

# FOODBANKFOCUS

A PUBLICATION OF THE AKRON-CANTON REGIONAL FOODBANK  
WINTER 2023



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[akroncantonfoodbank.org](http://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 Jeanette.

Jeanette, 71, loves to cook. She lives alone but her grandkids visit often, hoping she'll prepare a flavorful, homecooked meal. Chicken thighs, macaroni and cheese, spaghetti, and fish with home fries are some of their favorites. They're never hesitant to sleep over if it means grandma will make dinner *and* breakfast. Jeanette enjoys creating lasting memories with her grandkids over conversation and a simple meal.

But food can be expensive, especially when you're living on a fixed income. Jeanette retired in 2016 after years as a housekeeper. Although she's glad to be retired, she must stretch her budget more than ever. Her car is always breaking down and it's costly to fix, meaning trips to the grocery store are even more difficult.

A few years ago, she started receiving food delivered directly to her home

through the Foodbank's home delivery program.

"I'm so happy because sometimes my automobile is just not working," she says.

Every other week Jeanette receives a box of canned goods, meat, fresh fruits and vegetables and other nourishing groceries. "I feel like a kid on Christmas morning," she reflects on how she feels when her food is delivered.

Because of the home delivery program, Jeanette can have a reliable source of nourishing food and still pay her other bills and unexpected expenses.

**"I'm glad we have this program," she says. "I want to thank the people who helped donate this food. God must have touched your heart. I'm very grateful."**

# A note from Foodbank President & CEO



Your Foodbank and our network of hunger-relief partners were busy in 2022. We increased the number of food distributions with our mobile, pop-up pantry; we piloted a seasonal produce and perishable distribution; we collaborated with local farms to deliver farm fresh produce to families' doorsteps; and we redesigned how we serve guests in our food pantry based on their feedback. **It was a year marked by innovation and collaboration.**

But rising costs caused severe economic challenges for families. **In our service area, we saw a 14% increase in people served by our pantry network.** Of the families visiting pantries, 25% were new, meaning they've never visited a food program before. The Keith D. Monda Family Food Pantry in our Stark County Campus anticipated serving 100 families each week, but last year more than 600 families visited the pantry weekly.

Inflation also impacted the work of the Foodbank. Supply chain issues and the increased cost for food meant your Foodbank had to respond to a rise in demand with limited available inventory. The food donation shortage was unlike anything we've seen in our 40-year history, and we're uncertain how long this will last. We've responded to a shortage in food donations by purchasing more food than ever using donated dollars. **In 2022, we had to purchase 14% of the food we sourced compared to only 4% in 2021.** Inflation also increased the cost to fuel our fleet of trucks by 44%.

Despite these challenges, we began fulfilling the second phase of the Foodbank's capital campaign, an exciting expansion project to the Main Campus in Akron. A series of critical renovations will better serve our hunger-relief network and our neighbors facing hunger. We also led many focus groups and listening sessions with community stakeholders as we plan to launch a new strategic plan this year.

All of this work — feeding our neighbors, improving our facilities, having the ability to be nimble to respond to an increase in demand — is possible because of you and your support. **Inflation has impacted all of us, and yet you and your generosity have never faltered.** We are so grateful for you, friends. Thank you so much for keeping your Foodbank and our neighbors in need in your hearts.



Daniel R. Flowers, *President & CEO*

## Harvest for Hunger Campaign kicks off in March

The annual Harvest for Hunger Campaign is a great way for the community to support local hunger relief. There are a variety of ways to support the campaign and our neighbors facing hunger. Rally your colleagues, church members, friends and family together to support your Foodbank this spring. For more information, visit [akroncantonfoodbank.org/harvest](https://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. \$1 = 4 meals!



### FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Please consider making a personal donation or a corporate gift.

“

**Akron General is committed to ensuring families have access to basic needs for maintaining good health, especially sufficient food. This is particularly critical when patients are recovering from a health issue, and our hospital-based food pantry initiative is helping fulfill that need.”**

**Dr. Brian Harte**

*President of Cleveland Clinic Akron General*



## Foodbank secures funding to create pantries within local health systems

For years, the Foodbank has envisioned collaborative partnerships with local health systems to better serve our community, as there is a direct correlation between food insecurity and poor health outcomes. A Feeding America study reveals that communities with the highest rates of food insecurity face a higher prevalence for diseases, such as diabetes, obesity and high blood pressure.

