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Students from Wexford-Missaukee Intermediate School District's Career Tech Center hone their building skills. Credit: Brad VanBuren

## WMISD Career Tech Students Build for Hunger Relief

*Cadillac, Michigan — June 21, 2016* — In Wexford County, a snow blower isn't just a luxury. It's a necessity. But until recently, Lorrie Sluiter, manager of [Feeding America West Michigan's](#) Cadillac branch, couldn't keep one onsite. Food safety standards forbid the organization from storing gas-powered equipment next to food, so she had to haul it back and forth from her house every time it snowed.

Enter: an anonymous donor and a team of 20 students from the Wexford-Missaukee Intermediate School District's [Career Tech Center](#). Under the guidance of [Applied Construction Technology](#) instructor Brad VanBuren, they built a brand-new storage shed for the Food Bank at no cost to the organization.

"It's very, very cool," Sluiter said. "It's big and beautiful. The kids did one heck of a job on that."

VanBuren, who owns Sydmac Construction, said his students typically undertake one project for a local nonprofit each year. The Cadillac Rotary was one recent beneficiary, and a member recommended Feeding America West Michigan this year.

"I think it's good to see the students working and doing something positive for the community," VanBuren said.

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VanBuren's students were in charge of all aspects of the project from layout to framing to trim. Compared to the house they were constructing, though, it was pretty simple.

"We kind of stood back and got them going and they pretty much did everything and we just coached them along," VanBuren said. "It's a well-build shed."

VanBuren says the shed is worth between \$3,000 and \$3,500. That same amount of money can be used by Feeding America West Michigan to distribute 13,000 meals.

"That's money we'll be able to use to put food on the table for local families," Sluiter said. "When you're a nonprofit like us, every single dollar counts."

The shed was delivered to the Food Bank on June 3.

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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](http://FeedWM.org).