

Full Plate PRESS

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



Feeding Kids in Need: School Mobile Pantry Program Grows

Child hunger is on the rise in West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. According to this year's Map the Meal Gap report, it crept up from 20.2 percent in 2012 to 20.4 percent in 2013. But the new numbers haven't caught us off guard.

Thanks to a grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, Feeding America West Michigan's School Mobile Pantry program is now serving kids at 20 different campuses, up from just one in April 2013. The program provided more than 370,000 meals last year alone.

The concept is simple: Feeding America West Michigan delivers a truck full of fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy products, beverages and baked goods to schools in the afternoon. Volunteers from the schools (mostly students and parents) set up what looks like a pop-up farmers market. And between 100 and 200 households are able to pick up half a week's worth of food completely free of charge.

New to the program this year is Baldwin Community Schools in Lake County, home to the highest child food insecurity rate in all of Michigan. Superintendent Stiles Simmons says the need for food is obvious: close to 50 percent of his students are in poverty.

"Some of our students don't eat over the weekend," Simmons said. "Their moms are working maybe two jobs, and what's in the cabinet is what they get."

"Knowing that our students are going to have nutritious food provided for them at home, not just at school, is comforting."

At the Mobile Pantry in Fennville Elementary, Marilyn, a mother of three, filled four reusable grocery bags with potatoes, cauliflower, carrots, tomatoes, PopTarts and green bell peppers. She and her husband lost their home to foreclosure shortly before moving to town last year. No longer living near her mother, who used to babysit the kids, Marilyn had to put her three-year-old into daycare.

"The added expense — that was our food money, basically," Marilyn said.

But things are looking up. Marilyn's husband recently got a promotion, and she's started working at a humane society in the county. "I'm hoping we won't need to come here as much, but it's definitely nice to have the option when I need to," she said.

While far too many children are still at risk, we believe that by working with partners at local schools and foundations, our School Mobile Pantry program can be part of the solution to child hunger in our state.

Food Bank Achieves New Food Safety Standard

In June, Feeding America West Michigan passed its first food safety audit from AIB International, bringing our organization to its highest level of food safety to date. So far 80 Feeding America member food banks have passed this inspection.

Feeding America's national food safety manager Wayne Melichar says the network emphasizes third-party certification because "it shows that our network follows the same food safety audits that our for-profit partners follow."

AIB certification was a two-year process, involving new documentation procedures for cleaning and temperature control, as well as some infrastructure investment, said the Food Bank's warehouse manager, Zach Saucier. He credits the operations team with making it happen:

"It's easy to have somebody shouting out the orders, but the fact that the team took it seriously and understood why we were doing it was a big reason why we passed."



Michigan Health Endowment Fund Drives Hunger Relief

As part of the Michigan Health Endowment Fund's investment in our School Mobile Pantry program (see "Feeding Kids in Need: School Mobile Pantry Program Grows"), they've underwritten the leases of two brand-new refrigerated straight trucks.

Each truck can haul roughly 10,000 meals at a time, and they'll be dedicated first and foremost to serving children and seniors in need throughout our service area.

Acquiring two new vehicles at one time gives a big boost to the reliability of our fleet. Logistics manager Tim Johnson says that acquiring new trucks allows us to operate more reliably and efficiently with less downtime for repairs. "A downed truck takes driver time," he says, and with fresh vehicles joining our fleet, "we're able to keep our drivers moving."



Ada Piano Students Provide 27,600 Meals

Every year, piano teacher Sherry Van Overen organizes a piano recital for her students at Ada Congregational Church, and every year she takes a collection for Feeding America West Michigan. Since 2009, Sherry and her students have quietly raised more than \$6,900 — the equivalent of 27,600 meals.

Sherry feels it's important for her students, many of whom come from privileged backgrounds, to be aware of the need that exists in West Michigan. "To play just for the accolades of their parents is fine, but they work really hard," Sherry said, and she wanted to show them how they can use their efforts to make a difference. "The families get really involved."

This summer's recital alone funded nearly 6,000 meals.

"You get such a big bang for the buck from the donation," Sherry said. "That's one of the reasons we stuck with the program. It does a lot to help in our own backyard."