After receiving funding from the Ohio Department of Medicaid, the Foodbank was able to partner with Akron Children’s Hospital, Cleveland Clinic Akron General and Summa Health to address health disparities and improve food access. As a result, all three health systems have opened a food pantry within their respective hospitals.

Physicians and hospital staff use a simple screening tool to ask patients questions regarding their ability to secure food for their household. Depending on the response, the patient may be referred to the hospital pantry. The pantry is stocked with food from the Foodbank.

**“Akron Children’s and our providers actually do come in contact with families every day who are really struggling with food insecurity and whose children have chronic health issues,” said Lisa Aurilio, the chief operating officer for Akron Children’s Hospital.**

Countless studies show that limited access to healthy food plays a significant role in the physical and cognitive development of children

and exacerbates the likelihood of chronic disease and many other poor health outcomes.

“We know that physicians can play a critical role in identifying and addressing food insecurity,” said Dan Flowers, Foodbank president and CEO. “The dedicated leadership, physicians and staff at our local hospitals have taken their commitment to hunger relief one step further by opening their own food pantries to serve this community, an exciting, innovative approach to addressing social determinants of health.”



*31st annual*  
**CELEBRITY CUISINE**  
APRIL 18, 2023

**THE BEST HAPPY HOUR IN STARK COUNTY BENEFITING YOUR FOODBANK**

Table sponsorships available;  
general admission \$50/person

Visit [akroncantonfoodbank.org/celebritycuisine](http://akroncantonfoodbank.org/celebritycuisine)



“

We're seeing a lot of elderly people at the shelter. With rent, medication and the cost of food, it's rough out there for seniors. We're also serving people with mental health issues and people facing addiction. But we want to provide food for everyone, and I have always had a heart for people in need.”

**Phyllis Boice**

*Friends of the Homeless  
Maintenance Manager*

## Homelessness and hunger impact local community

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, thousands of people experience homelessness in Ohio. Individuals tend to experience homelessness more frequently, though families are the second largest group.

The Foodbank is fortunate to partner with organizations that provide support services for people experiencing homelessness. Friends of the Homeless is a shelter in Tuscarawas County and a member of the Foodbank's hunger-relief network. It aims to address the very real, but unseen issue of homelessness not by treating it as a shameful condition, but by providing respect and dignity to people served and giving a hand-up when it's needed.

Friends of the Homeless is a unique shelter in that it offers accommodations for men, women and families, rather than just one population. Some shelters operate one day at a time, meaning individuals aren't guaranteed a place to sleep for consecutive nights. But residents at Friends of the Homeless enter a 90-day program where they work with a case manager who offers support services, including job readiness, goal setting,

securing housing and creating an exit strategy.

“I've seen so many positive changes in the people we serve,” said Phyllis Boice, the shelter's maintenance manager since 2005. “When they leave here, they have a positive outlook and they've changed for the better. And we provide support even after they leave — we keep in contact with them to check in.”

Phyllis manages the food programs available at the shelter. Residents receive three meals per day — fixing their own breakfast and lunch, and then coming together for supper. Dinner is prepared and provided by community volunteers. The shelter also offers to-go meals every day for non-shelter

residents, and a food box program for people in need of extra groceries.

Josh, 39, a shelter resident, is a recovering addict. He's sober now and is working toward getting his life together so he can see his children again.

**The Foodbank is grateful for your support of local hunger-relief efforts! Your generosity makes all the difference for our struggling neighbors.**

“

Having meals every day is awesome. Just knowing I have a place to sleep and something to eat means everything.”

**Josh**

*Shelter Resident*





## Give monthly to help families all year long

The Foodbank deeply appreciates the supporters who make regular financial contributions. As we feed our neighbors each month and plan for the future, it's comforting to know we have generous friends we can count on. Loyal, monthly donors are members of the Foodbank's Sustainer Circle program.

