

FOODBANKFOCUS

A PUBLICATION OF THE AKRON-CANTON REGIONAL FOODBANK
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AKRON-CANTON REGIONAL
**FOOD
BANK**

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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 Helen.

In 2020, Helen was diagnosed with cancer. Her world turned upside down in what seemed like a blink of an eye. Before getting sick, she owned her own window cleaning business. She never needed to visit a food pantry for herself and didn't receive SNAP food benefits.

Helen's initial cancer treatments began in the morning and lasted into the evening. Not only did she no longer have time to work, but she was too ill for physical labor. One day, while driving down the street after a treatment, she saw a long line of cars waiting to receive food from a drive-thru food pantry.

She started visiting the pantry to help make ends meet while she navigated a new budget and lifestyle. The food pantry provided her with fresh fruits, vegetables, meat and pantry staples. But it also provided her with new friendships and support.

"This place has been here for me in my lowest of lows and my highest of highs," she said. "This place has a real special place in my heart."

Helen is still receiving cancer treatments and surgeries. She has struggled to find a job willing to work with her treatment schedule. When she needs a little help with groceries, she knows the pantry is there for her with open arms.

Throughout her emotional health journey, Helen has remained positive. When she has the time, she helps volunteer at the same pantry that supports her.

Helen says to supporters of the Foodbank and local hunger relief, "I love you. Thank you. If the world worked together like this food pantry, it would be a better place."

“

We were born and raised in Akron. Our kids were raised here, and our grandchildren are being raised here. Giving locally requires participation because it's in our own backyard.”

*Dave and Cheryl Venarge
Philanthropists*



Local family makes significant impact for Foodbank

The Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank is extremely grateful to call Dave and Cheryl Venarge good friends. Their extensive commitment to hunger relief compelled them to make a significant donation to the Foodbank's capital campaign, with the new onsite food pantry at the Main Campus in Akron being named in their family's honor. Dave and Cheryl also established an endowment fund, helping to ensure their faithful support to the Foodbank will continue in perpetuity.

The new pantry, now open, is named The Venarge Family Food Pantry & Resource Center. It will serve families with groceries and other support services through community partnerships.

“Having the pantry named after our family is a legacy we can be very proud of, all the way through our grandchildren and those who come after them,” said Cheryl.

The Venarge's passion for fighting hunger runs deep. Both growing up in single-parent homes, Dave and Cheryl know firsthand how important it is to have access to nourishing, consistent food.

Cheryl, though retired, has made it her personal mission to feed school children in the Akron Public School district. On a Saturday morning, you can find Cheryl, her family and friends packing 200 weekend food bags for children they'll never meet. Sourcing the food, packing and delivering the bags — Cheryl does it all.

“Finding food for kids keeps us busy! We talk about food insecurity a lot — this is what we do. It's a part of our lives,” she said.



You can also find Cheryl at the Foodbank's Main Campus in Akron a few times per month. She is a dedicated volunteer who has helped in the warehouse, at drive-thru distributions, and is someone we

rely heavily on for administrative support. She also plans to be a regular, friendly face in the new food pantry.

The Venarge's have passed their philanthropic spirit to their children and six granddaughters. It's become an annual tradition for the girls, now ages 12 to 21, to convene at the Akron Community Foundation to help determine what organizations their grandparents grant money to each year. They receive grant proposals and hear presentations on each charity before deciding which charities to support. They have also visited some of the organizations to see their impact firsthand.

“We think it's very important for the children to be aware of their surroundings — to see firsthand what is going on in their community,” said Dave.

Our community is lucky to have such a generous and dedicated couple like Dave and Cheryl who are willing to support local causes both financially and with their time and talents. Thank you, Dave and Cheryl, for making a significant impact on hunger in our community!

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This CGA is a wonderful opportunity and a win-win for both the Foodbank and me. To be able to supplement my income through a program like this is great. Plus, I’m able to help the community and feel good about it.”

*Beverly
Foodbank Donor*

Donor creates a “Win-Win” gift

You’d never know Beverly is 80 years old. Just five years ago, she drove across the country to help her brother move to Colorado. She’s chatty, witty and spry. Already retired, it’s important for her to manage her money carefully. Just because she has a budget doesn’t mean she can’t also support organizations doing important work in her community.

Beverly has been a Foodbank supporter for a few years — becoming a financial donor during the pandemic.

After Beverly’s initial donation to the Foodbank, she received more information about the organization’s impact. She toured the new Stark County Campus and saw her donations hard at work. Soon, she decided to take her involvement with the Foodbank one step further. Beverly established a charitable gift annuity (CGA) for the Foodbank.

A CGA will provide Beverly partially tax-free and fixed payments during her lifetime.

CGAs terminate when the donor(s) pass(es) away, and then the

Foodbank receives the residual funds from the donor’s CGA.

“This CGA is a wonderful opportunity and a win-win for both the Foodbank and me. To be able to supplement my income through a program like this is great. Plus, I’m able to help the community and feel good about it.”

