

Full Plate Press

Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank

Fall 2011

A quarterly publication of Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank which includes the Western Upper Peninsula Food Bank, Houghton; Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank, Ishpeming; Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank, Sault Ste. Marie; the Manna Project, Petoskey; Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank, Cadillac; Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank, Grand Rapids; and Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank, Benton Harbor.

Table of Contents:

2010 ANNUAL
REPORT P. AR 1

FRIENDLY
RIVALRY FEEDS
THOUSANDS P. 2

BIG LOTS MAKES
BIG DENT P. 2

HUNGER BEATEN
WITH CLUBS P. 2

EVER-POPULAR
HOLIDAY
GIFT NOTICES P. 2

ACT NOW FOR
TAX CREDIT P. 2

GREAT GOODS
FOR 10/14 GALA P. 3

“WHAT CAN WE DO?” Some fun ideas for Hunger Action Month—and beyond

For most of us, September feels like a fresh start. Maybe it's the crisp, energizing weather... or a lifetime of back-to-school excitement.

Whatever September means to you, here's something fairly new: it's national Hunger Action Month, a great time to help your hungry neighbors this winter.

So much to be done

Unfortunately, our still-hungry economy isn't helping West Michigan families. The U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that one in six Americans don't know where their next meal is coming from. In the 40 counties your Food Bank serves, the situation is even worse. Among families who count on our Food Bank, almost half have had to choose between buying food and paying utility bills. Almost 60% have unpaid medical or hospital bills. About a third have had to choose between food and medicine.

But there is some good news...

And it's really good: Just \$26 can feed a family of four for a week. Just one dollar can provide three meals.

How is that possible? Through the waste-ending, fast-action efforts of your Food Bank. With surplus food from farmers, manufacturers, distributors and retailers—and contributions from you—we help stock 1,300 local food pantries in 40 West Michigan counties.

Effective anti-hunger fun

Families, school groups and co-workers find it incredibly easy to make a big difference. For example:

- Every December, Awareness Home Funding in Grandville encourages employees to wear blue jeans—if they chip in to a charity fund. Last year, their fund gave \$4,000 to the Food Bank and a local agency—enough for 14,000 meals.
- Employees of West Michigan Shared Services, which handles business affairs for Trinity Health System hospitals, organized a season of dress-down days, pot-luck lunches and other activities to raise \$3,727.92 for the Food Bank—enough for more than 13,000 meals.
- Five-year-old Connor Geelhoed of Jenison raised more than \$1,000 selling chocolate bars to family, friends and neighbors.

- Last Thanksgiving, Food Bank supporters raised more than \$100,000 just by skipping side dishes and donating the money they would have spent to the Food Bank. You can do that in September by skipping a snack, drink or dessert—even just one day a week—and sending what you save to the Food Bank.

Official Hunger Action Month events

All month long: See and share the videos. Matt Damon, Taye Diggs and Ana Ortiz star with real people facing hunger in buzz-worthy videos. Find them online at HungerActionMonth.org.

All month long: Take the Hunger Challenge. Right here in West Michigan, thousands of people have \$4.37 or less per day to spend for food. Could you function on the food that they can afford? Share your experience online at facebook.com/hungryactionweek.

September 14 through 30. Help gather the harvest. The Food Bank Council of Michigan will kick off its 21st Michigan Harvest Gathering campaign on Wednesday, September 14, 2011 at the Capitol in Lansing. To learn more or make a donation, visit www.FeedMichigan.org.

Wednesday, September 14: Jazz up some bags. Kids love the decorated “Sack Suppers” provided by Kids’ Food Basket in Grand Rapids. To share some extra happiness with a hungry kid, pick up some bags at our main warehouse, decorate them with general positive messages and bring them back.

Friday, September 16: Check in with old friends. The Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan and Senior Meals Program ask you to check with older neighbors and relatives to be sure they have all they need to eat and meet other basic needs.