Grand Rapids



October 3, 2015

2014

ANNUAL REPORT



“Our commitment for this year and the years to come is to deepen those partnerships, strengthening our network, and ensuring that, ultimately, every single person in our region is able to get the food they need to lead a full and healthy life.”



Letter From the Board President and CEO

In our line of work, progress is measured in pounds. Pounds of food donated, pounds of food purchased, pounds loaded onto Mobile Food Pantries and shipped out to soup kitchens and after-school programs. Add up all those pounds, though, and what do you get? A record year for our organization, certainly, but something even more important than that.

It's the young mother from Marquette who's able to feed herself as well as her newborn baby thanks to one of our food pantries. It's the student who serves clients at his Grand Rapids high school's Mobile Pantry because he remembers the times he stood with his mother in the same line. It's the Army couple who were able to get back on their feet after leaving the service, thanks to the kindness of friends and the support of our Food Bank.

When we talk about pounds, we're really talking about people: thousands and thousands of neighbors who, thanks to the Food Bank, don't have to go without.

But we can't do any of this on our own. More than anything else, Feeding America West Michigan is a network of people. It's a collaboration between financial supporters, food donors, farmers, volunteers and partner agencies all coming together for one purpose: solving hunger in West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula.

We firmly believe this goal is attainable. Our society produces more than enough food to feed everyone in need. In fact, if just 15 percent of the surplus food in our nation's food system could be directed to hunger relief, we could feed more than 25 million Americans every year. We believe that the missing element is not the food itself, but the funding and the collaboration required to get it to those in need.

In 2014, new collaborative endeavors like the Food Club of Greater Grand Rapids, the School Mobile Pantry program and our partnerships with organizations like the VA Medical Center in Iron Mountain made it possible to provide more food than ever before. Our commitment for this year and the years to come is to deepen those partnerships, strengthening our network and ensuring that, ultimately, every single person in our region is able to get the food they need to lead a full and healthy life.

Thank you for your partnership with us over the past year. We know that together we can solve hunger.

Sincerely,

Kelly Crosse
President of the Board

Ken Estelle
Chief Executive Officer

Feeding America West Michigan is a network of people all coming together for one purpose: solving hunger in West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula.

Top 25 Food Donors

Donor	Pounds Distributed
Walmart/Sam's Club	3,516,005
Kellogg Company	1,250,371
Meijer	1,150,315
General Mills	838,272
Country Fresh Dairies, Inc	687,151
Coca-Cola North America	677,134
SpartanNash	676,057
Gordon Food Service	609,279
Dannon Company, Inc	409,542
Hillshire Farms/ Tyson	384,660
Marker Farms	372,126
Roskams Bakery	330,400
ConAgra Foods	310,810
Pero Family Farms	305,809
Kerlikowske Farms	297,576
Sysco	294,361
Request Foods, Inc	287,048
Mondelez International	281,693
Old Orchard Brands	270,699
Buist Community Assistance Center	262,725
Target	247,173
Gavin Orchards	212,440
Pepsi-Cola Bottling	176,584
Van Solkema Produce	168,402
Campbell Soup Company	163,480
	14,180,142

A network of food donors.

Hundreds of farmers, retailers and manufacturers contributed to a record-setting total of 28,060,003 pounds of food received in 2014. Proof that together we can solve hunger.



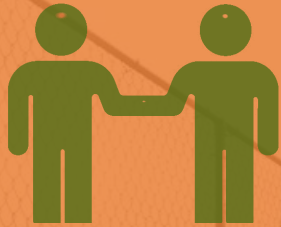
A network of volunteers.

1 hour of volunteering can provide 150 meals.

Volunteers served **31,535.5 hours** with Feeding America West Michigan and its branches in 2014 and provided an estimated **5.63 million meals.**

Another **45,690 hours** were served at Mobile Food Pantry distributions to provide an additional **7.75 million meals.**





A network of agencies.

Top 10 Agencies

Agency	City	Pounds Dist.
Muskegon County Cooperating Churches	Muskegon	763,670
Love INC of Newaygo County	Grant	444,122
Senior Meals Program, Inc.	Grandville	391,065
Love INC Tri-Cities	Grand Haven	277,520
Project Hope of NE Allegan County	Dorr	275,388
Salvation Army Social Services	Grand Rapids	265,962
TrueNorth Community Services	Fremont	263,708
Family Network of Wyoming	Wyoming	263,577
Rotary Charities of Cadillac	Cadillac	250,192
Loaves & Fishes	Muskegon	220,888



A network that distributes food to those who are hungry.

