

# Full Plate PRESS

THE NEWSLETTER OF  
**FEEDING  
AMERICA**  
West Michigan Food Bank

## Million Meal March Sponsors

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Sysco  
H.T. Hackney  
Morrison Industrial Equipment Co.  
Forest Hills Foods  
Michigan Office Solutions  
The Corner Bar  
Terra GR  
Kellogg's

## Taking Strides to End Hunger

On Saturday, September 28, hundreds will gather at Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank to declare that hunger has no place in our community.

**Ladies and gentlemen, the Million Meal March 10K Trail Hike is back for a second year!**

The route runs from the Food Bank to the Plainfield Township Office in Belmont and back along the White Pine Trail. Families, pets, walkers, runners and even bikers are welcome. If 10 kilometers sounds a little intimidating, a trolley will be available to bring you back to the Food Bank from the halfway point.

Each participant is encouraged to raise \$100, enough to provide nearly 400 meals to people struggling with hunger. In appreciation for their support, \$1 will be given to Friends of the White Pine Trail for every hiker who participates.

***Hunger is tough, but together we can defeat it.***

Sign up to be a part of it at [MillionMealMarch.org](http://MillionMealMarch.org) or by calling 616-389-6356.

Even if you can't make it to the Food Bank on the 28th, you can still strike a blow against hunger. Designate a gift to the Million Meal March with the attached envelope and your contribution will help us send an additional 1 million meals to families in need.



**MILLION  
MEAL  
MARCH**



9:30 a.m. Saturday, September 28, 2013  
Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank  
864 West River Center Drive  
Comstock Park, MI 49321

- Live music by Suburban 5&10 and Jack Tabler
- Food and ice cream provided by The Corner Bar of Rockford and Country Fresh

## Fishing for Hunger in Sault Ste. Marie

Thunderstorms and heavy rain on the eve of Feeding America West Michigan's Fishing for Hunger tournament made it an anxious night for staff.

"We thought it would be a rough fish," organizer James Fitz said, "but I tell you what, everyone was bringing in walleye."

Organized by the Food Bank's Sault Ste. Marie branch, the June 22 event drew about 45 participants and raised around \$1,200 — enough to distribute 4,800 meals in the Eastern Upper Peninsula.

The branch also received some upgrades to its warehouse, courtesy of tournament sponsors Tom Fornicola and Positive Energy & Design.

The winners included Doug Krause, who brought in a 5.63-pound walleye, and kids' division champion Sydney Hank, whose walleye weighed in at 2.05 pounds.

Thanks to its enthusiastic embrace by participants and sponsors, plans are already in the works to bring Fishing for Hunger back next year.



## Stamp Out Hunger Gathers 155,000 Pounds Locally

Seven Post Office branches, 190 volunteers, Food Bank staffers and a city full of caring donors came together to collect more than 155,000 pounds of food for hungry families during the National Association of Letter Carriers' 21st-annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive in Grand Rapids.

Neither wind nor rain nor unseasonably cold temperatures could stop this crew from fighting hunger. Thanks to their efforts on May 11, thousands of food-insecure families throughout West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula experienced the blessing of a good meal.

Across the country, the NALC collected 74.4 million pounds for food banks, food pantries and other hunger-relief organizations, making it the second biggest drive to date.



## Opening Our Doors

For many people, the Food Bank is off the beaten path. If you're not hungry yourself, or you're not involved with a food pantry in another way, we're easy to miss. So to break the ice, we held open houses at our Benton Harbor and Cadillac branches. We saw many new faces and made new connections to the communities we serve.



*Laura Porter takes open house guests on a tour of the Cadillac branch, which serves 120 agencies in northern Michigan.*



*Jude Smith greets Pastor Calvin McCoy at the Benton Harbor branch.*



*Benton Harbor's Mobile Pantry program has seen a large expansion over the last year, thanks to grants from the Walmart Foundation, the Upton Foundation and others.*

## PLANT A SEED

Have you considered making a planned gift to the Food Bank?

Call Linda Vanderbaan at 616-389-6356 or email her at

LindaV@FeedingAmerica

WestMichigan.org to learn more.