Saturday September 17th: Dare to be poor. Access of West Michigan will host a two-hour, eye-opening poverty simulation for courageous citizens. Email Nicole@AccessofWestMichigan.org by September 14 to participate—if you think you can cut it. *More Grand Rapids events are listed online at FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org.*

Spread the word

Read about more recent hunger-hammering events below. To learn more fun fund-raising ideas, call Linda Vanderbaan at 616.784.3250.

Telling your friends about the Food Bank may be the easiest action of all. Let them know how we can turn every dollar into three meals or more—and how raising just \$26 can mean a week's meals for a family of four!

Fun(d) raising: Friendly rivalry yields 10,000+ meals.

Employees of Andy J. Egan Company and its accounting firm Beene Garter, both of Grand Rapids, were literally bean-counting in June as they competed to gather food and funds for the Food Bank.

Egan president Tom Jasper and Beene Garter managing partner Tom Rosenbach

are old friends who often challenge each other. Employees happily took sides as the two led their teams in collecting dollar and food donations. The totals: 2,380 pounds of food and \$2,429—enough for more than 10,000 meals.



More fun(d)-raising: Big Lots makes a big dent.

From July 1 through 17, 15 West Michigan Big Lots stores competed to collect funds, food and toiletries for regional food banks. Together, they gathered food and funds for more than 6,300 meals.

Mike Willis is assistant manager of the

Grand Rapids Plainfield Avenue store, which collected more food and money than any of the 14 other stores. "It's something I like to do and my manager does, too," he says. "It gets folks talking about Feeding America and it's free advertising for us!"

More fun(d)-raising: Foursomes "beat hunger with clubs."



On July 18, 41 golf buddies gathered at Grand Rapids' Alpine Golf Club for the 2011 "Beat Hunger with Clubs" golf outing for the Food Bank. The day-long scramble netted \$917 this year: more than enough for a week's food for 40 families of four. The event has proven so successful, Food Bank CEO Ken Estelle (who played that day) says, "We're planning to make it bigger and better" in years to come.

How can your friends, family or company raise funds and have fun fighting hunger? Learn more by calling Linda Vanderbaan at 616.784.3250.

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND: FOOD BANK HOLIDAY GIFT NOTICES

Have a caring friend or family member who "doesn't need anything" or who's just hard to buy for? Here's a heart-warming, hunger-fighting solution: Make a gift in the person's name to Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank.

We'll send you a special card insert announcing the donation in your name. You can forward it to the recipient (in a holiday card, for instance) or present it in person. Call Linda Vanderbaan at 616.784.3250 or email lindav@FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org to arrange a gift. Act by December 1 to make sure it arrives in time for the holidays!

FEEDING AMERICA
West Michigan Food Bank

Your chance for a Food Bank tax credit ends this year

As part of Michigan's huge new tax reform law, the Michigan Food Bank Tax Credit for individuals and married couples will end at midnight on New Year's Eve.

Some 35,000 Michiganders received the

tax credit in 2010, earning an average tax credit of \$93 apiece.

Fortunately, from now to December 31, you may earn not only a federal tax deduction, but also a Michigan tax credit of up to \$100 per person (for donations to the Food

Bank of up to \$200 each).

To earn your tax credit, donate online at www.FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org or use the enclosed envelope to send your gift—and get your tax credit while you still can.

New food procurement staff



Some people might think that food just rolls into the Food Bank, but unfortunately this isn't the case. Attracting and procuring millions of pounds of surplus food isn't easy. Luckily, the Food Bank has two new part-time staff members to help meet the critical, growing need.

Ron Groen, a retired vice president of Sysco Food Systems, is our new Resource Development Director. He will work with major food donors (farmers, manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers) to acquire the wide variety of products that our agencies need.

Katherine (Katie) Auwers will be coordinating

food drives, donation pick-ups and other food procurement activities. A former food pantry volunteer, Katie has worked in the food service industry for seven years. She is a graduate of Grand Rapids' Aquinas College, where she earned the Spectrum Leadership Scholarship. (Katie's position is funded by a grant from Feeding America's national office.)