**Become a part of this elite group by contacting Laura Villwock at 330.535.6900 or [lvillwock@acrfb.org](mailto:lvillwock@acrfb.org).**

### MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Exclusive Sustainer Circle events and activities
- Sneak peek at upcoming Foodbank programming
- Special volunteer opportunities
- Reduced mail from Foodbank
- Payments made throughout the year, limiting financial burden
- Recurring auto-payments, making giving easy

## Mark Your Calendar

**FEBRUARY 28, 2023**

Harvest for Hunger Campaign Kick-off Breakfast

**MARCH 1-MAY 31, 2023**

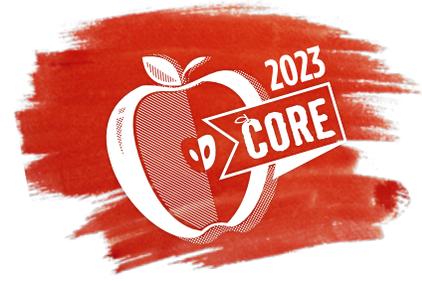
Harvest for Hunger: Check Out Hunger

**APRIL 18, 2023**

31st Annual Celebrity Cuisine

**DECEMBER 16, 2023**

Selfless Elf 5k



## CORE engages young professionals in local hunger-relief efforts

In 2011, the Foodbank launched CORE, a group for motivated young professionals wanting to expand their professional network while helping local families struggling with hunger. The YP organization underwent a refresh during the pandemic. This February the program will relaunch, offering members the opportunity to fully immerse themselves in food banking, while learning about the organization's work, who we serve and how we operate.

In their first year, CORE members will learn about the Foodbank and its impact on the community. They will participate in poverty simulations, take tours of the Foodbank's two campuses, volunteer, and learn more about the Foodbank's network of hunger-relief partners and programs.

After individuals have completed their first year in the program, they can apply to be a legacy member. Legacy members work on capstone projects for the Foodbank using the skills and knowledge they learned throughout their first year.

"The revamped program was created to educate members on the *why* of what we do here at the Foodbank," said Alex Branham, CORE coordinator. "The Foodbank's vision is a thriving community free of hunger. Young professionals in our community can play an instrumental role in the local fight against hunger. They are the next generation of leaders."

**If you are interested in joining a community of change-makers seeking to address hunger at the local level, please contact Alex Branham at 330.535.6900 or [abranham@acrfb.org](mailto:abranham@acrfb.org) or visit [akroncantonfoodbank.org/core](http://akroncantonfoodbank.org/core).**

# Honor Roll

## THANK YOU TO OUR TOP SUPPORTERS OF THE SEASON

American Electric Power Foundation  
Akron Area Interfaith Council  
Ameriprise Financial Services  
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Barberton Community Foundation  
Barnhart Crane & Rigging Company  
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Gary Benz  
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Canton LMCC, North Central Ohio Chapter, NECA  
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Larry Shirk  
The Sisler McFawn Foundation  
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Stark Community Foundation  
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Julian & Kerry Steinberg  
Synchrony  
TANA Foundation  
Taylor Tele-Communications, Inc.  
The TJX Companies  
Tri-County Restaurant Association, Inc.  
David & Cheryl Venarge  
Walmart & Walmart Foundation  
The Welty Family Foundation  
Westfield  
Clayton Whitney  
Samuel Reese Willis Foundation, Inc.  
Woodforest National Bank

# Thank you for supporting your Foodbank's Holiday Campaign!

More than 100 organizations coordinated food and funds drives with their schools, churches, friends and coworkers, and nearly 900 elves participated in the Foodbank's 10th annual Selfless Elf 5k. Approximately 9,400 turkeys were distributed through our hunger-relief partners, Foodbank grocery distributions and other special events. The holiday season was made merrier because of your support of the Foodbank and our neighbors in need. Thank you for your generosity!



The Foodbank provides food to families all year long at the I PROMISE School food pantry, and supplied turkeys for the holidays.



We partnered with KNR to distribute 1,000 turkeys during their annual Coats & Cans for Kids Turkey Giveaway.



Selfless elves celebrated the 10th running of the Foodbank's annual 5k.

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