



FOODBANKFOCUS

A PUBLICATION OF THE AKRON-CANTON REGIONAL FOODBANK ■ **SUMMER 2021**



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akroncantonfoodbank.org



SERVING 8 COUNTIES
Carroll, Holmes, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit,
Tuscarawas & Wayne Counties

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“

I truthfully am grateful for everything the Foodbank does.”

-ROBERTA



EVERY MEAL HAS A STORY. MEET ROBERTA.

Roberta is strong. Every two weeks she travels nearly a mile uphill in her wheelchair to receive food from the Foodbank's drive-thru distribution.

“Today was a struggle,” she says as she exhales. “I'm in physical therapy for a sprained back and getting here was hard.”

Because of COVID-19, transportation has become an issue for Roberta. Local services that typically help elderly people get around are limited because of the pandemic. In most cases, Roberta is stuck traveling on her own.

She lives in an apartment specifically for low-income seniors; this helps her save on rent and utilities. But

her fixed income barely covers the cost of food. That's why the Foodbank and its hunger-relief partners are so important. If it weren't for these programs, Roberta would have to rely on her sister for help. “I know my sister would do without in order to help me, and I can't do that.”

Though Roberta is in need, she still helps her fellow neighbors. Of the food items she receives at the distribution that she cannot use, she gives the items away to ensure nothing is wasted. “I like to save someone else the time who can't get out or make ends meet — it helps them out.”

Thank you for supporting your Foodbank and our community members struggling with hunger.

HONOR ROLL

THANK YOU TO OUR TOP SUPPORTERS OF THE SEASON

3M

Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank Staff

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Amazon FC AKCI

American Electric Power Foundation

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YOUR GENEROSITY SUPPORTS RURAL PROGRAMS IN HOLMES COUNTY

As one of a few hunger-relief agencies in the western part of Holmes County, Lakeville United Methodist Church never turns anyone away.

“That was one of the reasons why we saw a need,” said Sandy, the pantry director.

“There was nothing really in our corner of the county, and we wanted to help.”



Lakeville native, Sandy, has always been part of the food programs at Lakeville United Methodist Church.

Sandy has been involved with the pantry since its conception in 2007. “I just feel that God has called me to help in this way. I’ve become more aware of the needs in the community and what a blessing it is to help others.”

The pantry typically serves 35 to 40 families per distribution through its biweekly food programs, although numbers have been down recently due to the pandemic. This is attributed to elderly clients feeling less safe about going out in public.

“We’re a low-income area with a lot of unemployment. It’s a small community away from the larger towns, so I think there’s always been a need here,” said Sandy.

In 2012, Lakeville United Methodist Church joined the Foodbank’s network of hunger-relief partners. Sandy said this partnership has saved funds for the pantry and has helped it become more cost-effective.

“It’s been a great relationship, and we’re always so thankful for everything the Foodbank has available,” Sandy said.

“Before we joined the Foodbank’s network, we were limited in our spending and what we were able to provide. But because we’re able to buy larger quantities of food at a reduced rate, it has helped us tremendously.”

The Foodbank and its partners have always shared the cost of procuring, storing and distributing food to the community. But because of the community’s generosity in 2020, the Foodbank is able to temporarily waive these fees, allowing partners to invest in their capacity and other resources to better serve their community.

Because of the 2021 shared maintenance fee waiver, Lakeville United Methodist Church will be able to invest in its capacity to source and distribute even more food. This savings will enable Lakeville United Methodist Church to purchase a third refrigerator this year to source, store and distribute more food.



Linda, a volunteer, helps load groceries into cars during a food distribution.

Thank you for your continued support. Your generosity has directly helped our hunger-relief partners and the people in their community facing hunger. We couldn’t do this work without you!

THANK YOU FOODBANK MAJOR PARTNERS!

VISIONARY PARTNERS 1 MILLION+ MEALS



MISSION PARTNERS 80,000+ MEALS

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 The TJX Companies
 Tri-County Restaurant Association
 Theodore & Maureen Unton
 David & Cheryl Venarge
 Wayne Insurance Group
 Wells Fargo

LEADERSHIP PARTNERS 200,000+ MEALS



YOUR SUPPORT FUELS COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN

Because of you, 2020 was a year of considerable generosity. The Foodbank is positioned to extend significant support to our strained hunger-relief network based on their input about where the greatest needs exist. This year, we're enacting a bold plan to support the short- and long-term food security needs of the region. To view our entire plan, please visit akroncantonfoodbank.org/response-update. Thank you for your support!



YOUR FOODBANK WILL:

- Waive shared maintenance fees for hunger-relief partners in 2021, allowing partners to invest in capacity and resources to better serve their community.
- Save valuable time and resources for hunger-relief partners by delivering food directly to them.
- Provide food access to neighborhoods with limited food resources with a new, mobile pop-up pantry.
- Bring food to food insecure households through innovative delivery partnerships.
- Continue to offer its drive-thru grocery distributions twice per month.
- Partner with local health systems to focus on the relationship between hunger and health.

LOCAL MAN RUNS 48 HOURS WHILE FASTING TO RAISE FUNDS FOR HUNGER RELIEF

Foodbank supporters are generous community members passionate about local hunger relief. Financial contributions, volunteering, collecting food — there are so many ways to give back.



But some take their support to an entirely different level, like Niles. He's the medical director for Summa Health Sports Medicine, father of three, and a Foodbank supporter for 15 years. He's also an avid runner, always looking for new ways to challenge himself.

This spring, Niles embarked on the 4x4x48 challenge created by David Goggins. This includes running 4 miles, every 4 hours, for 48 straight hours. Being an experienced runner however, this challenge wasn't going to push Niles, he wanted to make it more difficult. He decided to fast — to not eat anything during the 48-hour timeframe and raise funds for the Foodbank.

"Food is a basic necessity. We all need food for energy and having access to it makes everything in your life easier," said Niles. "We have such an abundance of food in this country that we take it for granted. We assume no one goes hungry."

Niles remembers visiting India with his parents as a child and being struck by the immense poverty he saw there. As he grew older, he realized poverty exists in the U.S. too, it's just not as visible.

COVID-19 exposed this reality for many, as long lines of cars wrapped around the Foodbank for miles waiting to receive groceries. Niles and his family volunteered at a drive-thru distribution and saw the need firsthand.

"It was pretty eye-opening to see all the cars in line for food. For my kids, I think the enormity of this, how many people are affected by hunger, is the bigger problem."

Niles began his Goggins Challenge at 11pm, pausing for a short break, and running again at 3am, 7am, 11am etc., with no food and minimal sleep.

"The combination of sleep deprivation and not eating made it difficult. Toward the end, I was getting pretty hungry. But at least I knew I had an end. For

people facing food insecurity, they don't necessarily know where their next meal is coming from."

Niles helped collect more than \$13,000 for the Foodbank. This will help provide the equivalent of 52,000 meals for families facing hunger. He and his family will continue to create awareness about hunger in our community, and plan to make volunteering at the Foodbank an annual tradition.



"The biggest thing I want my kids to carry with them is however they help someone else, it's important, every little bit counts."

"It doesn't matter that they're just one person. If we all pay it forward, it multiplies, and the change made is exponential."

VIEW THE 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

See your impact in action by reviewing the 2020 annual report: akroncantonfoodbank.org/resources



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