



As the first Executive Director of The Hunger Coalition, I am honored to be given the responsibility of moving this organization forward. Our mission to end hunger in Blaine County by providing healthful food to those in need is one that inspires and challenges me. I come to this position feeling humbled by the mission yet confident that my many years of non-profit work have prepared me to take on the challenge.

My interest in social justice goes back to childhood, when I came home from school with a collection box for the poor, making sure my entire family contributed. My empathy for those less fortunate increased after college when I spent years working and traveling in developing countries. It was there that I witnessed the type of poverty that hits you in the face and at times leaves you breathless. I learned a great deal in those months, much about the state of the world and even more about myself. I returned to the States with an appreciation for our nation of abundance and a stronger desire to help those in need.

That desire has taken me around the world, from Africa to Mexico to Thailand and back again, trying to make a difference where I can. It provided me the impetus to spend seven months in the slums of Bangkok, working with street children and AIDS patients. There I got a first-hand glimpse into the devastating affects of poverty and hunger on families. It took me to the rolling hills of Chiapas, Mexico, where my husband and I delivered much-needed food and supplies to an orphanage struggling to help children climb out of their condition through education. And finally, it has taken me here, to The Hunger Coalition, where I can utilize my skills and experience to provide nourishment and hope to children and families right here in Blaine County.

While we generally do not have the kind of poverty in our community that I just described, hunger does in fact exist. It is harder to see yet is still debilitating to parents laboring daily to provide the basics for their families. It is empowering to realize that every one of us has the ability to reach out and make a difference right now. We have the opportunity to become a model community, one to which others look for ideas to solve the problems of hunger and poverty.

While we have a long way to go, The Hunger Coalition has already made significant progress toward improving the lives of our neighbors in need. We have established a safety net through our food voucher, food box and infant formula programs so no one has to go to bed hungry. In addition to maintaining these vital services, we are now focusing

on the core causes of hunger in our community. Our aim is to not just treat hunger, but to prevent it. I am filled with optimism that we will succeed by working together.

We have the opportunity to create a vibrant community, one where children can count on three meals every day, where families don't have to choose between paying for rent or buying groceries, where parents can take their children to the doctor and still have enough money for food. These are not choices anyone should have to make. I know in this valley of plenty, we are capable of ensuring they won't have to.

I look forward to working with each of you to achieve this vision. One of the greatest assets we have is *you*, our community, without whose support none of our work would be possible. I look forward to meeting many of you in the coming months and hearing your opinions and suggestions.

Thank you for your compassion and generosity. Together we are fighting hunger and feeding hope.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Liston  
Executive Director  
The Hunger Coalition