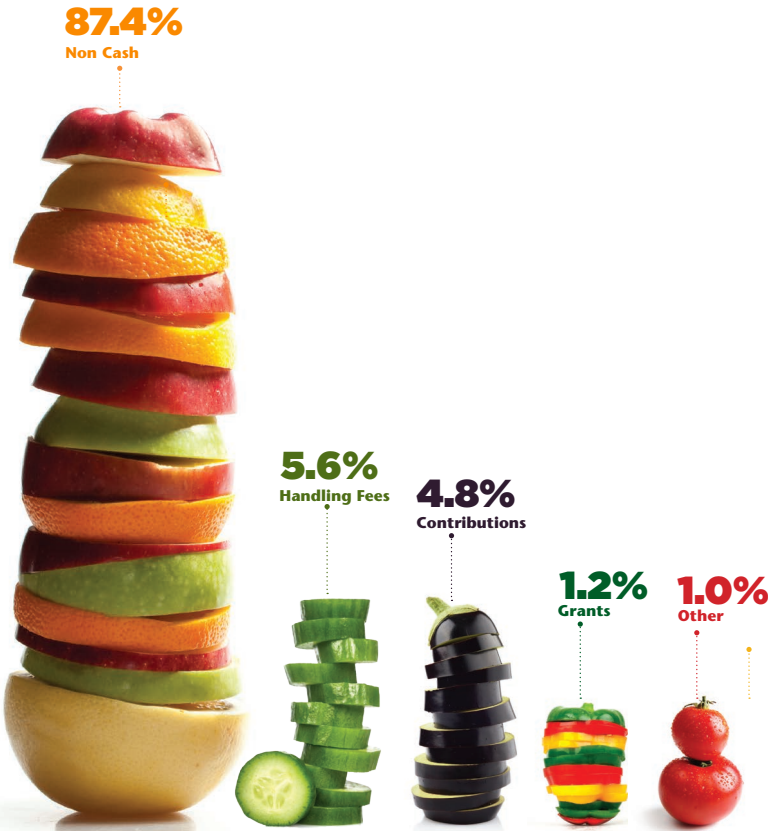
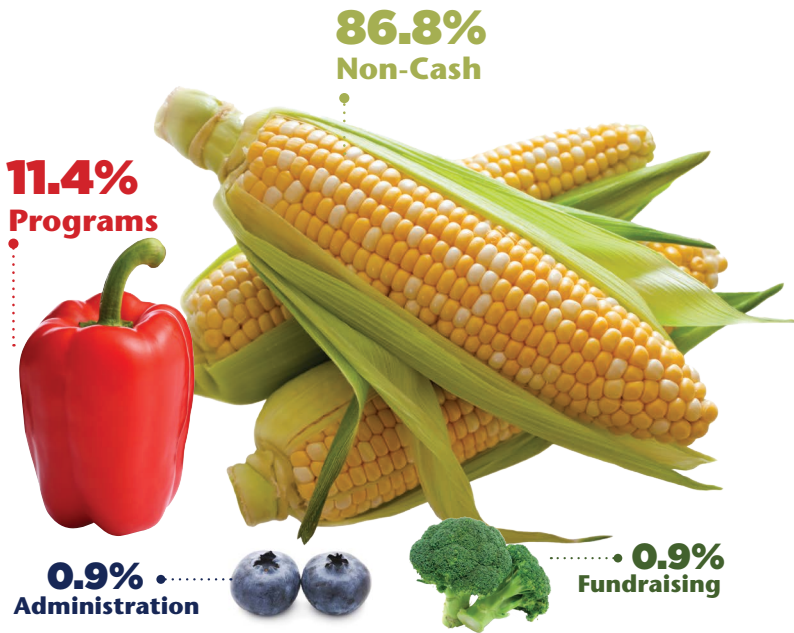
When we talk about pounds, we're really talking about people: thousands and thousands of neighbors who, thanks to you and the Food Bank, don't have to go without.

