



# FOODBANKFOCUS

A PUBLICATION OF THE AKRON-CANTON REGIONAL FOODBANK ■ WINTER 2022



**MAIN CAMPUS:** 350 Opportunity Pkwy, Akron, OH 44307  
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[akroncantonfoodbank.org](http://akroncantonfoodbank.org)



**SERVING 8 COUNTIES**  
Carroll, Holmes, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit,  
Tuscarawas & Wayne Counties

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“

If I can put a smile on someone's face, then I've done a good job.”

**-BARB**



## VOLUNTEERS MAKE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. MEET BARB.

“There's a saying I try to live by: I will do everything I can for as many people as I can for as long as I can,” said Barb, 71, a dedicated Foodbank volunteer who joined the organization after retiring in 2019. Barb was looking for a way to stay active, while also making a positive impact in the community.

Serving others is very personal for Barb. After losing her son 12 years ago, she was seeking an opportunity to channel the courage, strength and compassion her son had exemplified. “I needed that in my life again. I needed to know I was fulfilling something.”

Barb has made a tremendous impact at the Foodbank. She volunteers 2-3 days per week and is willing to help wherever needed. You can spot her in the volunteer

center sorting food items while dancing and singing with the 'A Team.' “The people I've met here are like family. And we feel like what we're doing really has a purpose. We're part of something much bigger than ourselves.”

Barb also works at the front desk in Akron, serves families at grocery distributions, works on special projects for various departments, and most recently, began volunteering at the Keith D. Monda Family Food Pantry at the Stark County Campus.

The Foodbank is so grateful for Barb and all the volunteers who help support local hunger-relief efforts. We couldn't do this work without their support. Thank you!

# HONOR ROLL

## THANK YOU TO OUR TOP SUPPORTERS OF THE SEASON

Akron Area Interfaith Council  
Andrew & Jessica Alleman  
American Electric Power Foundation  
James & Lisa Backlin  
Barilla America, Inc.  
Barnhart Crane & Rigging Company  
Bauhart Family  
BJ's Charitable Foundation  
Bridgestone Americas Trust Fund  
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Barry Chiron  
Estate of Billie R. Coile Trust  
James Deroche & Debra Eisenstat-Deroche  
Dominion Energy  
Dunkin'  
The Harry K. and Emma R. Fox Charitable Foundation  
GAR Foundation  
Bob & Nancy Gessner  
Donald Hafner  
Heinen's Fine Foods  
John Hinds  
The J.M. Smucker Co.  
Kovatch Castings, Inc.  
Kraft Heinz Company Foundation  
John & Regina Lindeman  
Kristen Manes  
The Maynard Family Foundation  
Matt & Baily Meeker  
The Keith D. Monda Family  
Anthony J. & Susan E. Paparella Family Foundation  
James Parry  
The Progressive Insurance Foundation  
Becky Ramsey  
Samuel Reese Willis Foundation, Inc.  
Larry Shirk  
The Sisler McFawn Foundation  
Julian & Kerry Steinberg  
Synchrony  
Synthomer Foundation  
Taylor Tele-Communications, Inc.  
The TJX Companies  
Kevin Tucker & Patricia Howell  
Theodore & Maureen Unton  
David & Cheryl Venarge  
Walmart & Walmart Foundation  
The Welty Family Foundation  
Westfield  
Woodforest National Bank

# WOOSTER HOPE CENTER CONTINUES TO EVOLVE TO BETTER SERVE ITS RESIDENTS

The Wooster Hope Center is a dedicated partner serving rural families in Wayne County. Celebrating 10 years of service last year, the program has grown exponentially and continues to find innovative ways to offer help to residents.



**Wooster Hope Center Executive Director Richard Frazier loads cars with food at their distribution.**

The pantry originated as a hygiene pantry. A few months into serving the community, the founding members realized food was also a necessity. "We wanted to be a part of the solution," said founding member and Executive Director Richard Frazier.

Soon, the Wooster Hope Center partnered with the Foodbank to offer a Direct Distribution (DD). DDs distribute large quantities of fresh, perishable food to communities in need. Because of the generosity of Foodbank donors, the transportation and cost of food is free for the food program.



**Frank, a volunteer, is happy to help out his neighbors in need.**

Feeding the community became the primary focus of Wooster Hope Center. The

organization opened a food pantry and hot meal program. It also serves vulnerable residents, children and senior citizens, through backpacks of food distributed to 13 elementary schools each month, and shelf-stable, nutritious food boxes for seniors on a limited income.

**"We've seen a big change from when we opened to now. More and more seniors are on fixed incomes and are having a difficult time making ends meet. We need to focus more on them right now and figure out a better way to serve them."**

And the Wooster Hope Center plans to do just that with its new mobile pantry. Richard realized acquiring a vehicle of their own could help them access communities in need more easily. The pop-up pantry plans to visit assisted living centers, low-income housing for seniors, etc. to meet people where they are, overcoming the obstacle of transportation.



