for my birthday, Bob will do one like for his birthday, so we get funds that way.

**Bob Borg 50:46**

We've had some very generous people that have donated out of someone's passing, and they had a windfall of money. And so they elected to give us some I have a great friend at work, we were at a Christmas party, and they were sitting around the table eating pie, and I'm talking about the pantry and I spoke with such passion. Every pay day, for the last two years, Kyle has given us \$100 Just [wow], every time that's just, we're, we my wife, and I decided we're going to do this you can count on it. And it's that type of consistent giving is just so wonderful. And even a little bit, if I had 10 people that gave me \$10 every month, then that would be a fourth of our food budget. And that would be that'd be wonderful. And, you know, we have all the all the normal expenses of a business, there's the rent, there's the electricity, and the gas and the appliances and, and all that nobody gets paid, nobody takes any cash home. And then we chip in every month, because this is our baby, and we're not going to let it fail. And at first we chipped in everything for about six months. And that was okay, that was our choice. You don't have to do something big, you can do something small. But just go do something.

**Tami Enos-Borg 52:17**

We, you know, we take care of what needs to be taken care of because this does mean so much to us. And, you know, people ask us, what do you guys get out of it? And, it's kind of an insult because it's like, What do you mean, what do we... we get out of it, making relationships. We get out of it knowing that we're sending people away, and they're not having to worry about their next meal. We don't, is it's like they extinct that we're getting like this humongous paycheck or something. And it's like, no, you don't understand. We don't, we don't get paid for this. This is all volunteer and they're like, really, you do that for ... and it's sometimes it's just crazy, that people think there's got to be a motive by by people doing good. And I, I love that we're in a spot where we can do good. We don't live high on the hog. You know, we don't live high on the hog. We live very modestly and we want people to be able to flourish. And it's okay if we have to sacrifice some. What have they sacrificed? So it is what it is and we love what we do. And that's what we get out of that's our pay.

**Blake Smith 53:50**

It is a shame that that's where folks naturally go in our culture that there must be some payoff. Because we just can't imagine someone doing it with such a heart that you guys do. So what a tremendous model and gift that is for all of us. What else would you like to share that I haven't asked that's on your heart that you think our listeners need to hear?

**Bob Borg 54:12**

I would offer that you can. You can open a pantry. You can do something big with your heart and trusting God and moving forward and there will be obstacles, but you'll rise to meet them God will be there supporting you. I love our church. Because we are moving away from, "Let's gather a weekly and talk about how wonderful it is," to "I'm not going to church this Sunday because I am so tired from serving other people on pantry weekend." It's rare that we get to go on that Sunday because we're so

exhausted but God is with us and God will be with you. Whatever you choose to do if it's too you volunteer, to donate money, to donate goods, to spread the word that, hey, this is available, go use it and just get out and into the community, and be Christ's hands, be Christ's voice, be Christ's love. That's what the world needs more of people doing that. That's what I think.

**Blake Smith** 55:32

Thanks, Bob, how about you Tami?

**Tami Enos-Borg** 55:34

You know, I, I agree with Bob, I mean, it's so easy to sit back and let everybody else do stuff. But to actually get in the trenches and do it for the right reasons. And do it for, you know, do it because of the love that you have in your heart that you want to share with others. And understanding that, you know, things happen, and we just have to lift those, lift up others who are needing that. And if that's an ice cream bar, if that's a scrubby for their pan, or whatever, you know, I like to have a party at the pantry. And I like my clients to come in and joke and laugh and talk about those silly dry beans that I'm trying to pawn off on them. And it's just, it's, it's wonderful. It's wonderful. And I urge anybody out there who has a thought, just a little whisper in their ear, go for it, you will not, not, not regret it, you will regret it if you don't.

**Blake Smith** 56:44

Well, I can't thank you guys enough, not only for taking the time to be with me here for this podcast and interview. It's great to talk with you guys. But especially for the completely selfless way in which you have engaged in mission and the model that you're setting for all of us in the church and outside the church, discipling and building relationships. It's just incredible. So thank you so much for that. And thank you for being with me here today.

**Tami and Bob** 57:15

Thanks for having us. Thank you.

**Blake Smith** 57:18

I also want to thank our Project Zion Podcast listeners and encourage you as you've heard, Bob and Tami talk tonight to get involved in something. Find a mission that you feel comfortable with that you're feeling called to and just give it a shot. Check them out on Facebook at 3G Food Pantry and check us out at Project Zion podcast.org in the what's brewing series, are check out our other series to see what's happening around the church. Again, thanks for being with us, and we look forward to being with you next time.