Thankful for the food bank

Regarding Bob Dyer's Nov. 5 column, "Food bank policies, including salaries, might surprise you," let's hear another point of view. My husband, Larry, and I direct the Akron Bible Church's Baskets of Love Ministry. The church is an inner-city ministry that is all about outreach to the community.

Our food ministry that started as a Christmas food basket distribution 37 years ago has never had a budget or much money, but in 2012, we became members of the food bank and the growth in our food ministry has been phenomenal.

The food bank has been a blessing for us, helping us to distribute fresh, nutritious food to one of the neediest communities in the city. In 2016 we distributed over 30,000 pounds of fresh produce, all supplied by the food bank. This is a big help to a community that often struggles to put any food on the table, much less fresh produce.

We access nutritious USDA foods, meats and dairy. We receive foundation grants for equipment and food. The Baskets of Love ministry now sponsors and maintains a hot meal program, serving an average of 800 hot meals a month, and in 2016, the emergency food pantry proudly distributed over 144,000 pounds of food.

The professionalism of the food bank staff and the value and quality of the food we receive when stacked against the money we spend far outweighs 18 cents a pound for a handling fee. This is a small price to pay to keep the food bank's lights on and give a decent wage to employees.

The opportunity to serve hungry children when school is out and to serve the homeless, the seniors and shut-ins cannot be measured. We are a thankful and proud member agency of the food bank.

Henri Etta Fletcher-Lockhart
Director, Akron Bible Church Baskets of Love