



## For Immediate Release

### Contact:

Andrew Steiner

616.432.6964

[andrews@feedingamericawestmichigan.org](mailto:andrews@feedingamericawestmichigan.org)

## Flair Night at TGI Friday's shows off bartenders' skills while raising money for hunger relief

Comstock Park, Michigan — February, 27, 2014 — On Tuesday, March 11, [TGI Friday's of Kentwood](#) is hosting a flair bartending competition where mixologists will display their skills and auction off their creations along with a host of other prizes to benefit [Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank](#).

What is flair bartending? Think Tom Cruise in "Cocktail." Better yet, check out the [Flair Bartenders' Association](#) website, which serves as an informational hub for practitioners around the world. This is serious stuff.

"Flair Night puts our bartenders in the spotlight and really allows them to demonstrate their skills," said Christina Spencer, assistant general manager at TGI Friday's.



TGI Friday's bartender Dan Jeffers practices his moves ahead of the March 11 competition.

Feeding America West Michigan has benefited from TGI Fridays' generosity before. In 2011, Grand Rapids' downtown location raised enough money to send 2,300 meals to local families in need.

Feeding America West Michigan distributes food to more than 1,200 food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters in West Michigan

and the Upper Peninsula. Last year the organization distributed 25.6 million pounds of food, more than at any other time in its 33-year history.

Contrary to the popular narrative of economic recovery, the organization believes food insecurity may be on the rise in Michigan.

“All the indicators we know of today point to an increased demand,” said Ken Estelle, CEO of Feeding America West Michigan.

“Although the job market is picking up, they’re not the kind of jobs people can live on.”

The 2014 Farm Bill, [signed into law in East Lansing](#) earlier this month, could make things harder for low-income people by cutting more than \$8 billion from federal food assistance in the next decade, a decision which came on the heels of an \$11 billion reduction to the program in November. That makes the support of local businesses like TGI Friday’s all the more important, Estelle said.

“We’re blessed by their generosity,” he went on. “This event’s going to raise financial support for hunger relief, which is essential, but it’s also going to raise awareness, and in the long run, that could be our most powerful tool for change.”

“Nobody should have to worry about food,” Spencer said. “We just want to do our part to make sure everybody has enough to eat in our community.”

Flair Night begins at 7:30 p.m., and entry is free. Music will be provided by local DJ Sean Boney. TGI Friday’s is located at [3345 28<sup>th</sup> Street SE in Kentwood](#), near Woodland Mall.

**About Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank.** One of the nation’s largest and most effective food banks, Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank reclaims edible surplus food from farmers, manufacturers, distributors and retailers. It stores, processes and distributes that food through more than 1,200 local food pantries and other hunger-relief agencies in 40 Michigan counties from the Indiana border through the Upper Peninsula. More than 100,000 West Michigan families rely on food from Feeding America West Michigan. For more information, visit [feedingamericawestmichigan.org](http://feedingamericawestmichigan.org).