

FOODBANKFOCUS

A PUBLICATION OF THE AKRON-CANTON REGIONAL FOODBANK
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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 Julia.

Julia, 56, has a big heart. She graduated from college with a degree in social work and worked with children in the foster care system for years. After having her first child, she knew she wanted to be a stay-at-home mom. Julia fell in love with being a mother and started adopting and fostering children so they could have a better life. She and her husband loved having a big family.

But she never could have imagined raising several children alone. A few years ago, her husband died in a farming accident. He was in the hospital for days, accumulating nearly \$500,000 in medical bills. Fortunately, the bills were paid by Worker's Compensation, but still, amidst her grieving, Julia worried how she would make it without him.

Julia has a household of 12, with most of her kids still in school. The money Julia receives every month from her husband's death is not enough to pay

her large family's bills, and they don't receive government food benefits.

Because of inflation, Julia's grocery bills have risen dramatically. She has a job working at a greenhouse, but it is not enough to support her family.

"Everything's getting to be harder and harder to pay — electric bills have gone up, gas bills have gone up, insurance. Everything has gone up."

She visits the Love Center Food Pantry in Holmes County for extra groceries when she needs to.

"This pantry helps alleviate the stress of worrying about how I'm going to feed my family."

Because of the pantry, Julia can use her paycheck to purchase her children's other essentials.

"These groceries make it so that I can purchase clothes for the kids or buy school supplies."

Foodbank celebrates National Volunteer Month

Foodbank volunteers have a selfless commitment to the fight against hunger. Their gift of service is invaluable; we truly could not do this work without them. Each year during National Volunteer Month, we recognize our volunteers' compassion, dedication and contributions. Below are this year's award recipients. Thank you, friends! We love you!

STARK COUNTY CAMPUS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Lori Hart

Lori is a huge help in the Keith D. Monda Family Food Pantry & Resource Center. She volunteered 380 hours in 2022, helping register neighbors in the pantry, assisting them with shopping, and stocking the pantry shelves.



DO YOU HAVE A STORY OF A TIME YOU FELT YOU REALLY HELPED SOMEONE?

Every day I've been in the pantry has been a positive experience. Seeing firsthand that people are receiving help with feeding their families is satisfying, especially during these challenging times of high inflation and economic uncertainty.

MAIN CAMPUS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Eric Shamp

In 2022, Eric volunteered 146 times for a total of 463 hours. He helps package food boxes for seniors, assists partners in the MarketPlace, serves families at Neighborhood Distributions and so much more.



WHY DO YOU VOLUNTEER WITH THE FOODBANK?

I love the mission and what the Foodbank does. I'm happy to do my part, and I'm happy to help people. It's always a good feeling to volunteer at the Neighborhood Distribution and directly see and help people in need.

ORGANIZATION VOLUNTEER GROUP OF THE YEAR

Glenwood Class of '75

The Glenwood Class of '75 began volunteering at the Foodbank's Stark County Campus in 2021. Every month, the group helps sort and pack food for local families and individuals struggling with hunger.



WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT VOLUNTEERING?

Volunteering brings us closer as a group. We sort donated items and canned goods, check for expiration dates, wipe down items, pack boxes for distribution to senior citizens, and sort and stock items. It's nice to have a variety of things to do each time. We all wanted to give back to the community where we grew up.

CORPORATE VOLUNTEER GROUP OF THE YEAR

Giant Eagle

In 2022, 41 Giant Eagle associates donated 106 hours of service to the Foodbank. Giant Eagle has been a loyal supporter for more than 20 years and is one of our best examples of a strong, sustained partnership.



WHY DOES YOUR CORPORATION CHOOSE TO SUPPORT HUNGER RELIEF?

As a retailer focused on providing its customers with high-quality foods, we understand the impact of hunger in our communities. Giant Eagle is deeply committed to combating hunger and food insecurity through food donations, financial support and associate volunteerism. We are honored and humbled to be recognized as the Corporate Volunteer Group of the Year and thank our team members for their commitment to helping our communities thrive.

Foodbank launches 3-year strategic plan, focuses on deepening its impact



Your Foodbank has served the community through a variety of challenges in recent years. We've been flexible and nimble, and have experienced the equivalent of 10 years of innovation during that short time. Although 2022 was another year of profound change and many challenges, we also knew it was critical for us to make time to pause, reflect and set the stage for our work ahead. After engaging in meaningful dialogue with a variety of stakeholders, the Foodbank created a 3-year strategic plan focusing on five key areas. Moving forward, we strive to **deepen our impact** in each of these areas. To learn more about the Foodbank's strategic plan, please visit akroncantonfoodbank.org/strategy.



Our Neighbors

The people we serve are the beating heart of everything we do. We will deepen our impact for our neighbors by deepening our relationship with them by determining the specific food they need, how best to get it to them, and to ensure their experience accessing charitable food is one that maintains their dignity and respect.



Our Communities

Whether rural or urban, rich in resources or struggling to meet basic needs, we owe every community we serve a consistently high-quality experience. As we deepen our impact throughout our geographical footprint, we must forge deeper collaborations, maximize shared infrastructure, expand community connection points and leverage our scale to better serve our region.



Our Investors

Our work is enabled by the extraordinary generosity of our investors in the form of food, money and time. The Foodbank strives to deepen our impact with our stakeholders who choose to support local hunger relief.



Our Foodbankers

The Foodbank strives to be a place where people do good, feel rewarded and have fun. To deepen our impact for the community, the Foodbank will continue cultivating the Foodbank Family culture.



Our Foodbank

Our physical locations and the manner in which we run them must continue to enable our responsiveness, agility and commitment to innovation. We will continue to deepen our impact by investing in the organization and continuing our legacy of efficient operation and high-quality service.

