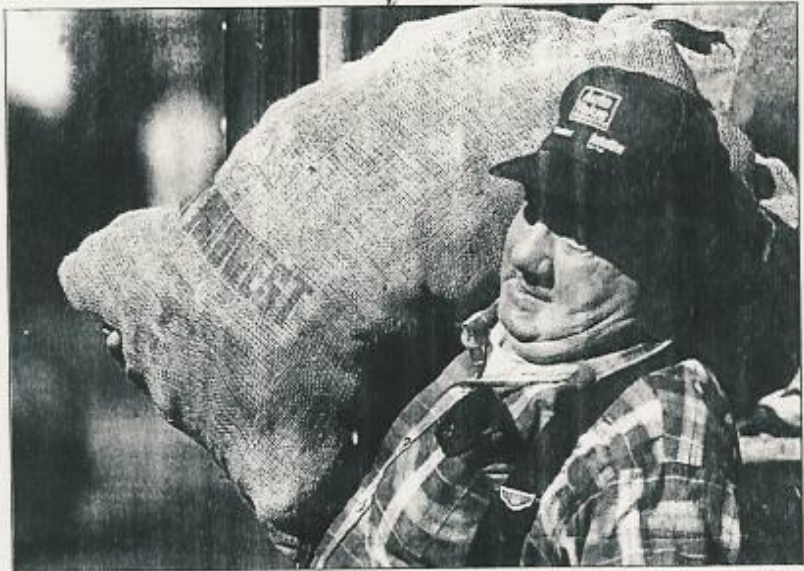


# FACES & PLACES



Star Tribune Photo by Darlene Pfister

Volunteers Henry Lanners grabs a sack of potatoes and Lawrence Klawitter waits, and Paul Arnopoulos is hidden behind a sack he is loading for a man. Pastor Paul's Mission gave away 48,000 pounds of spuds Tuesday. At right, Klawitter makes lifting the 100-pound sack look easy.

## Mission possible: Feeding area families

By Darlene Pfister  
Star Tribune Staff Writer

Sacks of potatoes were tossed out of Pastor Paul's Mission at the rate of 13,714 pounds an hour Tuesday.

Volunteers took only 3½ hours to give away 48,000 pounds of potatoes to folks who lined up for them. The mission, at 1000 Oliver Av. N., distributes food to an estimated 40,000 people each month.

That number is about 25 percent higher than last year, according to Pastor Paul Arnopoulos, who has been serving the community in this way for more than 17 years.

"There's a lot of economic uncertainty these days," he said. "People are being laid off, or trying to raise a family on minimum

wage, and not quite able to make ends meet. That's where we come in."

Jeanine Arnopoulos said, "It [the number of families the mission serves] has just grown by leaps and bounds since October of last year." She is the mission's administrator and the pastor's wife. "We went from 6,700 families in October to 7,344 families today. It's tough going out there."

The mission operates a grocery shelf five days a week, serving families, seniors and those with disabilities. Each family is allowed 140 pounds of food monthly. That includes staples, canned goods, fruit, vegetables, bread and meat. The majority of the mission's families are single women with children; nearly 15,000 children benefit from its grocery shelf, Jeanine Arnopou-

los said.

"We serve a large and diverse population from all over the metropolitan area," she said. More than 900 registered families are from St. Paul, she said, and the mission has seen a significant increase in Russian and other Eastern European immigrants recently.

It also sponsors a public food giveaway of mostly perishable food every Thursday from 1 to 3 p.m. The mission estimates that it distributed 10 million pounds of food to the community last year.

New registrations for the grocery shelf are taken at the mission every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Those wishing to donate time or money may call 521-4665.