

# FOODBANKFOCUS

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SUMMER 2023



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**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 Sandy.

It's around 10am on a Wednesday. Sandy has been waiting in line for a local food distribution for half an hour. While she eagerly waits for her groceries, she has a smile on her face. “My name is Sandy, like candy,” she introduces herself.

Food has always been a part of Sandy's life. Before she retired, she worked in a high school cafeteria. Now, when she's able, she helps her daughter cater food for special events. According to her three children and three grandchildren, she is a terrific cook. Every meal Sandy prepares is flavorful, chock full of veggies and made with love.

Eating healthy is important to Sandy. Several of her family members struggled with their health as they got older, and Sandy wants to be around to see her grandchildren blossom into adults. Ten years ago, she was diagnosed with fibromyalgia, meaning a healthy diet is even more important for living a long and fulfilling life. But nutritious, fresh produce and groceries can be expensive, especially with rising food prices. “Things are starting to get so expensive,” she says.

At 76 years old, Sandy lives on a fixed income, and groceries are difficult to afford. She lives alone in a mobile home community tailored for seniors and pays her own utilities. Because a new leasing company recently purchased her home, her rent will nearly double after her lease ends. Her already-stretched budget will be worn even thinner.

Sandy began visiting a food program in Stark County a few months ago when she realized she needed help. The food program gives Sandy access to nourishing groceries that help sustain her.

**As tears well in her eyes, overcome with appreciation for everyone who supports the Foodbank and local hunger relief, Sandy says, “I am so thankful. So very grateful for everything – so very, very grateful.”**

Sandy is one of thousands of seniors who find food security and bridge hardships every week with your support.

“

When our associates start thinking about volunteering, their mind goes straight to the Foodbank. It's such a consistent, high-quality and engaging volunteer opportunity. And they get to see their impact firsthand.”

*Jason Chapman*

*The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company,  
Community Engagement Specialist*



## The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company is committed to doing good for the community

The Foodbank relies on community partners to help achieve its mission. Partners provide food, funds, volunteers and more. And then some partners become integral members of our Foodbank Family — an extension of the organization, their staff a sounding board for ideas. The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company is that type of partner for the Foodbank, and we're so grateful for their support.

Goodyear has supported the Foodbank since 1988. Over the years, they've integrated the Foodbank into their company culture.

“Being a good partner and staying aware of what the Foodbank is working on enables us to offer meaningful support wherever we can,” said Joni Fitch, director of community affairs & engagement for Goodyear. “I want the Foodbank to be able to call us when they have a need they think we can help with — so we can try to solve it together.”

As a collaborative partner, Goodyear associates volunteer throughout the year in the Foodbank's warehouse, helping sort, inspect and repack food items, as well as directly serving neighbors facing hunger at our drive-thru food distributions. A Goodyear

associate has also volunteered their time and expertise on our board of directors. Goodyear has created an internal council, in which associates passionate about hunger relief work together to create unique ways to engage their colleagues in giving to the Foodbank's annual Harvest for Hunger Campaign and encourage volunteerism.

“When our associates start thinking about volunteering, their mind often goes straight to the Foodbank,” said Jason Chapman, community engagement specialist for Goodyear. “It's such a consistent, high-quality and engaging volunteer opportunity, and they get to see their impact firsthand.”

During Goodyear's annual Global Week of Volunteering, associate volunteers not only serve at the Foodbank, but also at food programs within the Foodbank's network, helping with large, one-time projects.

Goodyear associates also engage in skills-based volunteerism, utilizing their professional skills to benefit the Foodbank. In the past, Goodyear associates helped with a warehouse redesign at the Main Campus in Akron, their project management optimization team guided the Foodbank's transition team for the Stark County

Campus, they've participated in many conversations regarding warehouse safety, and their IT team offered Microsoft 365 training.



**Heather Hall and Michele Root volunteer at a Neighborhood Distribution.**

In addition to this ongoing and tremendous support, Goodyear makes an annual financial contribution to the organization and matches associate donations during the Harvest for Hunger Campaign. Because of their support, millions of meals have been provided to the community.

**“The products, brand and people of The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company are second to none in the world. The partnership the Foodbank has with Goodyear is deep and impactful, and we are continuously grateful for their support,” said Dan Flowers, Foodbank president and CEO.**

# Local families face "hunger cliff" as food benefits decrease

During the pandemic, the federal government issued low-income families additional financial support each month for groceries. The funds were allocated through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), commonly known as food stamps. The pandemic-related SNAP benefit expired after February, leaving thousands of families at risk of hunger.