We need your help to advocate for new Farm Bill

In March, Congress announced the end of the emergency Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) allotments that more than 1.5 million Ohioans relied on the last three years of the pandemic. Individuals enrolled in SNAP received approximately \$90 per person in additional support each month. The last of these emergency allotments ended in early 2023.

SNAP is the country's largest anti-hunger program and this change has left many of our neighbors with fewer resources to attain fresh, healthy foods.

Your Foodbank is here to provide support to our communities when federal benefits are not available. But there is more you can do!

The current Farm Bill, the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018, will expire in September 2023, and negotiations for a new bill have begun. Every five years, Congress revisits the bill, which contains provisions for several farm and conservation programs, but the bulk of the spending, more than 75%, is geared toward nutrition programs such as SNAP. As the bill is debated in the Senate and House Agricultural Committees, it will be critical for hunger-relief advocates to make their voices heard.

Join your Foodbank in its advocacy efforts related to this bill and other critical pieces of legislation by signing up to be an advocate at akroncantonfoodbank.org/advocate.



“

There has been a pretty stark increase in need across the district. I think we're really fortunate to have the partnership with the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank. We couldn't do this work without them.”

Ted Lysiak

President of Nelson Garrettsville Community Cupboard

Nelson Garrettsville Community Cupboard makes a difference for local families

The Nelson Garrettsville Community Cupboard in Portage County has served families in the Garfield Local School District for more than a decade. But with inflation and increased grocery and fuel prices, they are helping feed more families than ever before.

“There has been a pretty stark increase in need across the district,” said Ted Lysiak, president of the program and superintendent of Garfield Local Schools.

Each month, 70 families receive groceries and hygiene products like shampoo and deodorant through their drive-thru food pantry. More than 40 households with transportation barriers receive groceries delivered directly to their homes through their delivery program. And their snack pack program discreetly provides more than 100 students with a bag of yummy, healthy snack foods every month.

“I think we're really fortunate to have the partnership with the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank,” Lysiak said. “We couldn't do this work without them.”

They also could not do this work

without the support of their generous community. Local donors help sustain their fuel costs to deliver food to people in need, 4-H partnerships help acquire two pigs every year so families can have fresh meat around the holidays, and local farmers donate eggs and fresh fruit.



Susan (left) enjoys helping people find the the food they need for their families.

And, of course, volunteers help make everything run smoothly. When families visit the pantry, they know a kind volunteer will assist them. Volunteers like Susan make sure every family has a pleasant experience. Multiple times per week, Susan volunteers with the

pantry because she has experienced hunger firsthand.

“I started volunteering because when my first husband passed away, I was able to receive help when my children were younger. This is a way for me to give back now. I know the need out there, having been on both sides,” said Susan.

Because of the community's support, families like Tammy's can receive the groceries they need to live healthy lives. Tammy is a mom of three. A few years ago, her husband unexpectedly got sick and accumulated a number of medical bills they're trying to pay off. When she needs a little extra help with groceries, she visits the food pantry.

“I was pregnant, and my husband was in the hospital. Everything just snowballed, and we needed help.”

With the support of the community and the Foodbank, The Nelson Garrettsville Community Cupboard can support families when they're in need.

Foodbank embarks on renovation and expansion project in Akron



Community members made their mark on the Foodbank's history by signing the white construction beam earlier this year.

The Foodbank was excited to welcome guests to its Main Campus in Akron for a beam signing event. Guests had the opportunity to sign a 21-foot beam that has already been erected in the new expansion. The event commemorated the second phase of the organization's capital campaign project and renovation of its Akron facility.



Perry Clark (left) and Gary Wyatt (right), directors of local food programs, celebrate with Foodbank President and CEO Dan Flowers.

The Foodbank embarked on the construction project in the fall. It will enable the organization to better serve its hunger-relief network and community members struggling with hunger.

A series of mission-critical renovations will be made and includes an addition of a new network partner welcome center and distribution docks on the south

side of the building. The freezer and cooler capacity will be doubled, and a food pantry, similar to the one in the Stark County Campus, will be added. Office and community spaces will also be renovated.

"This project brought together so many networks of people across our region who focused their energy, talents and passion on making tomorrow brighter for people they may never meet," said Amanda Montgomery, chair of the Foodbank's board of directors.

"That's what this project represents – creating a future for this community that transcends this moment – building something that endures beyond ourselves."



Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro signs the construction beam.

Support Harvest for Hunger. Help feed families.

Say no to local hunger and yes to feeding families. It's simple — support the Foodbank's 32nd annual Harvest for Hunger Campaign. Harvest for Hunger is your Foodbank's largest and most essential annual fundraising campaign, helping support food distribution all year long. This year's goal is to raise the equivalent of 4.5 million meals and we need your help! For more information, visit akroncantonfoodbank.org/harvest.



CHECK OUT HUNGER

Donate \$10, \$5 or \$1 each time you visit a participating supermarket or GetGo gas station.



HOST A VIRTUAL FOOD DRIVE

Create a personalized online fundraiser and share with your social networks.



HOST A FOOD & FUNDS DRIVE

Collect food and funds for your Foodbank.



FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Please consider making a personal donation or a corporate gift. \$1 = 4 meals!

Mark Your Calendar

APRIL 10-MAY 8, 2023

Walmart & Sam's Club "Fight Hunger. Spark Change." Campaign

MAY 7, 2023

Akron Area Interfaith Council's
14th Annual Hunger Walk

Board of Directors

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SUPPORT YOUR FOODBANK

You can make a lasting impact on local families facing hunger. Please consider leaving a legacy gift to the Foodbank or becoming a member of our Sustainer Circle by making monthly contributions.

When every \$1 donated can help provide four nourishing meals, your generous gift can go a long way.