

PCA Mill Supports Food Needs at Local Community Center

October 7, 2020

For over 80 years, the Backus Community Center in International Falls, Minnesota, has served the local community in a variety of ways, including hosting gatherings of all types, various counseling programs, government services and programs that address food insecurity. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the center has recently seen a vast increase in the need for its food programs.

The International Falls mill has supported the programs at Backus for many years, but the sudden demand in 2020 for the center's food resources caught everyone off guard. In response, the mill has increased its giving this year to the center's Community Café and the Summer Food Service Program, totaling almost \$15,000 since the start of the pandemic.



A Backus volunteer hands out noon meals provided by the PCA-sponsored Summer Food Service Program.

According to Ward Merrill, Backus's Executive Director: "Like many others, I had hoped the COVID-19 pandemic might be lessening by this point. It has not, and neither is the need for meals for many people in our area. This, coupled with the need to suspend volunteer staffing to limit risk, has also led to increased costs. Thanks to PCA's assistance, we've been able to make some progress in closing the gap."

According to Lori Lyman, Public Affairs Manager at the PCA mill, International Falls is a small community, and Backus is at the heart of it. Along with food service programs, they provide arts, recreation and more for young and old alike. "Backus Community Center is meeting critical needs in the community, and we extend our thanks to them for doing so," said Lyman.