



FOODBANKFOCUS

A PUBLICATION OF THE AKRON-CANTON REGIONAL FOODBANK ■ **SPRING 2018**



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akroncantonfoodbank.org



SERVING 8 COUNTIES

Carroll, Holmes, Medina, Portage, Stark,
Summit, Tuscarawas & Wayne Counties

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“

Even if you have a job, you may still be scraping by to make ends meet.”

-STACY



YOUR GENEROSITY HELPS SO MANY LIKE STACY

Stacy has spent the past nine years taking care of people as a home health aide, and with her soft and thoughtful demeanor, it's clear she fills the role well. However, even with a full-time position, financial emergencies and everyday expenses continue to stretch Stacy's limited budget.

“Do you pay your electric bill or buy groceries?” she asks, describing the tough decisions she must make.

Stacy first heard of the monthly direct distribution in her town more than a year ago. The food provided by services like the direct distribution allow her to pay bills without sacrificing a meal.

“I wish people knew how widespread hunger is in the

community. The economy is not catching up with the needs. Even if you have a job, you may still be scraping by to make ends meet.”

Stacy's favorite part of the distribution is the variety of fruits and vegetables available—especially the berries! She grew up eating from a garden and finds it difficult to stay healthy when produce is out of her price range.

When thinking of those who help provide the monthly distribution, Stacy's eyes light up and she smiles softly, “Saying thank you just isn't enough.”

For more Stories of Hope, or to help neighbors like Stacy, please visit our website.

akroncantonfoodbank.org/stories

HONOR ROLL

THANK YOU TO OUR TOP SUPPORTERS OF THE SEASON!

415 Group
89.7 WKSU
American Wood Reface
Jon & Kathryn Antalvari
Arcelormittal
The Beaver Excavating Company
Douglas and Kyra Bosnik
John E. Boughton
Brechtbuhler Truck Sales, LLC
Brubaker Family Foundation
David & Cynthia Brunner
Buckeye Corrugated, Inc.
Butterworth Foundation
The Canton Repository
CareSource
Cargill, Inc.
Lynn Cavalier
Citizens Bank
Cleveland Clinic Akron General
Community Health Resources, Inc.
The George H. Deuble Foundation
Diebold Employee Charitable Fund
Dietz & Watson
Enterprise Holdings Foundation
The First Congregational Church of Hudson
FirstEnergy Foundation
Daniel & Holly Flowers
Veronica E. Frank
William & Nancy Gerdes
The Gessner Family Foundation, Inc.
Giant Eagle
Stacey K. Gonzalez
Frederick & Jane Griech
Joseph and Dena Haag
R. Mark & Elizabeth Hamlin
Harwood Rubber Products, Inc.
Haslinger Family Foundation
W. Henry Hoover Fund
The Howland Memorial Fund
Huntington National Bank
JAH Foundation
The Joy in Childhood Foundation
Kovatch Family Charitable Fund
M. James Kozak
Richard Kramer
Robert C. Levin
Making Smiles Foundation
Sumeeta Maxwell
Brent and Marilyn Minney
The Mitsui USA Foundation
National Electrical Contractors Association
Northeast Ohio Eye Surgeons
PNC Foundation
Revere Local School District
Christopher Rojas & Heather Maze-Rojas
Ron Marhofer Auto Family
Mike and Jennifer Saxon
Synchrony Financial
Timken Company Charitable and Educational Fund
The TJX Companies
James & Linda Venner
Walgreen's
Walmart
Westfield Insurance
Ethel R. Wheland
Richard & Lara Wilson
Milton I. Wiskind

APRIL IS NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH



Amber and Rylee are a dynamic mother-daughter duo whose passion is contagious!

THANK YOU TO OUR INCREDIBLE VOLUNTEERS

National Volunteer Month allows us to show our gratitude for our volunteers and their tireless commitment to our community members struggling with food insecurity.

During this special month, we enjoy highlighting the individuals who give their time and talents to fight hunger locally each and every day.

