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Feeding America West Michigan brought Mobile Pantries to hundreds of sites throughout West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula, including Parkview Elementary in Wyoming, Mich. (Photo Credit: Feeding America)

Food Bank Announces Third-Consecutive Record Year

Comstock Park, Mich. — Jan. 13, 2016 — [Feeding America West Michigan](#) just finished up its third record year in a row, distributing 27.6 million pounds of food in 2015, the equivalent of 22 million meals. That's an increase of 1.1 million pounds over 2014.

"I'm incredibly proud of the work our staff, volunteers and partner agencies have done to make this happen," said CEO Ken Estelle. "It truly is a testament to the creativity and generosity of our community."

Not only did total distribution increase — distribution of fresh fruits and vegetables grew from a quarter to more than a third of the food bank's output. A large part of that growth can be attributed to the expansion of the food bank's [Mobile Pantry Program](#).

In 2015, [Feeding America West Michigan received a grant](#) from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund to bring Mobile Pantries to schools and senior centers throughout West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. Each Mobile Pantry provides fresh produce, dairy products and baked goods to between 100 and 200 households. Requiring little more than a parking lot

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and a few volunteers, Mobile Pantries are ideal for serving rural and urban communities that lack traditional food pantries or accessible grocery stores.

In all, Feeding America West Michigan conducted more than 1,600 Mobile Pantry distributions in 2015. Estelle is pushing to increase that number this year, particularly in the Upper Peninsula, where need is high and local resources scarce.

“We’ve seen what can happen when communities are united on the issue of hunger,” Estelle said, pointing to Wexford County, where the [Cadillac Area Community Foundation and the Cadillac Rotary Club](#) have underwritten the food bank’s Mobile Pantry Program for years.

Other standout supporters of 2015 include the Fremont Area Community Foundation; United Way offices in Ottawa County, Southwest Michigan and Sault Ste. Marie; the Upton Foundation and the Walmart Foundation.

The year also saw enthusiastic support from individual donors, with online giving growing by 23 percent.

Looking back over the year, Estelle feels optimistic about 2016:

“Too many of our neighbors still struggle to afford the basics, but more and more, we’re seeing that people get it. They understand the need and they want to get involved. I firmly believe that if businesses, foundations, churches and individuals come together, we can solve hunger in our region.”

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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 FeedWM.org.