

FOODBANKFOCUS

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phone: 330.535.6900

fax: 330.996.5337

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



PARTNER
FOOD BANK OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**



Every meal has a story. Meet Edgar.

Edgar is a hard worker. His family's well-being is his number one priority, and he is dedicated to providing a good life for them.

Edgar moved to the U.S. nearly 30 years ago because he struggled to make ends meet. "In Mexico, it is hard to make a living or survive. You don't make enough to eat or dress yourself," he says.

He now works as an arborist, cutting down excess brush and trees. Edgar's wife is a stay-at-home mom for their three young children but takes on occasional jobs when she can to help supplement their income.

"[The amount we make] is enough, but sometimes, with the way work is, we make just enough to get by," says Edgar.

Stretching their budget can be a challenge, especially since Edgar's daughter has health problems. She has had two surgeries to help treat an issue with her eye.

Fortunately, their health insurance has covered their medical bills, but finding the time and resources to frequent the hospital is not easy.

But when they visit, they can also visit the hospital's onsite food pantry. Edgar and his family choose groceries from the pantry's shelves, much like they would at a grocery store, at no cost.

They often receive food items that help them prepare traditional Mexican meals, such as corn, fruits and vegetables, rice, beans and meat.

Thanks to the food pantry, Edgar and his family do not have to worry about where their next meal is coming from. The pantry has brought a sense of hope and security to their lives.



“

The Foodbank was an obvious choice; we know people need food. Food is the basis of our lives. If you're hungry, you can't concentrate on doing anything else.”

Judy

Sustainer Circle Member

Local donor's respect for food inspires her to join Sustainer Circle program

“In our family, we showed our love through food, by feeding one another. Family gatherings always centered around the dinner table.”

Meet Judy. Growing up, she had a close relationship with her grandparents who lived during the Great Depression. She heard stories about family friends struggling with limited resources.

“Not wasting food was very much instilled in us. We were taught to be respectful of the food we had and not to take it for granted.”

Witnessing her great aunt volunteer with a local meal site, Judy understood the importance of hunger relief at a very young age.

She has maintained her respect and appreciation for food into adulthood. More than 20 years ago, she and her husband, though only in their early 30s, realized they had the means to support a charitable organization important to them.

“The Foodbank was an obvious choice; we know people need food. Food is the basis of our lives. If you're hungry, you can't concentrate on doing anything else.”

Judy's compassion for others led her to become a social worker; she's been serving the community for 33 years.

“

By being a social worker, I see what people go through and I see that they don't have access to food all the time. People don't struggle because they want to.”

Judy is a long-time member of the Foodbank's Sustainer Circle. As a sustaining member, she makes

financial contributions to the Foodbank every month, supporting hunger relief all year round.

Members can make monthly, quarterly or biannual gifts – they choose the cadence that works best for them.

Becoming a member of the Sustainer Circle program shows your commitment to hunger relief. The reliable stream of revenue helps your Foodbank plan for and maintain its operations.

To join the Sustainer Circle, please contact Laura Villwock at 330.535.6900 or visit akroncantonfoodbank.org/monthly-giving.



Foodbank and local health systems continue to address hunger among patients

Every doctor's visit holds new possibilities — relief, recovery, and often, a sense of hope. For thousands in our community, the road to wellness includes a stop at a food pantry right down the hall.

Recognizing the strong link between food insecurity and poor health outcomes, the Foodbank and local health systems have continued to strengthen their collaboration. Since launching the partnership with Akron Children's Hospital, Cleveland Clinic Akron General and Summa Health in 2023, the Foodbank has worked to expand access to nutritious food for people facing health challenges.

Each health system houses an onsite food pantry available to patients and their families. The pantries have provided hundreds of thousands of meals since opening.



"The pantry has helped supplement some of my meals," Steven says. "Because of the pantry, I can pay for my meds."

Health Systems Impact

January-September 2024

35%

OF FRESH FOOD DISTRIBUTED



24,404 people SERVED

199,904 pounds of food DISTRIBUTED



166,586 meals provided



Harvest for Hunger Campaign kicks off in March

Support the Foodbank's 34th annual Harvest for Hunger Campaign! This year's goal is to raise enough food and funds for 4.4 million meals, and we need your help! This campaign is vital as it supports food distribution all year long.

Learn more at akroncantonfoodbank.org/harvest



Host a Virtual Drive

Create a personalized online fundraising page and share with your social networks. \$1 = 3 meals!



Host a Food & Funds Drive

Collect food and funds for your Foodbank.



Financial Contributions

Please consider making a personal donation, a corporate gift or coordinating payroll deduction for your employees.



Volunteer

Build team spirit while making an impact on hunger.



Check Out Hunger

Add a donation during checkout at participating Buehler's Fresh Foods, Dave's Supermarkets, GetGo Gas Stations, Giant Eagle and Heinen's Grocery Store.



“

I enjoy volunteering for the food pantry. You get to know the people who visit. You get to know the kids. You get to know their stories.”

Carl

Volunteer at Twin City Christian Food Pantry

Compassionate volunteers fuel food pantry

Visiting a food pantry can be a vulnerable experience; asking for help isn't always easy. But a pantry staffed with caring, welcoming individuals can make all the difference. Twin City Christian Food Pantry in Uhrichsville is one such place. Run entirely by volunteers, it serves the community with compassion.

The pantry's nearly 70 volunteers include retirees, students and people driven by their own experiences with hardship.