The change caused individuals to lose approximately \$90 per month per person. With so many people receiving SNAP benefits because of low wages, unemployment and underemployment, the sudden end of the emergency allotment has been characterized as a "hunger cliff." The abrupt change in a family's grocery budget is as if they're standing precariously on the side of a cliff with no obvious alternatives.

Katie, a stay-at-home mother who helps homeschool her young children, found herself in a food line for the very first time. She was nervous to attend but didn't see another option. Because of the SNAP cut, she saw a dramatic decrease in the amount of food assistance her family was receiving.

**"Since our benefits were cut in half, it's been a really, really, hard adjustment, especially with a toddler and two homeschooled children. It's been a mess," she said.**

In the Foodbank's eight-county service area, nearly 168,000 people receive SNAP benefits. These individuals and the local economy have lost nearly \$16 million each month.

**According to the Food Research & Action Center, older adults at the minimum benefit level saw their monthly allotment drop from \$281 per month to \$23.**

While the pandemic emergency allotment was never meant to be permanent, the end of the expanded benefits comes at a time when family debt is on the rise. Credit card balances are at record highs, while people are stretched so thin they're no longer able to pay their credit card minimums, according to data released by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in February.

These economic factors and tighter grocery budgets mean one thing: people are facing difficult choices between providing food for their families and paying other bills. For some, this could mean forgoing meals entirely. For others, it could mean purchasing less and buying less expensive, healthier food items.



The Foodbank partnered with Summit County Job & Family Services to support families impacted by the SNAP decrease.

To help offer support to struggling families, the Foodbank partnered with Summit County Job & Family Services to offer additional pop-up pantry days.

"Your Foodbank and our hunger-relief network continue to serve families facing hunger," said Dan Flowers, Foodbank president and CEO. "We hope our neighbors turn to us before making a choice between nourishing food and paying for other necessary expenses. That's why we're here; that's why we exist — to serve our neighbors in need."



## View the 2022 Annual Report

Review the Foodbank's 2022 annual report at [akroncantonfoodbank.org/resources](https://akroncantonfoodbank.org/resources) and see your support in action!



“

**I just love helping people. I've always liked to be able to give and share what I have. It's very fulfilling to organize this whole operation to feed people and meet more than their physical needs.”**

**Edgar Raber**

*The Love Center Food Pantry,  
Director*

## Local pantry nourishes community beyond food

The Love Center Food Pantry has been a reliable source of food and support in Holmes County for the past 40 years. Edgar Raber and his wife Polly have been involved with the pantry for decades and have served as the directors for the past 10 years. They've seen families impacted by the 2008 financial crisis, COVID-19, and most recently, increased inflation.

“Over the years, the need has continued to grow,” said Edgar. The pantry is currently welcoming an average of 15 new families each month. Individuals in need receive nourishing groceries through the pantry's drive-thru distributions. It also has a diaper bank onsite for mothers in need.

Open every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, families have a sense of comfort knowing if they find themselves struggling to put food on the table, the pantry is there for them with open arms.

expenses for necessary medications quickly added up and strained their finances. But the Love Center was there for Marisa and her husband, providing groceries and emotional support.



“

**This help basically saved our lives.”**

**Marisa**

*Food Recipient*

Helping families in need is what keeps the Rabers and their dedicated group of volunteers going. “I just love helping people. I've always liked to be able to give and share what I have,” said Edgar. “It's very fulfilling to organize this whole operation to feed people and meet more than their physical needs.”



**Rosemary is a loyal volunteer at The Love Center Food Pantry.**

Marisa, 65, started visiting the food pantry a few years ago after she was laid off. She had worked all her life but suddenly found herself struggling to make ends meet. While she was worrying how she and her husband would pay their bills and buy groceries, he had a stroke.

Marisa had carried their health insurance, so her husband's hospitalization costs came directly out of pocket. The medical bills and

**Edgar is thankful for the local community's support and their partnership with the Foodbank, which helps bring their mission to life. “Without the Foodbank, we couldn't do what we do. The Foodbank has been there for us through this whole time.”**



## Construction project at Main Campus will expand Foodbank's impact on local families

Construction vehicles, neon vests and hard hats are an everyday sighting at the Foodbank's Main Campus in Akron as its renovation project is well underway. Currently on schedule, construction is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

The expansion project includes a series of mission-critical renovations that will enable the Foodbank to better serve people facing hunger in the region, as well as our network of hunger-relief partners.

The Foodbank's Main Campus doesn't currently have an onsite food pantry. A new 1,600-square-foot pantry has been designed and modeled operationally after the food pantry in the Stark County Campus. The Foodbank will also offer resources beyond food by partnering with local organizations to offer additional support services for families, such as job readiness, health screenings, legal services and more.