**The line for the pantry wrapped around the building as families waited for nourishing food.**

And because of the waiver on all cost sharing fees last year, the organization was able to make capital improvements to its facility.

**"The Foodbank has blessed us with free food in 2021, and that, partnered with generous local support from donors, has afforded us the opportunity to get a new roof, garage door, repair our dock and add solar panels, and we are very thankful for that!"**

# A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND CEO

After a challenging year in 2020, in which we were all stretched beyond our limits, thankfully, 2021 unveiled the light at the end of the tunnel. Early in the year, we began to see a return to pre-pandemic numbers of families seeking emergency food assistance from our network of hunger-relief partners. We believe additional temporary government benefits and expedited vaccination distribution resulted in a lessening of demand.

As the demand slowly eased, it allowed your Foodbank and the hundreds of pantries, hot meal sites, shelters, children and senior programs within our network to catch our breath, to recalibrate and focus on building a stronger, more collaborative and sustainable network. Partnering with DoorDash and pantries in our network, we delivered food directly to people who were homebound; we listened to the network's needs and through grant support, began delivering food orders directly to food programs, saving them time and resources; and focusing on the correlation between hunger and health, new partnerships with local health systems and hunger-relief partners emerged.

And because of the overwhelming generosity of our community, we were able to waive all cost sharing fees for food in 2021 allowing partners to invest in their capacity and other resources to better serve our community.

Additionally in 2021, we celebrated a historic occasion as we opened the new Stark County Campus. Our vision to increase regional capacity for fresh food distribution, expand our reach into communities of need, and engage thousands more volunteers in the local fight against hunger became a reality with this brand-new purpose-built facility. If you haven't toured the new campus, we invite you to visit us anytime.

As we embark on 2022, the future is bright. Despite continuing increases in the cost of food paired with labor shortages, supply chain issues and increased transportation costs, the last two years have shown us what we're capable of — what we can accomplish when we all work together.

While we know that 13 percent of individuals within our service area may still experience food insecurity this year, our work will continue as we seek to ensure everyone in our community has access to safe and nourishing food. We will remain diligent in this fight. With your support, we know we can continue to change the history of hunger relief.



*Daniel R. Flowers*

Daniel R. Flowers, *President & CEO*

## FREEZE OUT HUNGER AT THE POLAR BEAR JUMP

Help fight hunger across our region by taking the icy plunge in the Polar Bear Jump on February 26, 2022 presented by the Portage Lakes Polar Bear Club. If plunging into frigid waters is not for you, help our neighbors facing hunger by collecting pledges.

For details and to register, visit [portagelakespolarbearclub.com](http://portagelakespolarbearclub.com).





## GIVE MONTHLY & HELP FAMILIES ALL YEAR LONG

Make the biggest impact possible for families and children facing hunger by joining the Sustainer Circle. This monthly giving program consists of a special group of faithful Foodbank friends who help families struggling with hunger by making monthly donations.

### MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Receive less mail
- Less mail = reduced costs for your Foodbank
- Printing less = environmentally friendly
- Better budgeting = planning for our future

# HARVEST FOR HUNGER

# JOIN THE HARVEST FOR HUNGER CAMPAIGN

Harvest for Hunger is your Foodbank's largest fundraising campaign and helps support food distribution all year long. 100 percent of every dollar raised in this campaign goes directly to providing free food for individuals and families in need in our local community.

For more information, visit [akroncantonfoodbank.org/hfh](http://akroncantonfoodbank.org/hfh).



**CHECK OUT HUNGER**  
Scan a \$10, \$5 or \$1 donation coupon each time you visit a participating supermarket or GetGo gas station.



**HOST A FOOD AND FUNDS DRIVE**  
Collect food and financial donations for your Foodbank. \$1 = 4 meals



**HOST A VIRTUAL FOOD DRIVE**  
Create a personalized online fundraiser and share with your social networks.



**FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS**  
Please consider making a personal donation or a corporate gift.



**JOIN US!**

**Harvest for Hunger Campaign Kick-off Breakfast**

MARCH 1, 2022

**Learn more at**  
[akroncantonfoodbank.org/hfh](http://akroncantonfoodbank.org/hfh)

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**FEBRUARY 26, 2022**  
Portage Lakes Polar Bear Jump

**MARCH 1, 2022**  
Harvest for Hunger Campaign Kick-off Breakfast

**MARCH 6 - APRIL 16, 2022**  
Harvest for Hunger: Check Out Hunger

**MARCH 29, 2022**  
30th Annual Celebrity Cuisine

**FOR EVENT DETAILS, VISIT**  
[akroncantonfoodbank.org/events](http://akroncantonfoodbank.org/events)

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- |                                     |                  |  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|--|
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