People are trying to do the best with what they have.”

-CARLA

It’s a warm summer day when we meet Carla. She’s taken two buses to get to St. Joseph’s Catholic Church: an hour commute.

“When I get to sit down and have a meal with the friends I’ve found here, it makes me feel good.”

The coronavirus has shifted hot meal programs to a grab-and-go style to safely distribute food. Unfortunately, this means people who find companionship over a community meal are left without the socialization and personal connections they’re looking for.

The coronavirus has impacted Carla. Her 21-year old son, who is a big eater, used to help pay for groceries before he lost his job. And her husband who is a subcontractor isn’t receiving as much work as he used to. Though their family receives some help, it’s simply not enough to get by. “It’s a real struggle to make it through the end of the month. I eat less now so my son can eat.”

Carla’s family has been through a lot. Years ago, a surgery put her out of work for six months. Their savings couldn’t handle the loss in wages, and soon they couldn’t keep up with rent. The family of three found themselves living in motels, with friends and family, and eventually, homeless. Before the virus, she felt they were back on their feet.

“This place is such a blessing and is so important to me. Saying ‘thank you’ just isn’t sufficient enough.”

READ MORE STORIES OF HOPE ONLINE.
akroncantonfoodbank.org/stories
Thank you to our top supporters of the season

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Holiday memories are made around the dinner table. Baking holiday treats, tasting your favorite dish – but most importantly, connecting with friends and family over a special holiday meal. Food brings us together; food helps make lasting memories. For families facing hunger in our region, holiday meals might not feel as special. But together, we can help. Let’s ensure all families can gather over a very special meal. With your support, families can find joy this holiday season.

Join Our Holiday Campaign!

Financial Contributions
Please consider making a personal donation or a corporate gift.

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

Start an Online Fundraiser
Create a personalized online fundraiser, and share the link via email and through your social networks.

Host a Food & Funds Drive
Collect food and financial contributions for your Foodbank.

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

HARVEST MOON VIRTUAL RUN/WALK
November 8, 2020
Support the prepared and perishable food rescue program of the Foodbank, Community Harvest, through the annual Harvest Moon run. This year is a 5k only.

Double Dollar Day
November 30, 2020
On Cyber Monday, generous friends of the Foodbank will match your gift. On this day, $1 = 8 meals!

Long Haul Against Hunger
December 2020
Drive by and donate monetary donations and nonperishable food items while iHeartMedia radio personalities broadcast live! Visit akroncantonfoodbank.org/longhaul or call 330.535.6900 for more information.

Holiday Match
December 14-18, 2020
Help families find joy this holiday season. Thanks to several friends of the Foodbank, your donation can be matched to help twice as many families on December 14-18, 2020.

Selfless Elf 5K Virtual Run/Walk
December 19, 2020
Dress in your favorite, festive holiday-themed costumes or running gear. For more information on the virtual race, visit selflesself.com.

Visit akroncantonfoodbank.org/holiday for more information.
St. Joseph’s Catholic Church, a hunger-relief program within the Foodbank’s network, has been serving the community since the ‘70s. Funded by church parishioners and its St. Vincent de Paul Society, the food program offers a hot lunch, groceries and clothing to community members in need.

Serving 200 meals and packing 100 bags of groceries on average each week, the program is managed by three volunteers and run by 30 dedicated church members and the court’s community service program. One of those parishioners is Judge Eddie Elum of the Massillon Municipal Court, a 35-year volunteer at the weekly program.

“The need is greater today than it was 35 years ago when we started this program. Hunger and food insecurity are real and many people don’t realize that,” said Judge Elum.

As COVID-19 stripped many people of their savings and livelihoods, St. Joseph’s has seen an increase in need from people they’ve never served before.

“We’ve had a lot of new people due to the circumstances who don’t have any resources right now. We’re just glad we’re able to help as much as we can,” said Stephanie Ilg, one of the three volunteers who manages the program.

The program primarily serves senior citizens, veterans and people with mental health and addiction issues. But now, Stephanie and her volunteers are providing hope to many more, including entire families who have moved in together and grandparents taking care of grandchildren.

“It’s more than just food; it’s part of creating a sense of community. Our clients know us, and they like to come talk to us each week.”

Because of the coronavirus, the food program has shifted to a takeout-style hot meal, limiting the amount of time people get to spend with one another. The feeling of welcome and togetherness isn’t completely lost as community members stand in line, though most will be happy when they can get back to business as usual.

We’re so grateful for the food program at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Massillon and for their dedication to local hunger-relief efforts. Because of your support, we can continue to fight hunger together.
LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY BY PLANNING YOUR GIFT

THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT LOCAL HUNGER-RELIEF EFFORTS.

Bequest: Remember the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank in your will.

Charitable Gift Annuity: Make a gift of cash or appreciated property and receive fixed payments during your lifetime.

Life Insurance: Assign an existing policy to the Foodbank or designate the Foodbank as a beneficiary of a new policy.

Retirement Assets: Select the Foodbank as the beneficiary of your 401(K) or traditional IRA.

For more information on any of the above options, please contact Debra Hagarty at 330.535.6900.

LOCAL COUPLE MAKE LASTING IMPACT ON HUNGER RELIEF

THE AKRON-CANTON REGIONAL FOODBANK HAS SEEN AN OUTPOURING OF SUPPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC, HELPING IT QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY RESPOND TO THE INCREASE IN NEED FROM LOCAL FAMILIES STRUGGLING WITH HUNGER.

Harry and Cathy have been long-time supporters of the Foodbank’s hunger-relief efforts. They’re members of the Sustainer Circle, donating monthly through automatic, electronic payments.

“We like to give to the Foodbank because it can do so much more with a dollar – donations are used wisely and they multiply,” explained Cathy.

Supporting the fight against hunger is a cause that’s extremely personal for the couple. Harry shares stories from his childhood about preparing ketchup sandwiches, cornmeal skillets or dousing bread with milk for dinner.

Harry’s dad, a house-framing carpenter, had steady work when weather was agreeable; his mother cleaned homes. During the winter, their local grocery store would extend his family a credit so they could eat.

Cathy describes Harry’s story as having a powerful impact on her, and that she has always been surrounded by people facing hardships. As a teacher and then a pastor for 20 years, she’s fielded many phone calls from families seeking help. One of the churches she worked at organized its own food pantry for local families.

“Parents choosing not to eat to provide for their children—to see the struggle; it was heart-wrenching.”

Though years have passed since Cathy has retired, she had the very same feeling of sorrow as she saw the lines of people waiting for food because of COVID-19. She believes the coronavirus has raised the community’s awareness of how closely families live paycheck to paycheck.

To help offer hope to families facing hunger, the couple recently established a charitable gift annuity (CGA) for the Foodbank. A CGA will provide them partially tax-free and fixed payments during their lifetime. CGAs terminate when the donor(s) passes away, and the Foodbank receives the residual funds.

For more information on CGAs, please contact Debra Hagarty at 330.535.6900.

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OCTOBER 13, 2020
CORE Event for Young Professionals

NOVEMBER 8, 2020
Virtual Harvest Moon Run

NOVEMBER 30, 2020
Double Dollar day

DECEMBER 19, 2020
Selfless Elf 5k virtual run/walk

SAVE THE DATE

FEBRUARY 16, 2021
Harvest for Hunger Kick-off Breakfast

FOR EVENT DETAILS, VISIT akroncantonfoodbank.org/events

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