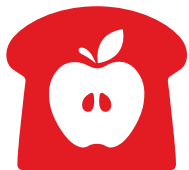


Foodbank Focus

A publication of the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank

Summer 2025



AKRON-CANTON REGIONAL

**FOOD
BANK**

1. Leave a legacy through a charitable gift annuity
2. School districts come together to fight hunger
3. Local food program focuses on children
4. Meet Jack!

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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



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Every meal has a story. Meet Kevin.

We meet Kevin at a homeless shelter, sitting at a table with his wife and two of his children. The four of them talk quietly, waiting for dinner to be served.

Dinners used to look differently for their family. Less than two years ago, they rented a house in Portage County. Kevin worked full time and was the main provider for the household. But then his health started to decline. One day, he collapsed in the bathroom and struck the hot water tank. The impact caused it to burst, scalding him with hot water and leaving him with first and second-degree burns.

The incident made him unable to work, and before they knew it, they were struggling to pay rent. Their longtime landlord understood they'd fallen on hard times, but when the property was sold, the new owner wasn't as understanding and their family was evicted.

"We struggled to get caught up on rent," Kevin says, recalling those difficult months.

They had a small amount of savings that covered three weeks in a hotel. When that ran out, they found their way to a homeless shelter.

Things have slowly started to turn around; Kevin's wife and son are both working. Kevin's health has stabilized, and he's now training to earn a certification for a new job. Together, they're getting back on their feet.

At the shelter, meals have been a lifeline, especially since several family members are working — they don't receive much through SNAP food assistance. Here, they receive a warm, nourishing breakfast and dinner every day.

"They spoil us," Kevin smiles, thinking about the meals he and his family have shared at the shelter.

Because of your support and our dedicated partners, Kevin and his family will get back on their feet.



Last year, school buses and vans representing 12 school districts delivered food donations to the Foodbank for the 7th annual Hunger: The Bus Stops Here fundraising drive.

Enough food and funds were raised to help provide the equivalent of nearly 9,000 meals for the community.

Fueled by kindness: School buses roll in with big donations to fight hunger

One of the largest demographics of individuals impacted by hunger are children under the age of 18. Nearly 20% of children in our region may struggle with hunger. Hunger-relief partners in the Foodbank's network operate nearly 300 food program sites that specifically cater to kids, including backpack programs, after-school programs, library snack programs and more.

One Foodbank donor, the Stark County Educational Service Center (ESC), is addressing food insecurity while also engaging kids in the local fight against hunger.

Eight years ago, the ESC launched Hunger: The Bus Stops Here. The campaign encourages staff, students and community members to donate food and funds to the Foodbank. Member schools of the ESC collect donations, filling classrooms and hallways with non-perishable items that will eventually be served in local homes.

Donations are then loaded upon a district's school bus or van and delivered to the Foodbank's Stark County Campus. Volunteer groups help unload

the buses in a flurry of activity, weighing the food as it comes in, as schools always enjoy a little friendly competition.



Since the ESC serves 22 school districts spanning four counties, it's safe to say this food and funds drive is a unique collaboration.

"This food drive continues to showcase the incredible impact we can make when our community unites for a common cause," said Foodbank President and CEO Dan Flowers.

"Seeing school districts collaborate across city and county lines to teach students the values of teamwork and service is truly special — and it has a real, lasting effect on our community."

Historically the campaign has been held in the spring to coincide with the Foodbank's Harvest for Hunger Campaign. To spark friendly rivalry among districts, this year's drive will take place in the fall alongside the excitement of football season.

“

Our districts love supporting the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank. They see students in need every day. Rallying their communities together to help fight hunger is rewarding for all the staff."

Marty

Assistant Superintendent at the ESC

Thank you to our friends at the ESC for continuing to support our neighbors experiencing hunger. We appreciate their partnership!

Honor Roll

Thank you to our top supporters of the season!

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Charitable gift annuities: A way to give and receive

Foodbank supporters can make a meaningful impact on the local fight against hunger through a charitable gift annuity (CGA). For individuals aged 65 years and older, CGAs provide fixed payments during the donor's lifetime in exchange for a gift of cash or appreciated property.

To learn more or request a sample gift annuity illustration based on your specific age(s), please contact Debra Hagarty, CFRE at 330.535.6900.



Benefits of charitable gift annuities

- ✓ You or another person receive fixed payments for life.
- ✓ You may qualify for an income tax deduction.
- ✓ A portion of each gift annuity payment is tax free.

AGE RANGE	GIFT ANNUITY RATES
65-70	5.7-6.3%
71-75	6.4-7%
76-80	7.2-8.1%
81-85	8.3-9.1%
86-90	9.3-10.1%

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Nearly 60,000 children in the Foodbank's region may struggle with hunger.

Your support helps children focus on fun and simply being a kid.

Food programs help fuel the future for children

Childhood is meant to be full of laughter, play and carefree moments — chasing friends on the playground or sharing giggles in the classroom. But for many young children, it's hard to enjoy those moments when they're experiencing hunger.



1 in 8 children in Holmes County may be food insecure. Organizations like Kno-Ho-Co-Ashland Community Action Commission (KCHA) help ensure children have nourishing meals every day.

KCHA is a community action agency serving four Ohio counties dedicated to improving the lives of children through a range of essential services. One of those services is their Head Start preschool program, which provides breakfast, lunch and snacks four days

per week to more than 75 children, age 3-5, from families living below 130% of the federal poverty level.

Many of these children's parents are working hard — often juggling multiple jobs or earning low wages — making it difficult to consistently provide healthy meals at home.

Head Start helps fill that gap with balanced, nourishing meals that support children's growth, development and learning. The program follows USDA dietary guidelines and ensures kids receive the nutrition they need to thrive.

As federal funding for Head Start faces uncertainty, programs like KCHA's are more important than ever. Community support helps ensure children can access meals and learning opportunities.

But the impact goes beyond just feeding children. Through their partnership with the Foodbank, KCHA can offer fresh fruits children love but might be too expensive for their families to purchase regularly. They can introduce new, healthy meals that help establish better eating habits from an early age.

"Because of our partnership with the Foodbank, we can try new and different things," said Laurel, child & family development administrator at KCHA.



Laurel is committed to serving the kids in her community.

"We try to think up creative ways to introduce foods and get them to eat new foods, or foods that they refuse to try simply because it's green," she laughs.

Proper nutrition is essential for a child's learning, growth and overall success. By providing consistent, nourishing meals, KCHA helps ensure that children can focus on being kids — not on being hungry.

Summer break impacts childhood hunger

Meet Jack. He likes to read, play outside and hopes to be a firefighter one day. Summer is his favorite season. Like most kids, the long, warm days mean he has plenty of time to play outdoors with friends.

Like most parents, Jack's mom wants him to learn, grow and thrive, but she's having a hard time right now because everything is more expensive.

As a working parent, finding affordable childcare is hard. Plus, during the school year, Jack receives free breakfast and lunch at school, helping his mom stretch her resources.

Jack is like thousands of children in our area who receive one, if not two meals while at school each day. Most of these students rely heavily on free or reduced-price meals, and some are recipients of backpack programs; they receive easy-to-prepare meals for weekends and holiday breaks.

In partnership with our hunger-relief network, your Foodbank seeks to help families just like Jack's by providing nourishing meals and snacks when school is not in session.

No family should have to go hungry. And because of generous supporters like you, we can help families making difficult choices. Together, we can make this a healthy summer for more kids in our community.

Visit Meet-Jack.com to learn more.



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Your impact highlighted in the 2024 annual report

Learn more about your support in action in our 2024 annual report at akroncantonfoodbank.org/resources.



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