

FOODBANKFOCUS

A PUBLICATION OF THE AKRON-CANTON REGIONAL FOODBANK
FALL 2022



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1. Local donor leaves lasting legacy
2. Project REBUILD serves students
3. Seniors face unique challenges
4. New program delivers farm-fresh produce to families
5. Fuel our fleet to help feed families

phone: 330.535.6900
fax: 330.996.5337

akroncantonfoodbank.org

MAIN CAMPUS

350 Opportunity Pkwy
Akron, OH 44307

STARK COUNTY CAMPUS

1365 Cherry Ave. NE
Canton, OH 44714

SERVING 8 COUNTIES

Carroll, Holmes,
Medina, Portage, Stark,
Summit, Tuscarawas &
Wayne Counties



Every meal has a story. Meet Nancy.

Nancy, 64, and her granddaughter Abigail, 7, play games as they sit in line for a local food distribution. This isn't the first time the two have visited the program, so they've found creative ways to fill the time as they wait for their groceries.

Nancy has been a teacher for 20 years. Currently, she's a criminology and law educator. But when classes are out for the summer, Nancy is without pay.

"I don't teach during the summer, so I have a loss of income in May, June, July and August. This program helps supplement the food we need," said Nancy.

In addition to Abigail, Nancy picks up groceries for her retired husband and daughter—Abigail's mom. Her family loves getting fresh fruits and

vegetables and the occasional sweet treat for Abigail.

"Those groceries are very expensive at the store, people don't realize," said Nancy. "But here you get everything for free!" adds Abigail with a smile.

Abigail and Nancy are grateful for the free groceries and for the warm, welcoming environment the food program provides.

"I feel very happy that a program like this is available," Nancy said. "You don't need to feel ashamed for using a food program. You don't need to feel like someone is looking down on you. You have someone like me who has two college degrees—including a master's degree, but for four months I don't work. I'm not made to feel anything but positive when I visit here."

Honor Roll

THANK YOU TO OUR TOP SUPPORTERS OF THE SEASON

AEO, Inc. - American Eagle - Aerie
Akron Area Interfaith Council
Akron-Canton Regional
Foodbank Staff
Tony & Becky Alexander
The Nancy Andrews
Family Foundation
Bill & Cindy Artman
The Big Lots Foundation
Ken & Gerri Blum
BoxLunch
Bridgestone Americas
Buehler's Fresh Foods
Eileen Burg
Cargill, Inc.
Cleveland Clinic
Costco Wholesale
CVS Health
Yvonne Drum
DuPont
East Central Ohio Building &
Construction Trades Council
Energy Harbor
Fifth Third Bank
FirstEnergy Corp.
Genworth Foundation
The Gessner Family Foundation
Giant Eagle
The Goodyear Tire &
Rubber Company
Diane Graham
Mark Keenleyside
Kovatch Castings, Inc.
James & Grace Kozak
Richard & Lisa Laubacher
The Lehner Family Foundation
Betty Levinson
Gary & Susan Lichten
W. Riley & Barbara Lochridge
Matt & Baily Meeker
The Mitsui USA Foundation
Harvey & Kim Nelson
Herbert & Dianne Newman
Ohio Harness Horsemen's
Association
Stephen & Jennifer Osvath
Hyun & Catherine Park
Portage Lakes Polar Bear Club
Louise Pursley
Ada C. & Helen J. Rank Charitable
Fdn, KeyBank, Trustee
Joe & Annette Ruby
Sheetz For The Kidz
The J.M. Smucker Co.
Subaru of America, Inc. &
Serra Subaru
Taylor Tele-Communications, Inc.
Timken Company Charitable
and Educational Fund
Wayne County Community
Foundation
Westfield



Jenn has found multiple ways to support her community through the Foodbank's work.

Local donor helps Foodbank plan for the future

During the height of the pandemic, Jenn remembers getting ready for work, watching the morning news, and being struck by the line of cars wrapped around the Foodbank. The cars were local families who had lost their jobs, had a decrease in work hours, or were worried that COVID-19 would strip supermarket shelves of food and other essentials.

"I stopped everything I was doing and rushed to my computer. I needed to know how I could help right now," said Jenn.

She became a member of the Foodbank's Sustainer Circle program, choosing to donate to the Foodbank each month. Giving to the Foodbank is now included in her monthly budgeting.

"There are things I can go without so that I can give the Foodbank more. It doesn't hurt me to cut back on my cable or a monthly subscription service when I know it means someone else can have a meal," she said.

Though Jenn didn't grow up experiencing hunger, it's a cause she's passionate about. "Nutrition is fundamental. You can't do great things if you haven't eaten. Supporting hunger relief has always been in my heart."

Jenn has taken her commitment to fight hunger one step further. Working in sales for the past 30 years, she's contributed to an IRA to help plan for retirement. She's recently named the Foodbank as the beneficiary of the IRA once she passes away.

"I want to help people today. I want to help people tomorrow. And I want to help people in the future. When I'm gone, I can continue to help feed people."

