



DID YOU KNOW?
Food distribution at the Foodbank increased 16 percent from 2012 to 2013.

SPRING 2014

THE FOODBANK FOCUS

A publication of the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank

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



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Making healthy choices

Today, Ebony Veal and her four-year-old son, Alex, are visiting the client choice food pantry at Pregnancy Care of Summit County. Ebony is nine months pregnant and has chosen several items from the pantry, including frozen meat, fresh vegetables and juice boxes for her son.

“We’ve been homeless,” explains Ebony shyly. “I was living in a big house when my son’s father left us. I tried keeping up with the bills by myself, but things slowly got cut off.”

Faced with the choice of paying her bills or buying groceries, Ebony doesn’t always know how she will feed her son, or where her next meal will come from.

“I might be able to provide a meal, but what about the next one?” Ebony says. “I never wanted my son to see me struggle. It’s hard out there, and if it wasn’t for food pantries, I literally don’t know what I would do. I am striving to make my kid’s life better, to make my life better, to become a better me.”

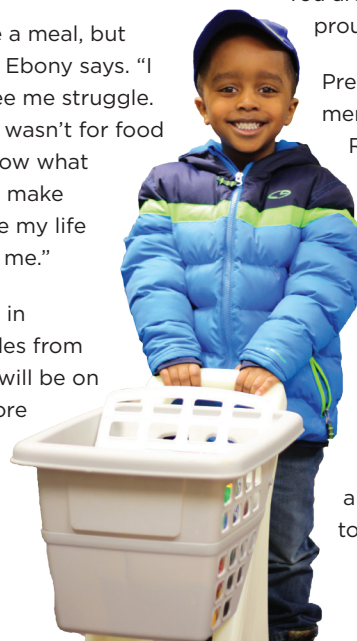
Placing her fresh groceries in shopping bags, Ebony smiles from ear to ear knowing dinner will be on her table tonight. Just before leaving the pantry, little Alex takes one more walk around the aisles with a shopping cart just



Alex and Ebony at Pregnancy Care of Summit County

his size. Grinning, he looks at his mom then reaches down to a lower shelf and picks up a small box of fruit snacks to put in his cart. Shannon Collins, Special Events Coordinator of Pregnancy Care, hugs Ebony tightly and says, “You are already a better you, and I am truly proud of you.”

Pregnancy Care of Summit County is a member agency of the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank. The Foodbank is the source of emergency food for their client choice food pantry, which creates more of a grocery store experience for those facing hunger. A client choice pantry allows individuals to select their own food instead of receiving a pre-packed or standard bag of groceries. Giving clients a choice prevents food waste and honors clients’ dignity by allowing them to select food according to health restrictions and dietary needs.



Double your donation

What are corporate matching gifts, and does my employer offer them?

If you're interested in joining the Foodbank in the fight to end hunger, check with your employer. Corporate giving programs inspire employees to give back to their communities by offering a matching donation to the

nonprofit of their choice. Although different companies have different rules and regulations, giving through your employer is a great way to double your impact! Simply check with your company's Human Resources department and inquire if your employer will match your charitable gift. Please contact Leslie Letner, 330.535.6900 or lletner@acrfb.org with any questions.



APRIL IS VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION MONTH

Although the Foodbank celebrates the work of its volunteers all year long, April is National Volunteer Month, a month dedicated to showing gratitude for those who give their time and talents. Just last year, the Foodbank hosted 6,800 volunteers who donated a total of 40,000 hours.

On a daily basis, Foodbank staff and board members see volunteers in action, and "thank you" can't be said loud enough or often enough. To help show sincere appreciation for volunteers, the Foodbank team asked a question to those who have received food from member agency programs like hot meal sites, soup kitchens and shelters.

The question was asked: "If you could thank the Foodbank volunteer who sorted, packed and made sure this food was perfect for you,

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?"

Jamie from Arlington Memorial Baptist Church food pantry said, "There are not enough words that can express my appreciation. I'm a working single mom, trying to do what's best for my children. I have hope for my future because of places like this..."

Jodee from the Ravenna Direct Distribution said, "I am so appreciative that this is available for seniors and the less fortunate. Thank you to all that are involved for giving your time and energy to be a part of something good."

Lashorea from the Client Choice Food Pantry at Pregnancy Care of Summit County said, "Before I came to the pantry, I had no food in my cabinets; they were completely empty. I had just enough money to pay a down payment for my housing and nothing left. To the volunteers, I appreciate you. You didn't have to take the time to help me and my kids, but you did. Thank you."

Local chefs give back

What could you create with a handful of simple ingredients such as a loaf of bread, milk, eggs, cinnamon and sugar? Chef Benjamin Walsh from The Wooster Inn in Wayne County, and winner of the 2012 Taste of the NFL event, spent an afternoon with representatives from the Foodbank's agency programs teaching them how to make warm bread pudding!