Pounds of Food Distributed in 2014

Counties	Food Bank Branch	Number of Agencies	Pounds of Food Distributed
ALGER	Ishpeming	6	55,445
ALLEGAN	Comstock Park	24	859,701
ANTRIM	Manna Food Project	8	525,591
BARAGA	Western UP Food Bank	9	206,105
BENZIE	Cadillac	8	294,782
BERRIEN	Benton Harbor	88	1,651,010
CASS	Benton Harbor	20	500,853
CHARLEVOIX	Manna Food Project	11	292,628
CHIPPEWA	Sault Ste. Marie	48	304,493
DELTA	Ishpeming	10	210,140
DICKINSON	Ishpeming	17	199,294
EMMET	Manna Food Project	15	943,235
GOGEBIC	Western UP Food Bank	7	355,735
GRAND TRAVERSE	Cadillac	27	848,959
HOUGHTON	Western UP Food Bank	26	654,596
IONIA	Comstock Park	17	618,874
IRON	Western UP Food Bank	6	195,998
KALKASKA	Cadillac	7	188,298
KENT	Comstock Park	321	7,493,561
KEWEENAW	Western UP Food Bank	1	31,984
LAKE	Cadillac	6	174,166
LEELANAU	Cadillac	5	215,234
LUCE	Sault Ste. Marie	10	106,024
MACKINAC	Sault Ste. Marie	10	88,312
MANISTEE	Cadillac	9	237,614
MARQUETTE	Ishpeming	27	442,192
MASON	Cadillac	7	226,315
MECOSTA	Comstock Park	13	546,748
MENOMINEE	Ishpeming	2	11,514
MISSAUKEE	Cadillac	9	161,368
MONTCALM	Comstock Park	28	827,668
MUSKEGON	Comstock Park	45	1,882,983
NEWAYGO	Comstock Park	28	1,771,723
OCEANA	Comstock Park	10	457,471
ONTONAGON	Western UP Food Bank	22	214,307
OSCEOLA	Cadillac	11	203,710
OTTAWA	Comstock Park	67	1,745,354
SCHOOLCRAFT	Ishpeming	6	51,453
VAN BUREN	Benton Harbor	28	489,456
WEXFORD	Cadillac	22	664,155
Total		1041	26,949,049

The numbers

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION, DECEMBER 31, 2014



EXPENSES

Programs	\$5,356,250	11.4%
Fundraising	\$418,296	0.9%
Administration	\$423,683	0.9%
Non-Cash	\$40,648,962	86.8%
Total	\$46,847,191	100.0%

Non-Cash: The value of the food we distributed.

Programs: All expenses related to reclaiming, storing and distributing food in the 40 counties we serve.

Fundraising: The cost of communications and development activities.

Administration: Administrative and accounting costs, along with other expenses not directly connected to food distribution.

REVENUE

Handling Fees	\$2,615,766	5.6%
Contributions	\$2,232,911	4.8%
Grants	\$546,097	1.2%
Other	\$480,133	1.0%
Non-Cash	\$40,628,308	87.4%
Total	\$ 46,503,215	100.0%

Non-Cash: The value of the food we received.

Handling Fees: Cost-sharing with partner agencies, who pay 6 to 18 cents per pound for most items.

Contributions: Free-will gifts from individuals, companies and other organizations.

Grants: Income from charitable foundations and government agencies.

Other: Funding from the Food Bank Council of Michigan and other sources.

Food Donor Profile: Kerlikowske Farms

Standing with Ed Kerlikowske on the edge of one of his fields in late June, when all his watermelon plants were just beginning to put out fruit, his enthusiasm for his work was evident. “I get to go out every day and grab soil and witness the miracle of life,” he said.

For Ed, who together with his wife, Tina, runs Kerlikowske Farms, a 215-acre watermelon-growing operation in Niles, Mich., farming is a miraculous partnership between the farmer, the land and the creator.

It’s that spiritual outlook that leads Ed and Tina to donate more produce to Feeding America West Michigan than almost any other grower: 298,000 pounds in 2014 alone, making them the 15th largest food donor in a list that includes some of the biggest players in the food industry.


“Watermelons are heavy,” Ed said, trying to downplay their ranking. “It’s different than if we had a bunch of peas.”