Jenn's future legacy gift of her IRA is being directed to the Foodbank's endowment which will perpetuate Jenn's annual generosity.

If you're interested in making a lasting impact on hunger relief, please visit acrfb.giftlegacy.com or contact Debra Hagarty at 330.535.6900 to learn more.



Jenn also volunteers at the Foodbank's monthly drive-thru distribution.

Project REBUILD, Inc. equips youth for fruitful futures while providing community and meals

Students of Project REBUILD, Inc., a work readiness and education youth program in Canton, spend their days learning how to construct homes for low and moderate-income individuals and families. When they're not being trained in construction, students work to earn their high school diploma or GED.

Eating nourishing food is key to staying healthy and energized while doing physical labor and schoolwork — it's hard to concentrate on an empty stomach. But 90% of Project REBUILD's students live at or below the federal poverty level, meaning sometimes food is scarce at home. That's why each day at noon, everyone takes a break to gather and share a meal.

"We are dealing with a population that sometimes is food insecure," said Joanna James, executive director of Project REBUILD.

"Being able to sit and have meals together and conversation that is not focused on programming, earning a diploma, or on work readiness is important. It is just focused on the individual, what they have going on that day, and what they like."

"It is a good opportunity for us to provide a meal before they go home," community outreach worker Brandon Simmons said. "Sometimes students don't always have healthy food options at home."

But their food distributions go beyond group lunches. Sometimes groceries are sent home to students' families who need a little extra help putting a meal on the table.



Community Outreach Worker Brandon Simmons helps prepare a meal for students.

"We have had some young people come to us and say, 'We don't have anything in the house, we are kind of in-between.' It is nice for us to be able to put food together and say, 'Take this home for your family,'" Joanna said.

"There is security knowing that Project REBUILD does have food we can take home if we're going through a hard time," said Dillan, a Project REBUILD student.

Before partnering with the Foodbank in 2019, the program used dollars from its general budget to purchase food. Now, that money can go toward things like warm overalls for the students to wear in the winter while they are

working on projects outside.

"Anytime we have to take money out of our budget, it means we may have to be sacrificing in other areas. So, the Foodbank partnership has been great by allowing us to use those funds elsewhere," Joanna said.

The partnership doesn't end there. A large part of Project REBUILD's mission is focused on giving back. Their program encourages youth to leave a positive impact on the lives of their neighbors. That's why students dedicate time to volunteering at local nonprofits like the Foodbank.

"A lot of our young people have been recipients of the Foodbank in the past, whether it is through us, a grocery giveaway or food pantry. We like to give back, so earlier this year we did a volunteer service day at the Foodbank," Joanna said.

Project REBUILD doesn't just feed their students while equipping them for a career; it inspires them to be productive, thoughtful residents of Stark County and we're proud to partner with them.



Dillan enjoys tacos during lunch time.

Seniors face unique challenges regarding food security

Aging is a natural part of life. The term “the golden years” tends to paint an idealistic picture of seniors playing golf and enjoying time with friends and family. But for 5.2 million seniors in 2020 in the U.S., retirement means attempting to live on a fixed income while experiencing food insecurity.

For the past six years, Feeding America has produced “The State of Senior Hunger in America,” an annual report that sheds light on the challenges seniors face regarding food security. The most recent report, analyzing data from 2020, concludes that the rate of food insecurity among seniors remains higher than before the Great Recession, a reflection of the growing size of the senior population.

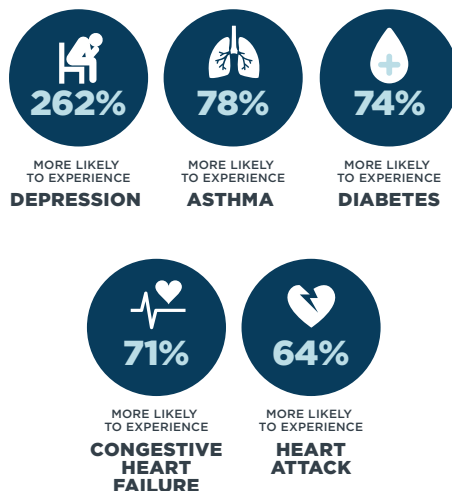
Food insecurity negatively impacts individuals of all ages, but for seniors, these effects can be especially problematic given the unique health, economic and nutritional challenges that come with aging. Obtaining adequate nutrition is important to support healthy aging, but limited financial resources and declining

health and mobility can make it hard for seniors to access nutritious food.

Findings show that food-insecure seniors consume lower quantities of key nutrients, such as iron, protein and calcium. Poor health can be both a cause and a consequence of food insecurity. For example, disability and disease contribute to employment instability and income challenges. Additionally, inadequate nutrition can increase the negative effects of disabilities and chronic health conditions.

But your support of the Foodbank helps more than 30,000 local seniors access nourishing food. Through the federal senior food box program, free DoorDash deliveries of groceries, and our extensive hunger-relief network, our hope is that seniors in need of food can find the resources necessary to support a healthy lifestyle.