Just last year, the Foodbank hosted nearly 12,000 volunteers who donated more than 67,000 hours of service, the equivalent of 32 full-time employees.

Amber and her 10-year-old daughter Rylee are a great example of steady volunteers who have become an integral part of our Foodbank family. They first visited the Foodbank last fall with Rylee's travel softball team, and by the end of 2017, they were regular volunteers.

The teammates commit to five volunteer visits per year at the Foodbank, qualifying them as a VIV, Very Important Volunteer. This distinction earns them a bright red water bottle to showcase their achievement. "They were all very excited to show those off at practice!" shared Amber.

Amber is thankful to share this experience

with her daughter. "I've had my own personal lows and have needed help. To be a lifeline for someone else is a great feeling," she explained.

After sorting and cleaning donated food items in the Volunteer Center, the mother-daughter duo was amazed to learn how impactful their volunteer time was. At the end of each shift, the Foodbank tells volunteers how many meals they helped sort and repack.

"To know that the food we directly handled would soon be on someone's dinner table, was very eye-opening," said Amber.

In addition to volunteering at the Foodbank, Rylee is passionate about childhood hunger. She often takes an extra sandwich to school in case a classmate is without lunch. She likes knowing that some of the Foodbank's partner programs give children access to meals over the weekend through backpack programs. Her passion excites us for the future of our volunteer force. What an inspiration!

To our volunteers, thank you for being such integral members of our Foodbank family! We appreciate you!



JOIN YOUR LOCAL HUNGER WALK

May 6, 2018, in Fairlawn, Medina & North Canton

On May 6, 2018, join hundreds of community members for the Akron Area Interfaith Council's Hunger Walk with three locations in Fairlawn, Medina and North Canton. For more information, visit akroncantonfoodbank.org/events!

SUMMER IS THE SEASON OF HUNGER FOR MANY CHILDREN

As the weather begins to warm, Northeast Ohio children begin daydreaming about summer's arrival. For many, this could mean trips to the pool and fun, neighborhood games. However, for more than one in five children in the Foodbank's 8-county service area, this may not be a reality.

More than 72,000 children in our area receive one, if not two meals while at school. Most of these students rely heavily on these free or reduced-price meals. Some are also recipients of backpack programs; they receive easy-to-prepare meals for weekends and holiday breaks.

When summer arrives, families with already overextended budgets are forced to make up for lost school meals, in addition

to daycare costs. It can be difficult to supplement the 10 meals per week their children would have received at school.

Summer hunger is a problem, and your Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank seeks to meet the needs of these children struggling with food insecurity during the summer months. The Foodbank's hunger-relief partners are here to help by providing nutritious meals and snacks when school is not in session.

Food pantries will serve as a much-needed resource for these families and will help them make ends meet. Many of these hunger-relief programs will see an increase in use during the summer months.



Thank you for helping provide meals to children during summer break.

MINERVA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH'S DIRECT DISTRIBUTION FEEDS MANY IN CARROLL COUNTY

Early in the morning, before the sun begins to rise, a semi-trailer of approximately 15,000 pounds of food arrives at Minerva United Methodist Church. About 30 volunteers are ready to roll up their sleeves to sort food items and bag produce. They have an hour to prepare before the Direct Distribution at Minerva UMC opens to the public.

In partnership with the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank, Minerva UMC offers a Direct Distribution the second Thursday of each month to its community members struggling with hunger. The distribution typically serves 200 families, approximately 500-600 people each month. Pastor Harley Wheeler, along with a few volunteers, also deliver 60 boxes of food to those unable to visit the distribution, due to mobility or transportation issues.

The program began six years ago when Pastor Wheeler and his staff evaluated the church's work within their local community. Individuals would sporadically stop into the church in need of food assistance, hoping to receive help.

"It was heartbreaking; we didn't know where to send them and couldn't offer them any help because we didn't have the resources," said Cheryl Hart, church secretary. "Now we're able to help fill the need and it makes you feel good to be the bright spot in someone's day."