# The Electric Strawberry: Turning Food Waste Into Energy

A Food Bank's job is to save surplus food from going to the landfill so it can be enjoyed by hungry families. But what happens to the food that goes bad before we can distribute it?

## Enter NOVI Energy.

The Fremont Community Digester, built by NOVI, is capable of converting 100,000 tons of organic waste into 3 megawatts of electricity each year, enough to power 1,500 homes. On June 20, we sent our first truckload of spoiled eggs, onions and strawberries to the plant, where they were converted into energy.

As impressive as this technology is, anaerobic digestion is actually a fairly simple concept, said NOVI CEO Anand Gangadharan. In fact, it occurs naturally in swamps. "This is nothing but a more sophisticated swamp, to put it crudely," he said.

As the bacteria break down the waste, they produce methane gas. That gas is piped into two 20-cylinder engines whose revolutions produce a continuous stream of electricity for Consumers Energy.



Anand Gangadharan  
CEO of NOVI Energy

Gangadharan believes anaerobic digestion will soon be available in residential neighborhoods. He envisions green bags of organic waste picked up curbside, along with the trash and the recycling.

"That is coming over the next 10 years," he said.

"Food banking was always a green idea," said Feeding America West Michigan CEO Ken Estelle. "We're taking excess food, keeping it from going to waste and getting it to people in need."

"I see NOVI as helping us make sure that none of our food, even the food that can't be eaten, goes to waste."

*Note: A version of this article first appeared in the Huffington Post, July 9, 2013.*

# If an Eight-Year-Old Can Do It ...

On the day of the Mobile Pantry at Riley Street Middle School in Hudsonville, eight-year-old Owen Ronning was wearing a white Avengers t-shirt and running from one side of the truck to the other, climbing into the bays to unload bags of lettuce and boxes of nectarines for the people in line. He seemed unaware of the stir he'd created in the community, even though MLive had run a story on him, and the Mayor of Hudsonville had personally come to volunteer.

## ***This Mobile Pantry was Owen's idea, funded by money he raised himself.***

Last summer, Owen's father was injured and couldn't work. His mother, Tara, sought help and brought Owen along to a couple Mobile Pantries. He didn't say much about it at the time, but this February, while he was sitting at home during a snowstorm, it came out.

"He said, 'I want to help people,'" Tara remembered, "and I said, 'Let's find out what we can do.'" It didn't take long for them to gravitate back to the program that had helped them when they were in need.

Owen went door to door collecting donations and held a coin drive in his class. Pretty soon he had \$495, enough to sponsor a 5,000-pound truckload. Word spread through local churches and the school district, and on June 17, more than 115 families showed up to receive food.

Owen said he was motivated by the thought that some people in his neighborhood didn't have enough to eat. "I wanted to make it so they had enough," he said.

One of those people was a woman named Nancy, a retiree attending the Mobile with her adult daughter Linda, who has Down syndrome. "I had my social security cut to \$250 a month, and it's pretty hard to live on \$250 a month," Nancy said. She called the Mobile Pantry a blessing from God. "Could you tell that boy thank you?"

Tara believes her son's effort is a testament to the West Michigan community. "If an eight-year-old with the help of his mom and dad can do it, there's no reason [others] can't."



# 2012 Annual Report



## Letter from the Board President and CEO

Dear Friends of the Food Bank,

From 2010 to 2012, Feeding America West Michigan distributed 24 million pounds of food per year — more than it ever had before. We believe 2013 will be another banner year for the amount of food distributed by our Food Bank.

From one perspective, that's good news. West Michigan is a place where generous hands always seem to be open. When need arises, concerned churches, businesses and individuals are there to help.

But from the perspective of the families we serve, that news isn't so good. It means the need for that generosity remains.

Every year, we hold conferences with our partner agencies — more than 1,200 food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters who serve those in need directly. This year, we've been asking them to raise their hands if they've seen a decrease in the number of people coming for help. No hands go up. We ask them to raise their hands if they've seen the same number of people. A few hands go up. Then we ask if they've seen more people, and without fail, almost all of them raise their hands.

This need is real, it's chronic and it's hurting families across our state.