Meet Carl, the current food coordinator for the pantry. Carl had a heart attack 15 years ago. He could no longer work a manual labor job like he had most of his life.

“What do I do now?” Carl thought to himself as he tried to imagine his next step in life.

He struggled mentally with the loss of his job and not being able to provide financially for his family. Thankfully, the food pantry was there for him when he needed it.

Several years later, Carl discovered that the pantry was on the brink of closing because a long-time volunteer was retiring. Carl decided to step up and take on the full-time volunteer role to keep the pantry afloat.

“I enjoy volunteering for the food pantry,” Carl says with a smile. “You get to know the people who visit. You get to know the kids. You get to know their stories.”

The food pantry now serves 1,400 people each month, including hundreds of older adults, many attempting to live on a fixed income, and families with young children.

Thanks to the help of the food pantry, families like Lynsey's have access to nourishing groceries. Lynsey and her husband are raising four growing children. And though her husband works, it is not enough to support their family of six.



“

The pantry is absolutely helpful. It's actually kind of life saving.”

Lynsey

Food Recipient

A note from Foodbank president & CEO

As the weeks pass since the close of 2024, its story is coming into clarity.

Many of you were with us when we celebrated the renovation of our Main Campus in early 2024 with a ribbon cutting ceremony. That, along with the construction of the Stark County Campus in 2021, concluded the signature projects associated with our capital campaign. Those projects, combined with the events of the pandemic and its aftermath, significantly shaped our work and brought us to where we are today — a much different, more programmatically diverse, and far stronger agency than any of us could have predicted.

The Stark County Campus included the opening of The Keith D. Monda Family Food Pantry, the Foodbank's first ever onsite pantry. In January 2024, we opened a second pantry at the Main Campus in Akron, The Venarge Family Food Pantry. In its first year, this pantry served over 220,000 people. In both pantries, we are providing families with critical support services from our resource rooms, connecting people with job readiness programs, health screenings, legal aid and more.

The day-to-day experience at the Foodbank has changed dramatically. On any given day, 1,000+ people may come through our doors.

When you drive by our parking lot, you will see volunteers, staff, neighbors seeking help, donors coming to take tours and hunger-relief programs picking up food orders. Your Foodbank is a vibrant hub of activity and I love it.

Many of our current programs were not in existence before the pandemic. Generous support during those years enabled us to expand our infrastructure and respond to the rising demand experienced all throughout 2024.

For the first time in Foodbank history, the organization distributed 3+ million pounds of food each month for the past 16 consecutive months.

Because we have kept our focus on sustainability, we are moving into 2025 as stable and optimistic as we have ever been. Of course, that starts with a great Harvest for Hunger Campaign kicking off in March. We hope you'll consider supporting the campaign as its success directly correlates with our ability to feed our neighbors. We also plan to launch an initiative to build our endowment to help secure the future of the organization and begin the work on a new strategic plan.

I want to invite you to the Foodbank for a tour if you haven't had the opportunity to see our work in action - to see your investment and generosity hard at work. We love you and appreciate you.

We couldn't do this great work if it weren't for you. Thank you.



Daniel R. Flowers

Daniel R. Flowers
President & CEO



**HARVEST
FOR HUNGER**

**Campaign Kick-Off
Luncheon**

Save the date!

February 28, 2025

John S. Knight Center in Akron
akroncantonfoodbank.org/rsvp

Honor Roll

THANK YOU TO OUR TOP SUPPORTERS OF THE SEASON

Akron Charitable Fund, North
Central Ohio Chapter NECA
Ameriprise Financial Services
Barberton Community Foundation
Bauhart Family
BoxLunch
Bridgestone Americas
Bridgestone Americas Trust Fund
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The Chiron Family Charitable Fund
The Christ Foundation
Citizens
Crystal Ship Charitable Fund
The Paul & Carol David Foundation
James DeRoche & Debra Eisenstat-DeRoche
DoorDash
Richard Edwards & Marcia Adair
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Norman & Pamela Gaynor
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Gary & Cheryl Prather
Louise Pursley
Rand Charitable Trust
The Schroer Group
Subaru of America, Inc. & Serra Subaru
Larry Shirk
The Sisler McFawn Foundation
Lloyd L. and Louise K. Smith
Memorial Foundation
The J.M. Smucker Co.
Source Foundation
Starbucks
Stark County Medical Society
Jeffrey Sterling
Tam Taylor
Bill & Joan Thomas
Brian & Beth Tierney
Larry & Blythe Toops
Truenorth
Walmart & Walmart Foundation
Barry Weidner Memorial Golf Tournament Fund
The Welty Family Foundation
Westfield

Foodbank collects survey results regarding food preferences to better serve neighbors

As part of our strategic plan, the Foodbank strives to deepen its relationships with neighbors receiving food. To best serve them, we collected survey results throughout the summer of 2024 regarding the types of food they'd like to receive, available in eight languages. The data collected will help guide our food sourcing team when selecting products to supplement the donated items on our menu.

The people we serve are the beating heart of everything we do. Their health, happiness and success drive what we do and how we do it.



Top 3 foods requested

High protein, versatile foods that can be used across different meals and cultures

- ✓ Eggs
- ✓ Bananas
- ✓ Chicken



Nutrition & health

Low sugar and low carb foods are preferred, suggesting neighbors may be managing health conditions like diabetes.



Diversity in dietary needs

Restrictions and preferences included vegetarian, paleo, ketogenic and allergies to dairy, wheat and tree nuts

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