For food donations, you can reach Ron or Katie at 616.784.3250. Or email rong@feedingamericawestmichigan.org or katiea@feedingamericawestmichigan.org



WEST MICHIGAN LITERALLY LICKED HUNGER IN JULY

Some 250 folks, including scores of kids, showed up for all-afternoon fun at the Food Bank's first Ice Cream Social, an "edutainment event." Local bands 12 Track Radio and Number the Stars set the tone. The Wolverine YMCA hosted face-painting and games. Country Fresh contributed multiple ice cream flavors (including Butter Pecan, Vanilla and Moose Tracks...mmm!) and Sysco donated a zillion toppings, assorted syrups, whipped cream, cones and, of course, cherries on top!



Great goods up for grabs at the October 14 gala

We know, we know: silent auctions are sometimes...well, not worth making noise over. But some of the auction items for our "Don't Stop Believin'" 30th-anniversary event are worth a shout. Here's a small sampling of what we've secured so far:

- Two season tickets to Opera Grand Rapids
- Ozzie Smith-autographed baseball
- Original paintings by artists Rick Beerhorst and Richard Cooper
- A hand-thrown vessel by ceramic artist Anna Greidanus

- A performance by Grand Rapids band Number the Stars
- Gourmet party appetizers for 12 from Marla's Catering
- A weekend at the Castle in the Country B&B in Allegan...
- and much, much more!

And don't forget, we'll have a 1981 costume contest with a great prize, too. So pull out your old Armanis (if you're lucky) and mousse your hair up high. Go to Don't Stop Believin' Gala on Facebook.

Don't Stop Believin'



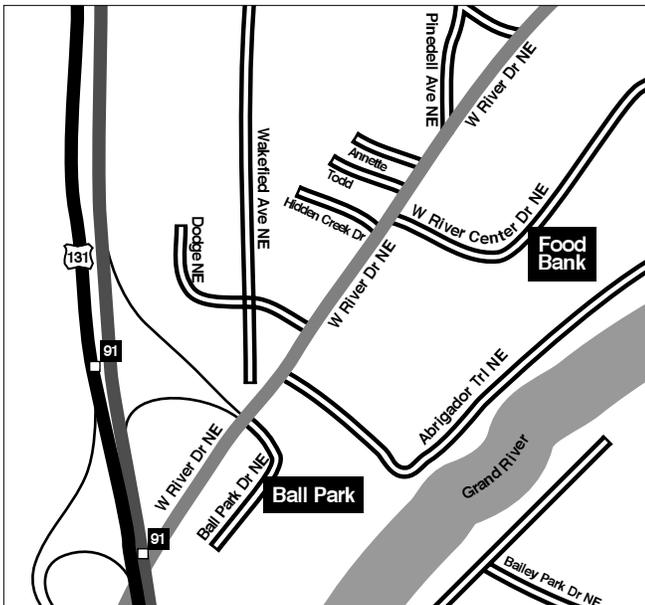
West Michigan Food Bank 864 West River Center
Comstock Park, Michigan 49321-8955
Formerly Second Harvest Gleaners Food Bank of West Michigan, Inc.

Non-Profit Org.
US POSTAGE
PAID
GRAND RAPIDS, MI
Permit No. 793

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**VISITING THE FOOD BANK?
We're easy to find.**

Take U.S. 131 to exit 91 (Comstock Park/West River Drive). Turn left on West River Drive. Turn right at the stoplight at West River Center Drive (Wendy's on corner). Our address is 864 West River Center Dr., Comstock Park, MI 49321-8955 Questions? Call us at 616.784.3250.



Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank is a non-profit surplus food warehouse distributing about 2 million pounds of food monthly in cooperation with 1,300 charitable agencies. The food we handle helps needy families, the unemployed, senior citizens, at-risk children, pregnant teens, domestic violence victims, AIDS patients and others at risk of hunger in our difficult economy. Ultimately, our food aids an estimated 100,000 West Michigan and Upper Peninsula families annually. Call us at 616.784.3250 or learn more at www.FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org.

Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank is a member of Feeding America – The Nation’s Food Bank Network, The United Way, and The Food Bank Council of Michigan.

Graphic Design: Mary Jo Cooper
Contributing Writer: Judy Bean