The report you're holding in your hands is a record of your response to that need. Every dollar raised, every hour volunteered and every family fed is a victory against hunger and a declaration of compassion for the thousands of people struggling with food insecurity.

Thank you for standing up for your neighbors in need.

Sincerely,

Kelly Crosse  
President of the Board

Ken Estelle  
Chief Executive Officer



# how we do it...

Every single day the Food Bank is open, it's filled with volunteers. Some of them serve with large groups of coworkers or classmates. Others serve individually. Many sort food and fill orders in the warehouse, while others take on clerical tasks and record-keeping. In all their roles, volunteers are indispensable partners in the work of feeding people.

**More than**  
**24,654**

volunteer hours were given in 2012. That's equivalent to 3,081,750 meals (1 hour of volunteering can provide 125 meals).

**"I love the idea that we are able to help Feeding America to feed those in need in our community."** ~ Michael Merren, volunteer



"Food Bank volunteer" conjures up images of hairnets and gloves, but volunteers have a wide variety of roles. Kristie Gortsema helps staff with data entry

Wayne Goddard climbs a cherry tree during a gleanng project at Asearch Company in Conklin, July 15.



Nick Hein and Colin McLaughlin interned at the Food Bank through Thornapple Evangelical Covenant Church. One day in July, they got suited up to dispose of some expired fruit juice.



Boy Scouts from Troops 3217, 271, 3373 and 223 collected 2,284 pounds during Scouting for Food this year, an impressive total.



On this Comcast Cares Day, volunteers set up a Mobile Pantry at the Hispanic Center of West Michigan. The day's visitors included Governor Rick Snyder.



After volunteering at the Food Bank, Kuyper College students created a presentation about their experience. Pictured: Kevin Singh, volunteer coordinator Dena Rogers, Dani Grill, Kevin Kruiuzenga, Joelle Garcia, Joyce Vang.



As part of their assignments, Americorps volunteers often serve at the Food Bank. These volunteers sorted and packed hundreds of pounds of frozen meat.





our partners...

## Agency Partners

In 2012, Feeding America West Michigan distributed over 24 million pounds of food to 1,225 hunger-relief agencies from southwest Michigan through the Upper Peninsula.

These nonprofit agencies are food pantries, community centers, soup kitchens and homeless shelters. Some of them provide a range of services from job training to counseling, while others are focused solely on food assistance. Large and small, these agencies are on the front lines of hunger in our communities.

**We couldn't do it without them.**

### Top 10 Agencies

Agency	Pounds Received
Muskegon County Cooperating Churches	769,096
Buist Community Assistance Center	475,402
Love Inc.-Newaygo County	448,100
Senior Meals	325,532
Family Network	309,991
Project Hope of Allegan County	277,614
Love Inc. of the Tri-Cities	261,258
Rotary Charities of Cadillac	234,259
Hesperia United Methodist Church	199,236
TrueNorth Community Services	191,260

## Top Food Donors: Giving Through Adversity

For much of Michigan's food industry, 2012 was an extraordinarily bad year.

An early thaw followed by a late frost wreaked havoc on fruit growers, claiming 95 percent of the crop in some orchards and vineyards. Hot on the heels of the freeze was a summer drought that demanded heavy irrigation and creative water-conservation strategies to save field crops.

In a year like this, you might expect food donations to fall, but we actually received over half a million more pounds in 2012 than in 2011, and the largest gains were in produce.

Some growers like Gavin Orchards designated portions of their land for the Food Bank. Others, like William Bos Greenhouse and Farm, who cultivate tomatoes, were able to give out of a surplus of crops that thrived in the dry heat.

The biggest gains, however, came from new donors. A new drive-in cooler at our Benton Harbor branch greatly increased our capacity for fresh produce, allowing us to welcome new donors like Pero Family Farms, Great Lakes Produce, SMP Marketing and Voyager Farms into the fold.

Another new partner was Meijer, who contributed an astounding amount of food in their first full year as a donor. Meijer began donating in December

2011 from four locations. By the end of 2012, 29 stores were contributing, elevating Meijer into our top 10 donors by volume. Meijer executive and new Food Bank board member Janet Emerson was instrumental in making this happen.

