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Community Foundation, Rotary collaborate to buy new freezer for food bank

Cadillac, Mich. — Nov. 11, 2015 — On Thursday, Nov. 19, [Rotary Charities of Cadillac](#) and the [Cadillac Area Community Foundation](#) will present a \$32,000 grant to [Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank](#) at the organization's Cadillac branch. Each organization is contributing \$16,000 to purchase a new freezer for the Food Bank.

"They provide the ability for us to give out the food to the community at extremely low cost," Linda Kimbel, executive director of CACF, said of Feeding America West Michigan, "and have worked with us over the years to make sure that we're providing the kinds of foods that are not available from other resources."

In 2009, Rotary Charities of Cadillac, with the help of CACF, began hosting bimonthly Mobile Food Pantries, free food distributions where anyone in the community can collect a few days' worth of fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy products and other foods — items that, Kimbel said, are particularly difficult for low-income people to afford.

The need in the area is real. One in four children in Wexford County is food insecure, compared to 1 in 5 in the state overall. But the Mobile Pantry distributions have made a difference. Since 2009, the effort has brought 1.2 million meals to people in the Cadillac area.

Kimbel was visiting Feeding America West Michigan earlier this year when branch manager Lorrie Sluiter informed her that she didn't have room to stock all the frozen foods, especially meat, the community wanted. Kimbel didn't like the idea that something as trivial as freezer space was holding up hunger relief in Cadillac, so she contacted Darrigan.

"We talked about if we could submit a grant to the Rotary and to the Community Foundation, maybe we could make this happen," Darrigan said.

And they did, splitting the cost of a new freezer 50-50 between Rotary and the foundation.

"I'm so excited, I can't wait," Sluiter said. "It's going to make a big impact here."

The new freezer will increase storage capacity by 80 percent. It will also be accessible to pallet jacks, making it much easier to move product in and out. It will be installed in early 2016.

In addition, Rotary will be donating \$1,500 to install new shelving in the branch's "shopping area," where representatives from local food pantries can browse on behalf of their agencies.

Local media are invited to Feeding America West Michigan's Cadillac branch at 12:15 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 19, where Linda Kimbel, Barb Darrigan and Feeding America West Michigan staff will be available for interviews. Media are then invited to attend the Rotary/CACF Mobile Pantry distribution at 2 p.m.

Feeding America West Michigan's Cadillac branch is located at [101 Clay Drive](#).

The Mobile Pantry distribution takes place at [908 6th Street](#).

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About Feeding America West Michigan. Serving local families in need since 1981, Feeding America West Michigan reclaims safe surplus food from farmers, manufacturers, distributors and retailers. We distribute that food through a network of more than 1,100 food pantries, youth programs, and other hunger-relief agencies in 40 counties from the Indiana border through the Upper Peninsula. Each year, an estimated 492,100 people receive food from Feeding America West Michigan. For more information, visit FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org.

About Cadillac Area Community Foundation. Founded in 1988, the Cadillac Area Community Foundation is a permanent philanthropic endowment for the Cadillac Area. A nonprofit, tax-exempt, independent, publicly supported philanthropic organization that is organized and operated as a permanent collection of endowed funds for the long term benefit of the community. For more information, visit CadillacFoundation.org.

About Rotary Charities of Cadillac. Rotary Charities of Cadillac is the grant-making arm of the Rotary Club of Cadillac. The organization awards grants to schools, governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations focused on six issue areas: culture and the arts, environment, economic development, recreation, education, and health and human services. More information can be found at <http://portal.clubrunner.ca/1378/>.