Helping hungry neighbors in need was important to Pastor Wheeler. In Carroll County, nearly 14 percent of the population is considered to be food insecure, 38 percent of which are children under the age of 18. He found that pursuing a food ministry had an exponential effect on those they could help.

"When you're able to set someone up with food, help them meet an immediate need, they then may have the resources to fix their

car, pay a utility bill or get ahead on rent. It's a minimal investment to be able to have a multiplier effect within a family," explained Pastor Wheeler.

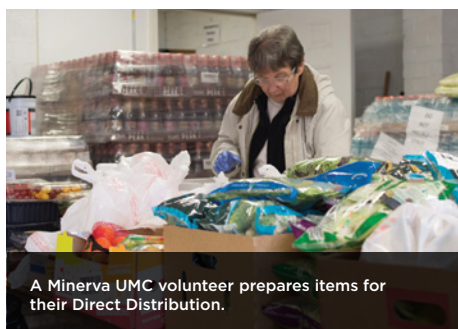
In addition to the Direct Distribution, the Foodbank encouraged Minerva UMC to open an emergency food pantry program, offering a three-day supply of food.

"It's been a wonderful journey and we're very thankful for our partnership with the Foodbank," said Pastor Wheeler.

Currently, the Foodbank offers nine Direct Distributions per month to distribute large quantities of fresh, perishable food to communities in need of additional support. The food is quickly placed in the hands of people who need it most. Because of your support, the Foodbank is able to cover the cost of all food and transportation.



Pastor Wheeler and Cheryl Hart together before the March Direct Distribution



A Minerva UMC volunteer prepares items for their Direct Distribution.

JOIN THE HARVEST FOR HUNGER CAMPAIGN!



Harvest for Hunger is the Foodbank's largest fundraising initiative and is one of the largest food & funds drives in the country. The Campaign is a collaborative effort of four food banks serving 21 counties in Northeast Ohio.

THERE IS STILL TIME TO GET INVOLVED WITH THIS YEAR'S CAMPAIGN!

MAKE A DONATION: The biggest impact in the fight to end hunger is made through financial donations. Every \$1 donation provides four meals. **100 percent of all Harvest for Hunger donations go directly toward feeding our neighbors in need.** Donate online at akroncantonfoodbank.org/hfh.

FUNDRAISE ONLINE with the Foodbank's online fundraising tool which allows you to create your own online fundraiser and generate gifts virtually! Check it out at give.akroncantonfoodbank.org/hfh.

HOST A FOOD & FUNDS DRIVE: Nearly 300 businesses, schools, community organizations and families are holding food & funds drives throughout the spring. To host a food & funds drive, simply register and download a coordinator's kit from the Foodbank's website, akroncantonfoodbank.org/hfh.



1.



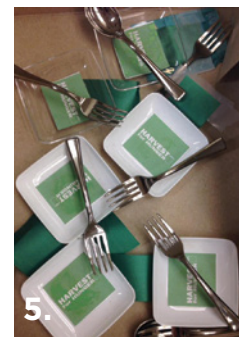
2.



3.



4.



5.

Pictured above:

1. Nearly 500 community members joined the Foodbank for the annual Harvest for Hunger Campaign Kick-off Breakfast on February 15, 2018. Thanks to all who attended and made it a success!
2. The Foodbank's internal staff campaign also kicked off with a breakfast of our own! Our warehouse staff gave high compliments on the bacon!
3. One of our Check Out Hunger partners has a challenge running: fill the piggy banks and the manager will kiss a pig! How creative!
- 4-5. Another Check Out Hunger partner created their own decorative Campaign name-plates to drum-up enthusiasm at the registers. We love to see this kind of excitement throughout the community!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

APRIL 2 - 30, 2018

Walmart's Fight Hunger. Spark Change Campaign

APRIL 17, 2018

CORE Event for Young Professionals

MAY 12, 2018

Stamp Out Hunger Annual Letter Carrier's Food Drive

MAY 17, 2018

CORE Event for Young Professionals

MAY 18, 2018

Harvest for Hunger Campaign Celebration

FOR EVENT DETAILS, VISIT
akroncantonfoodbank.org/events

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