When you browse through your kitchen for cans to donate to a food drive, you generally go into your pantry and pull out the tomato soup, tuna, peanut butter, and maybe even that stray can of artichoke hearts you once bought for a recipe you never tried. You take your bag to the drop-off the next day, and you never think about it again. But what really happens to your food? How much does it really help those who are hungry?

According to Julie Rosier, Food Bank Coordinator, what we donate really makes a difference, and without community support, the Food Bank couldn’t stay open. She says that “over 500 families are served, amounting to about 1,200 individuals, and that number is higher during the holidays.” Rosier adds that many people don’t realize that “donations help us financially as well. It’s a double-win.” This is because the Food Bank receives twelve cents per pound from the state for any donated food that was taxed at purchase. So any time the Boy Scouts, postal carriers, or the local high school holds a food drive, it stretches farther than people realize. The Food Bank also benefits from what they call “grocery rescue” by picking up donations from Lin’s, Smith’s, and Walmart, including dented cans, outdated pastries, and other products that didn’t sell.

For the past seventeen years, USU Eastern has made its own contributions by donating the money raised at the popular Bread ‘N Soup Night event. In 2015 alone, USU Eastern donated $5,000 to the Carbon County Food Bank, bringing the seventeen-year total to roughly $48,000. Geri Gamber, Community Service Program Manager, said of the annual donations, “It makes us feel like we belong in the community, that the community cares about us. The support is there.” She also explains that the families who receive food from the Food Bank “don’t understand the intricacies of these programs – where the food comes from . . . They need all the help they can get. By helping them in this way, it helps them succeed in other areas. They have a little more self-sufficiency.”

So whether you attended Bread ‘N Soup night back in November to just grab a quick bowl of soup, or wandered around the neighborhood with other SUN Center volunteers asking for canned goods during Trick or Treat for Food, or just tossed a box of macaroni and cheese into a donation bin, you made an important difference in someone else’s life.