To the hundreds of food donors who feed thousands of struggling Michiganders every year, we offer our heartfelt thanks.



Counties	Branch Served By	Number of Agencies	Pounds of Food Distributed
Alger	Ishpeming	7	38,835
Allegan	Main	26	676,333
Antrim	Manna Food Project	8	590,132
Baraga	Western U.P. Food Bank	9	242,894
Benzie	Cadillac	7	292,907
Berrien	Benton Harbor	113	1,316,155
Cass	Benton Harbor	20	243,915
Charlevoix	Manna Food Project	10	230,003
Chippewa	Sault Ste. Marie	61	249,298
Delta	Ishpeming	10	75,519
Dickenson	Ishpeming	16	171,947
Emmet	Manna Food Project	15	829,953
Gogebic	Western U.P. Food Bank	7	97,503
Grand Traverse	Cadillac	34	595,508
Houghton	Western U.P. Food Bank	24	611,987
Ionia	Main	20	324,320
Iron	Western U.P. Food Bank	4	48,566
Kalkaska	Cadillac	7	185,029
Kent	Main	421	6,841,692
Keweenaw	Western U.P. Food Bank	1	37,880
Lake	Cadillac	8	156,186
Leelanau	Cadillac	4	145,245
Luce	Sault Ste. Marie	9	72,147
Mackinac	Sault Ste. Marie	12	34,079
Manistee	Cadillac	9	226,430
Marquette	Ishpeming	32	381,789
Mason	Cadillac	8	240,507
Mecosta	Main	15	479,721
Menominee	Ishpeming	1	2,032
Missaukee	Cadillac	8	130,345
Montcalm	Main	25	772,854
Muskegon	Main	59	1,941,725
Newaygo	Main	37	1,718,679
Oceana	Main	11	435,191
Ontonagon	Western U.P. Food Bank	5	113,010
Osceola	Cadillac	13	154,604
Ottawa	Main	92	1,671,227
Schoolcraft	Ishpeming	6	55,854
VanBuren	Benton Harbor	29	418,583
Wexford	Cadillac	22	580,051
<b>Total</b>		<b>1225</b>	<b>23,430,635</b>
<b>Total Pounds Distributed (including pounds to other food banks)</b>			<b>23,815,412</b>

## Pounds of Food Distributed by Branch in 2012

Branch	Number of Agencies	Pounds of food
Main	706	14,861,742
Cadillac	120	2,706,812
Benton Harbor	162	1,978,653
Manna Food Project Food Project	33	1,650,088
Western U.P. Food Bank	50	1,151,840
Ishpeming	72	725,976
Sault Ste. Marie	82	355,524



## It'll All Be Worth It

As he watched his grandsons chase each other across the blacktop outside the elementary school, Marshall looked amused, then exasperated, then reflective. Sam, eight, and Marcus, six, both attend the school, located in a working-class neighborhood on the southeast side of Grand Rapids.

School hasn't always been easy for Marcus, who has ADHD, but he's made progress. Marshall credits that to the teachers more than anything else. "They're really outstanding," he said.

Marshall and his wife are currently in the process of adopting their two grandchildren. The boys' father was just released from prison, while their mother was recently sentenced.

"They almost went to the state, and we said, no, we can't have that," Marshall said.

Adoption isn't cheap, though, and neither is Marcus' medication. When you add those pressures to Marshall's disability,

which forced him to retire after three decades as a mechanic, and the cost of supporting the boys' father, who is also living with him, it's easy to see why he showed up to the school's Mobile Food Pantry that afternoon.

Laid out on tables were bags of carrots, stacks of sweet corn, flats of tomatoes, along with piles of baked goods, potatoes, fruit juice and yogurt. It's enough food to last a family of four for half a week, helping ensure that, whatever difficulties they may face, at least their most basic need will be met.

For that, Marshall is grateful.

Before stepping up to the first table with his grandsons, Marshall admitted that his situation isn't easy, but he said the challenges were beside the point.