Together with their religious convictions, the Kerlikowskes also donate fruit for some very pragmatic reasons. Ed explained that if a watermelon doesn’t meet the strict requirements of their buyers — if a rind has a cosmetic blemish, for example — it can’t be sold. Because those blemishes have nothing to do with the quality of the fruit, they choose to donate it.

As a result, Kerlikowske watermelons have become a staple at Feeding America West Michigan’s Mobile Food Pantries — a real treat for clients who, in most cases, would have difficulty affording them at the grocery store.

Not long ago, Ed and Tina attended a Mobile Pantry and got to see firsthand how much our clients appreciated their fruit.

“When you grow something for as long as I have you take a lot of things for granted,” Ed said. “To really understand the full value of what a watermelon is ... Your organization has helped bring that to the front to really see.”

A man in a red and white plaid shirt and blue jeans is leaning over a field of watermelon plants. He is looking down at a plant, and his hands are near the leaves. The background shows more of the field and some trees in the distance under a bright sky.

“I get to go out every day and grab soil and witness the miracle of life.”

FEEDING AMERICA

West Michigan Food Bank

864 West River Center Drive NE
Comstock Park, MI 49321
(616) 784-3250
FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org

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Feeding America West Michigan exists to ensure safe food is available to the hungry in our community. By working with over 1,100 hunger-relief agencies, we are able to serve an estimated 492,100 people in West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula each year.

Call us at (616) 784-3250 or learn more at FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org.



Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank is a member of Feeding America, the United Way, and the Food Bank Council of Michigan.



You Can Feed West Michigan
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Food Banker Profile: Heather Powell, Reclamation Coordinator

How long have you worked at Feeding America West Michigan?
8 years.

What did you do before that?

I was a childcare provider at MVP Athletic Club in Rockford. I grew up in the Belding, Greenville area. I went to Belding High School and Montcalm Community College for secretarial. I have yet to do anything that has anything to do with secretarial, but I answer the phone well.

Describe your role at the Food Bank.

I line up the jobs for the volunteers, make sure they have all the supplies that they need and oversee them. I'd say I see probably about 100 volunteers a week, ranging from probably 12 to 96 years old.

What's a very good day at work for you, and what's a tough day at work?

I don't really think there is a tough day for me. I enjoy the busyness. I look forward to Golden K (a group of retirees who have volunteered every Tuesday for more than three decades). They're always happy to see me in the morning.

What keeps you coming back to work day after day?

The people. The volunteers and the agencies and our purpose. I've actually had a lot of friends and myself who have needed help from time to time. (My husband) Aaron and I had spurts where we didn't have a full-time job. We chose to use a food pantry so we could pay our bills and keep a roof over our head. The whole purpose of beating hunger has always been a big thing for me.

What are you doing when you're not solving hunger?

Spending time with family and friends, scrapbooking and reading. My husband Aaron and I have two kids: Lillian, who's nine, and Holton, who's six. I've also got nine chickens.

You also make pickles. They're pretty famous around the Food Bank.

I learned canning from my grandma. I just remember sitting there snapping peas, getting ready to can. It's just a good way to get the fresh fruits and vegetables — I freeze some of it too — so I can have it throughout the entire year.



Full Plates Forever Society offers simple way to solve hunger

For donor Tom Larson, one of the most attractive things about Feeding America West Michigan is the simplicity of our mission.



"Your program appeals to me because it's very basic ...," he said. "You need help, we'll give you help. There's no extra baggage involved."

So it makes sense that Tom, a computer engineer who has worked at Steelcase for 30 years, would choose a similarly straightforward way to support our mission.

"Last year, I went to a lawyer and got a trust set up for my assets — and a will. And in the course of doing that, there were a few charities I wanted to support. Yours was one of them."

While Tom will pass most of his estate on to relatives, he chose to designate a percentage to his three favorite charities, including the Food Bank. The beauty of a planned gift like this is that it places no financial strain on the donor during his or her lifetime, but provides a way to make an investment in a cause they care about — and it can make a big difference.

If you're interested in learning more about planned giving and how it can benefit you and the Food Bank, visit [FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org/ Legacy](http://FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org/Legacy) or contact us at 616-784-3250.