In addition to operating an onsite food pantry to serve neighbors in need, the Foodbank will increase the amount of fresh food it can distribute into the community by expanding the size of its cooler and freezer. Both spaces are roughly 4,000 square feet and

will be doubled, enabling the Foodbank to receive and store more fresh produce, protein and dairy products.

To better serve the food programs that rely on the Foodbank, the organization is moving the dock area where partners retrieve and load their food orders. The new 15,000-square-foot addition will provide a more welcoming space for partners waiting to load their orders. And the new dock area will create a more logistically efficient and safe experience for partners and for all guests to the facility.

Accommodations have been made to ensure Foodbank operations continue throughout construction. This includes the relocation of the monthly drive-thru food distribution which has been moved to the Canal Place parking lot, approximately 1 mile away.

### Open for Hard Hat Tours

Schedule a hard hat tour to receive a behind-the-scenes look at the new expansion project. Please contact Laura Villwock at **330.777.7579** or **lvillwock@acrfb.org** to learn more.

## Celebrity Cuisine welcomes 1,000+ guests to support hunger relief

Food enthusiasts from all over Northeast Ohio delighted in a feast of local flavors from 40 restaurants and purveyors at the 31st annual Celebrity Cuisine. Celebrity chefs served up the region's best dishes while guests bid on auction items and raffles. The event helped raise enough funds to provide as many as 520,000 meals for our community.



Stark County Court of Common Pleas Judge Natalie Haupt chats with Erica Banks and Charron Otis of Akron over a few delicious samples.

## Mark Your Calendar

**SEPTEMBER 20, 2023**

Stark County Medical Society  
22nd Annual Golf Outing

**DECEMBER 16, 2023**

11th annual Selfless Elf 5k

# Honor Roll

## THANK YOU TO OUR TOP SUPPORTERS OF THE SEASON

3M Company  
 Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank Staff  
 Akron Community Foundation  
 Andrew & Jessica Alleman  
 Amazon FC AKC1  
 Bill & Cindy Artman  
 Austin-Bailey Health and Wellness Foundation  
 Bank of America  
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 The J.M. Smucker Co.  
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 State and Federal Communications, Inc.  
 Synchrony  
 Taylor Tele-Communications, Inc.  
 Kevin Tucker & Patricia Howell  
 Walmart & Walmart Foundation  
 Westfield  
 Alan & Janice Woll Family Fund

# Thank you, Foodbank Major Partners!

## VISIONARY PARTNERS

1 million+ meals



## LEADERSHIP PARTNERS

200,000+ meals



## MISSION PARTNERS

80,000+ meals

1127 Construction, Inc.  
 Akron Area Interfaith Council  
 Akron Beacon Journal  
 Akron Community Foundation  
 Anonymous (5)  
 Jon & Kitty Antalvari  
 Bauhart Family  
 The Beaver Excavating Company  
 Bimbo Bakeries  
 BJ's Wholesale Club  
 Bridgestone Americas  
 Canton Repository  
 Cargill, Inc.  
 The Chiron Family Charitable Fund  
 Christmas Groove  
 Citizens  
 The Mary S. and David C. Corbin Foundation  
 Costco Wholesale  
 Country Pure Foods  
 James Deroche & Debra Eisenstat-DeRoche

Yvonne Drum  
 Enterprise Holdings Foundation  
 Fresh Thyme Market & Fresh Thyme Giving Tree Foundation  
 Frito Lay, Inc.  
 The Gessner Family Foundation  
 Robert & Nancy Gessner  
 Diane L. Graham  
 Bruce & Erica Greer Family Foundation  
 Greg & Tricia Griffith  
 Sandra L. & Dennis B. Haslinger Family Foundation  
 Health Foundation of Greater Massillon  
 Integrated Marketing Technologies  
 Jersey Mike's Subs  
 Kisling, Nestico & Redick, LLC  
 James & Grace Kozak  
 Kraft Heinz Company Foundation  
 Kristen Manes  
 Marc's

Matt & Baily Meeker  
 Meijer  
 The M.G. O'Neil Foundation  
 Charles E. & Mabel M. Ritchie Memorial Foundation  
 The Samuel Reese Willis Foundation, Inc.  
 Sandridge Gourmet Salads  
 Subaru of America, Inc. & Serra Subaru  
 Sheetz For The Kidz  
 The Sisler McFawn Foundation  
 Lloyd L. and Louise K. Smith Memorial Foundation  
 Summa Health System Medical Staff  
 Superior Dairy  
 Synthomer Foundation  
 The TJX Companies Inc.  
 Kevin Tucker & Patricia Howell  
 Theodore & Maureen Unton  
 US Foods  
 Clayton Whitney

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