Food insecure seniors are more likely to have chronic health conditions.



Does your company match donations?

Many companies offer matching gift programs to encourage employees to contribute to charitable organizations. Most of these programs match donations dollar for dollar, and some even double or triple your gift amount.

Check with your employer to see if it offers a matching gift program. Complete the form from your employer and send it in with your donation. Thank you for doubling your impact for local families facing hunger!

Since 2005, the Foodbank has received

\$465,000+ from employee matches

from **175+** employers.

That's **2,000,000** extra meals!



New partnership helps deliver local farm-fresh produce to families in need

An apple a day keeps the doctor away, or so they say. But produce and other healthy, fresh food items can be costly for families, especially with inflation increasing food prices.

Research shows that there is a direct correlation between food insecurity and poor health outcomes. Limited access to healthy food can have serious implications for children's physical and mental health, academic achievement and future economic prosperity. Communities with the highest rates of food insecurity face a higher prevalence for diseases, such as diabetes, obesity and high blood pressure.

Regardless of age, healthy bodies and minds require nutritious meals. Your Foodbank strives to nourish local families through its new partnership with Produce Perks Midwest, the hub organization for Ohio's Nutrition Incentive Programs. Nutrition incentive programs empower low-income families to eat more fruits

and vegetables while supporting local farmers and strengthening local economies.

Every Tuesday from mid-June to October, the Foodbank staff visits four local farms to pick up fresh produce. Items may include tomatoes, radishes, leafy greens and other vegetables.

“We're excited about this program because it's getting super healthy food to underserved communities and people that need it.”

Jimmy Myers, Farmer, Front 9 Farm

The produce is taken to the Foodbank and picked up by DoorDash drivers. The drivers deliver the items biweekly to 300 families in Summit and Stark counties who meet income requirements and have children in their households. DoorDash generously covers the cost of the drivers, and

Produce Perks Midwest, through state funding, pays the farmers for the crops.

“We know that fresh food and produce have a direct impact on an individual's health,” said Mary Ann Mills, the Foodbank's manager of strategic programs. “Being able to distribute this extra produce is not only feeding local families, but it's helping ensure they receive the nourishing food needed to live a healthy life. We also know that transportation is one of the largest barriers to food access, so the fact that we can pair the produce with home deliveries is tremendously beneficial for families.”



Fuel our fleet to help feed families

Each year the Foodbank's fleet of trucks travels more than 257,000 miles to pick up and distribute local and regional food donations. The increase in fuel costs directly impacts our mission to feed our neighbors. **Fuel costs to operate our trucking fleet are up 56% in the first six months of 2022 compared to 2021.** But your financial contributions can support the upkeep of tires, repairs and routine maintenance. Your support can help fuel our fleet and feed a family. Contact Colleen Benson at 330.535.6900 to learn more.

200

STOPS EACH WEEK

\$3,200

FUELS THE FLEET FOR ONE WEEK



200

TIRES ON THE ROAD

\$12,800

FUELS THE FLEET FOR ONE MONTH

Mark Your Calendar

HARVEST FOR HUNGER
CAMPAIGN KICK-OFF
BREAKFAST

Save the Date

FEBRUARY 28, 2023

Board of Directors

Terry Link **CHAIR**

Amanda Montgomery **VICE CHAIR**

Maureen DeSanzo **SECRETARY**

Greg Long **TREASURER**

Bill Artman

Rob Bowers

Alison Breaux

Jerod Cherry

Rich Clark

Kristin Hannon

Alicia LaMancusa

Teri Lash-Ritter

Gary Martin

Annie McCauley

Hyun Park

Jill Penrose

Laura Query

Chris Richardson

Jonathan Thornton

Dan Flowers **PRESIDENT & CEO**



The Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization recognized by the IRS. If you know anyone who might be interested in receiving this newsletter, or if you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please contact the Marketing Department at info@acrfb.org or 330.535.6900.

Join the Holiday Campaign!



Holiday memories are made around the dinner table. Food brings us together; food helps make lasting memories. Though many families will connect with friends and loved ones over a special holiday meal this year, it will be challenging for some as the increased costs for food and gas have taken their toll.

But you can help by supporting our annual Holiday Campaign. With your support, families can find joy this holiday season.



\$1 = 4 MEALS

Please consider making a personal donation or a corporate gift.



HOST A VIRTUAL FOOD DRIVE

Create a personalized online fundraiser and share with your social networks.



IRA/STOCK ROLLOVER

Contact Debra Hagarty at 330.535.6900 to learn ways you can support the Foodbank through deferred gifts.



EMPLOYEE GIVING

A few dollars from each pay can make a lasting impact.



HOST A FOOD DRIVE

Collect food and financial contributions for your Foodbank.

selfless elf

selfless elf
5k run ♥ walk
december 17, 2022

Sign up at selflesself.com