Growing up in a family of six during the Great Depression was difficult for her parents. “My dad always had a job. We always had what we needed, but nothing extra.” This experience, along with seeing so much heartache in her community over her lifetime, has inspired Beverly to support the Foodbank’s work.

“There are so many people out there hurting. If I can help in some small way, then I’m happy to. I care about people.”

“

To me, there’s so much need out there. I wish more people knew about hunger in our community. I’ve been so blessed throughout my life — I just know God is directing me to do this.”



For more information on how a CGA could potentially be a “win-win” opportunity to help you grow your income, save on your taxes and help the Foodbank, please contact Debra Hagarty at 330.535.6900.

Feeding our neighbors is a community-wide effort

The Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank can feed its neighbors thanks to the support from its many community partners. Financial resources allow the Foodbank to purchase food when necessary and keep refrigerators running; food donations from a variety of sources help fill our shelves; nonprofit partners distribute food to families facing hunger; community leaders volunteer their time, talents and so much more. Caring for our community truly takes a village!

Every partner in the fight against hunger is vital to this work, and nonprofit partners who manage food programs are the boots on the ground when it comes to feeding our neighbors. Nearly 600 hunger-relief programs serve individuals and families in need across our eight-county service area. These pantries, hot meal sites, shelters, children and senior citizen programs serve as the difference between hunger and hope for thousands of people in our region.

The Foodbank is focused on building a strong, sustainable and collaborative network to help optimize the region's collective work in hunger relief. We couldn't feed our neighbors without the passion and perseverance of our hunger-relief partners.

To help cultivate growth and learnings for the network, we hosted nearly 20 roundtable



conversations for partners in 2022, offered 37 orientations and food safety trainings, and invested \$1.7 million in capacity-building resources through food credits, financial support, computers, shelving and more.

This year, we hosted our biennial network gathering for partners. Network partners came together to discuss best practices and share innovative ideas in our work. Topics covered included succession planning, asset building, fundraising strategies, cultural humility and grant writing.

Feeding our neighbors is a community-wide effort and you can help! Volunteer, make a financial contribution, become a hunger-relief advocate and so much more! Learn how you can get involved with your Foodbank at akroncantonfoodbank.org.

IN 2022

NEARLY
20
ROUNDTABLES


37
Orientations & Trainings

\$1.7M
FOR PARTNER RESOURCES



Celebrating 20 years in service!

Foodbank president and CEO Dan Flowers marked 20 years in service to the Foodbank this year. Under his leadership, our Foodbank has experienced monumental growth, innovation and service to our community. Thanks, Dan!

Honor Roll

THANK YOU TO OUR TOP SUPPORTERS OF THE SEASON

Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank Staff
 Amazon FC AKR1
 Aultman Health Foundation
 Ronald & Grace Barber
 Barberton Community Foundation
 Bauhart Family
 Ken & Gerri Blum
 Buckeye Corrugated, Inc.
 Eileen Burg
 Phillip & Debra Canuto
 The Chiron Family Chairtable Fund
 The Christ Foundation
 Community Health Resources, Inc.
 Costco Wholesale
 CVS Health
 Dominion Energy
 Enterprise Holdings Foundation
 FirstEnergy
 The Harry K. and Emma R. Fox Charitable Foundation
 GAR Foundation
 Giant Eagle
 GOJO Industries, Inc.
 Diane L. Graham
 Bruce & Erica Greer Family Foundation
 Greg & Tricia Griffith
 Heinen's Fine Foods
 John Hinds
 Hudson St. Mary Men's Club
 Louis Jaber
 Jeffrey & Elizabeth Kahrs
 Dale Gilbert & Mildred Keyser
 Kovatch Castings, Inc.
 James & Grace Kozak
 Nathan Lieb
 Andy & Emily Little
 Philip & Peggy Lloyd
 Charles E. Loehr Charitable Trust
 Massillon Cable TV
 The Mitsui USA Foundation
 NJM Insurance Group
 Robert O. & Annamae Orr Family Foundation
 Gary & Cheryl Prather
 Louise Pursley
 The Ada C. and Helen J. Rank Foundation
 Timothy & Katherine Rasinski
 Ripple Effect CLE Fund
 Joe & Annette Ruby
 The Samuel Reese Willis Foundation, Inc.
 Larry Shirk
 The Sisler McFawn Foundation
 The J.M. Smucker Co.
 Stark County Medical Society
 David & Cheryl Venarge
 Walmart & Walmart Foundation
 Barry Weidner Memorial Golf Tournament Fund
 Cheryl Wells
 The Welty Family Foundation
 Westfield
 Woodforest National Bank

Thank you for supporting your Foodbank's Holiday Campaign!

More than 80 organizations coordinated food and funds drives with their schools, faith-based organizations and coworkers, and nearly 1,000 elves participated in the Foodbank's 11th annual Selfless Elf 5k. The holidays were brighter because of your support of the Foodbank and our neighbors in need. Thank you for creating a season filled with kindness, warmth and nourishing meals for local families!



Students from Richfield Elementary School donated 839 pounds of cereal to help our neighbors in need.



Selfless elves jingled their way through downtown Akron to support hunger relief.



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