**It'll all be worth it.**

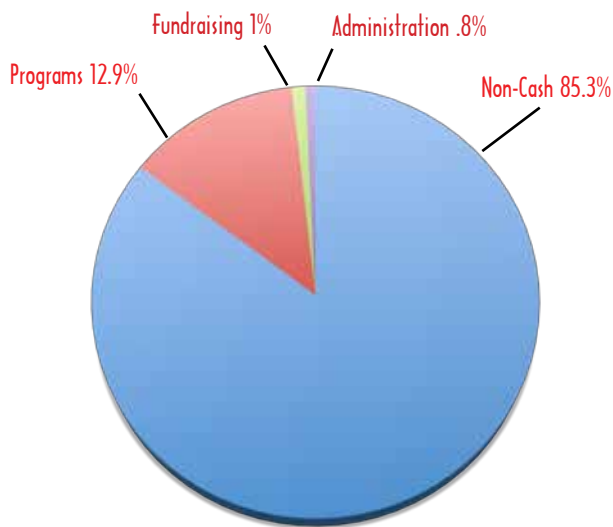
why we do it...



*Note: To protect their privacy, the names of the individuals in this story have been changed.*

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION, JUNE 30, 2013

## the numbers...



### EXPENSES

**Non-Cash:** The food and grocery items we distribute to agencies and food-insecure individuals.

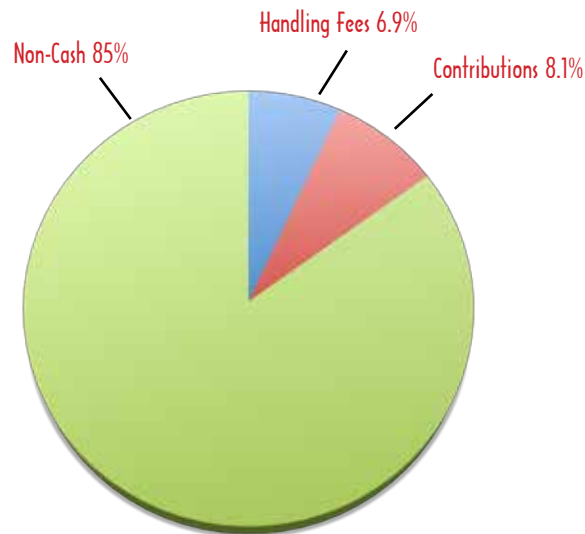
**Programs:** All expenses related to reclaiming, storing and delivering food to more than 1,200 agencies across West Michigan and the U.P. Included here are Mobile Food Pantries and gleaning projects. **Taken together, Programs and Non-Cash expenses account for 98.2% of spending.**

**Fundraising:** The amount spent on fundraising and marketing.

**Administration:** Administrative compensation, accounting and other costs not directly connected to the distribution of food.

Non-Cash	\$32,599,831	85.3%
Programs	\$4,932,573	12.9%
Fundraising	\$385,281	1.0%
Administration	\$291,098	0.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$38,208,783*</b>	

\*The total was initially printed incorrectly. It has been corrected.



### REVENUE

**Handling Fees:** Our agencies bear roughly half the cost of the food they receive, paying an average of 11 cents per pound.

**Contributions:** The other half of our expenses are covered by individuals, companies and charitable organizations.

**Non-Cash:** The majority of our revenue comes in the form of in-kind contributions, particularly the millions of pounds of food we received in 2012.

Handling Fees	\$2,606,939	6.9%
Contributions	\$3,098,759	8.1%
Non-cash	\$32,344,229	85%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$38,049,927</b>	

### Board of Directors:

**President:** Kelly Crosse

**Vice President:** Brett Christie

**Treasurer:** Patrick L. Repins, CPA

**Secretary:** Tom Bylenga

F.C. "Buzz" Baker

Jeffrey Battershall

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Kevin Mahoney

Pastor Bruce A. McCoy

Ed Nieuwenhuis

Robert R. Stark

Linda Winks



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www.feedingamericawestmichigan.org

### You can feed West Michigan

To give online please visit us at  
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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.



Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank is a non-profit surplus food warehouse distributing about 2 million pounds of food monthly in cooperation with over 1,200 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 reaches an estimated 100,000 West Michigan and Upper Peninsula families annually.

Call us at 616.784.3250 or learn more at  
[www.FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org](http://www.FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org).