The cooking class in the Foodbank's demonstration kitchen for its network of member agencies also included cooking techniques, and tips on how to get the most out of food items past their prime.

Previous Taste of the NFL chefs have taught classes on nutritious meal ideas that incorporate everyday food items available at the Foodbank that many individuals haven't cooked with, like kale, Brussels sprouts and brown rice. The Foodbank proudly partners with these local chefs to teach hands-on skills to better equip the agencies and the individuals they serve.

The Foodbank's network of member agencies operate 500 hunger-relief programs such as shelters, hot meal sites and pantries that serve eight Northeast Ohio counties. Along with the agencies' ability to receive nutritious food at little or no cost through the Foodbank, they also have the opportunity to share ideas and resources with other hunger-relief programs to create best practices—all to better assist those who face hunger locally.

The Foodbank recognizes that strong community partnerships are invaluable to providing food to those who need it most. Because of strong donor support and partners like The Wooster Inn, together, we can continue to make great strides in fighting hunger locally.



Chefs from The Wooster Inn demonstrate nutritious meal ideas for the Foodbank's agency programs.



HONOR ROLL SPRING 2014

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 Akron Community Foundation
 Akron General Health System
 American Legion 44 Memorial Fund
 Anonymous
 Apostolic Christian Church
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Join us in the largest Harvest for Hunger campaign in history

Energy filled the warehouse of the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank for the kick-off of the 23rd annual Harvest for Hunger campaign. Harvest for Hunger is the Foodbank's largest fundraising initiative and is one of the largest food & funds drives in the nation. The Campaign is a collaborative effort of four food banks serving 21 Ohio counties including the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank, Greater Cleveland Food Bank, Second Harvest Food Bank of Mahoning Valley and the Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio. During the kick-off event, the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank announced its local goal to raise more than \$1 million, enough food for 4 million meals.

Dan Flowers, President & CEO of the Foodbank stated, "Harvest for Hunger is important to us because you are important to us. Living in a healthy community, free of hunger, linked to a healthy and sustainable food system is important to us."

HARVEST for HUNGER

There is still time to get involved with this year's Harvest for Hunger campaign!

HOST A FOOD & FUNDS DRIVE: Nearly 300 businesses, schools, community organizations and families are holding food & funds drives throughout the months of March and April. To host a food & funds drive, simply register and download a coordinator's kit from the Foodbank's website, akroncantonfoodbank.org.

VOTE FOR VIRTUAL IDOL: Harvest for Hunger Virtual Idol is an online singing competition for individuals and groups of all ages. Please visit virtualidol.org and vote for the video of your choice! \$5 = 5 votes = 20 meals. The video with the most votes will be named the 2014 Harvest for Hunger Virtual Idol winner!



VIRTUAL IDOL ONLINE SINGING COMPETITION

Vote for your favorite video April 1 - 30, 2014 while helping Feed People and Fight Hunger.

\$5 = 5 VOTES = 20 MEALS
VIRTUALIDOL.ORG

The Honor Roll recognizes our top supporters of the season. Together we are the difference between hunger and hope.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



DATES TO REMEMBER

CORE
Young Professionals Event
APRIL 24

Interfaith Council Hunger Walk
MAY 4

Stamp Out Hunger
MAY 10

CORE
Young Professionals Event
JUNE 25

For event details, visit
akroncantonfoodbank.org

MarketPlace makeover

Each year, roughly 70 billion pounds of edible food is wasted in the United States alone. In our community where 1 in 7 people are food insecure, the Foodbank, our donor partners and our network of agencies are committed to rescuing and distributing these foods to individuals and families who struggle with hunger.

Every day, the Foodbank sends its fleet of trucks to pick up perishable products from local grocers around our region. Thanks to the generosity of the Sisters of Charity Foundation and the United Way Development Fund, a new MarketPlace cooler was installed in February, and now provides a refrigerated space for these perishable products right on the agency dock. The new cooler creates a grocery-like experience for member agencies "shopping" for free foods, such as fresh produce, breads and dairy products. The addition of the cooler to the MarketPlace area increases



the Foodbank's capacity to safely distribute rescued foods and solidifies our commitment to feed people in a sustainable way.



On Saturday, May 10, 2014, the Foodbank will join the National Association of Letter Carriers to Stamp Out Hunger across America. It's simple to get involved! Just leave non-perishable food items by your mailbox before the time of your regular mail delivery, and your letter carrier will pick them up and deliver them to the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank. For more information, please contact your local post office or visit akroncantonfoodbank.org.



Employees from Shearer's Foods spent the day volunteering at the Foodbank.



Thank you to the Walmart Foundation for donating \$70,000 to support the Foodbank's SNAP outreach initiatives.



Shawn McCall, President of US Foods and honorary campaign co-chair rallies attendees at the Harvest for Hunger campaign kick-off event.

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