

Full Plate PRESS

2016 Fall Newsletter
& 2015 Annual Report

THE NEWSLETTER OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**
West Michigan

 HUNGER
ACTION
MONTH

Take a Stand Against Hunger this September



Hunger threatens thousands in our community. We believe it's time to stop talking and do something about it.

That's why we're inviting you to take a stand against hunger during Hunger Action Month this September. You'll have opportunities to make a real difference in the life of a neighbor struggling with hunger all month long.

Vote.

We're taking over ArtPrize! National Geographic photographer Joel Sartore is partnering with Feeding America West Michigan to bring his hunger series to downtown Grand Rapids. See his work at DeVos Place, Sept. 21-Oct. 9, and don't forget to vote.

Volunteer.

Get your work boots on and join us as we pick fruits and vegetables for those in need at local farms. Look for additional volunteer opportunities at ArtPrize and the Food Bank.

Raise a Glass.

Visit a local brewery or restaurant and raise a glass for hunger relief. Participants include New Holland Brewing Co., Greenbush Brewing Co. Terra GR, Beards Brewery, Burnt Marshmallow Brewing, and Ore Dock Brewing Co.

Donate.

Make your gift go twice as far. From Sept. 13 to Oct. 11, Weingartz will match every gift you give online. That means every dollar will send eight meals to local families in need.

Learn more at FeedWM.org/HAM.





Food Bank volunteers bag frozen sweet potatoes from Arbre Farms.



New Website Includes Mobile Pantry Calendar

If you've visited FeedWM.org lately, you've probably noticed some changes. The images are bigger and brighter. The navigation is simpler. And it just looks prettier.

"A website is a lot like a home," said Jeff Thomas of Grandesigns, who developed the new site. "It might be just what you wanted when you got it, but over time your needs and priorities change."

Our biggest need wasn't aesthetic. It was essential to our mission: connecting more people in need with Mobile Food Pantries in their communities.

In the past, Mobile Pantry information was scattered across dozens of local newspapers, church bulletin boards and webpages. Now all of that information — updated hourly to reflect any scheduling changes — is available on our website at FeedWM.org/FindFood.

DEQ Partnership Reduces Waste, Fights Hunger in West Michigan and Flint

The founding principle of food banking is this: that if we use excess food to feed hungry people, we can solve food waste and food insecurity at the same time.

That's exactly what a new grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality is doing. This spring, the DEQ gave Feeding America West Michigan \$100,000 to start a major food rescue partnership with Arbre Farms in Walkerville, Mich.

Arbre Farms is one of the largest frozen fruit and vegetable processors in Michigan. As in food production everywhere, a small percentage of that produce is rejected for aesthetic reasons: for being the wrong shape or color. By allowing us to save that produce, Arbre Farms can provide up to 3 million pounds of healthy food to people in need each year.

Half of that food will go to people in Flint through the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan.

"This project will be a powerful tool in addressing the effects of lead exposure by Flint residents," said President and CEO Bill Kerr.

That's because the calcium, vitamin C and iron in the carrots, green beans and squash processed by Arbre Farms help the body resist lead absorption.

And that's not the end of the story. Feeding America West Michigan CEO Ken Estelle believes the model can be expanded to food processors all over Michigan and across the country.

"Frozen vegetable processors are probably the biggest untapped source of food in the food system today," Estelle said. "If this partnership is successful, it will be a game-changer for American food banking."



2015 ANNUAL REPORT

Letter From the Board President and CEO

There's a saying you might have heard: "Together we can solve hunger." It's the motto of the national Feeding America network, and it's one we've chosen to adopt here at Feeding America West Michigan. It conveys a lot in just a few words. But for us, one of those words is more important than the others: Together.

"Together" matters because hunger relief is a team effort. Food insecurity is too big of a problem for one person or organization to solve on their own. But if we unite, it's more than possible. It's already happening.

In 2015, Feeding America West Michigan distributed 27.6 million pounds of food, the equivalent of 22 million meals. It was the third record year in a row for our organization, and we did it by working together.

Together with Michigan's farmers, grocery stores and produce brokers, we acquired 9.5 million pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables, accounting for over a third of our total intake.

Together with 3,864 volunteers, we sorted and packed 5.6 million pounds of food and personal-care items in our reclamation department.

Together with 1,100 local food pantries, soup kitchens, community centers and schools, we distributed food across 40 Michigan counties.

And together with our donors, we raised enough money to get that food to half a million people in need.

2015 was a big year. 2016 is shaping up to be even bigger, and the investment of local donors and volunteers has never been more important.

The challenges are great — food insecurity still affects 1 in 8 people in our region — but we have the solution. By bringing donors, volunteers and local agencies together, we can and will solve hunger in West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula.

Will you join us?



Kelly Crosse
President of the Board



Ken Estelle
Chief Executive Officer



“And together with our donors, we raised enough money to get that food to half a million people in need.”



Top 25 Food Donors

Donor	Pounds Distributed
Walmart / Sam's Club	2,825,548
Meijer	1,318,171
Kellogg Company	1,282,671
General Mills	883,341
Kerlikowske Family Farms	720,099
Gordon Food Service	692,131
SpartanNash	619,654
Pero Family Farms	613,828
Country Fresh Dairies	582,045
Coca-Cola North America	455,223
H.J. Heinz Co.	419,818
Sysco Grand Rapids	358,877
National Food Group	291,285
Tyson / Hillshire Farms	290,656
Target	271,869
Mondelez International	250,213
ConAgra Foods	246,804
Pearson Foods Corporation	237,693
Old Orchard Brands	235,550
Gavin Orchards	213,718
Marker Farms	208,795
Aldi Stores	204,603
Roskams Bakery	177,973
Heeren Brothers	171,692
Kraft Foods	168,451
	13,740,708

A network of food donors.

Feeding America West Michigan received generous donations from hundreds of other organizations and individuals for a grand total of 28,497,717 pounds of food in 2015.



... Together



The power of volunteers.

1 hour of volunteering can provide 165 meals.

In 2015, **3,864 volunteers** served **28,288 hours** at Feeding America West Michigan and provided an estimated **4.67 million meals**.





A network of agencies.

Top 10 Agencies

Agency	City	Pounds Dist.
Muskegon County Cooperating Churches	Muskegon	841,893
Salvation Army Social Services	Grand Rapids	478,104
Love INC of the Tri-Cities	Grand Haven	419,770
Love INC Newaygo County	Grant	405,111
Community Food Club	Grand Rapids	333,162
Senior Meals Program	Grand Rapids	297,649
TrueNorth Community Services	Fremont	284,885
Rotary Charities of Cadillac	Cadillac	254,920
Project Hope of Allegan County	Dorr	246,866
Family Network of Wyoming	Wyoming	231,304



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.

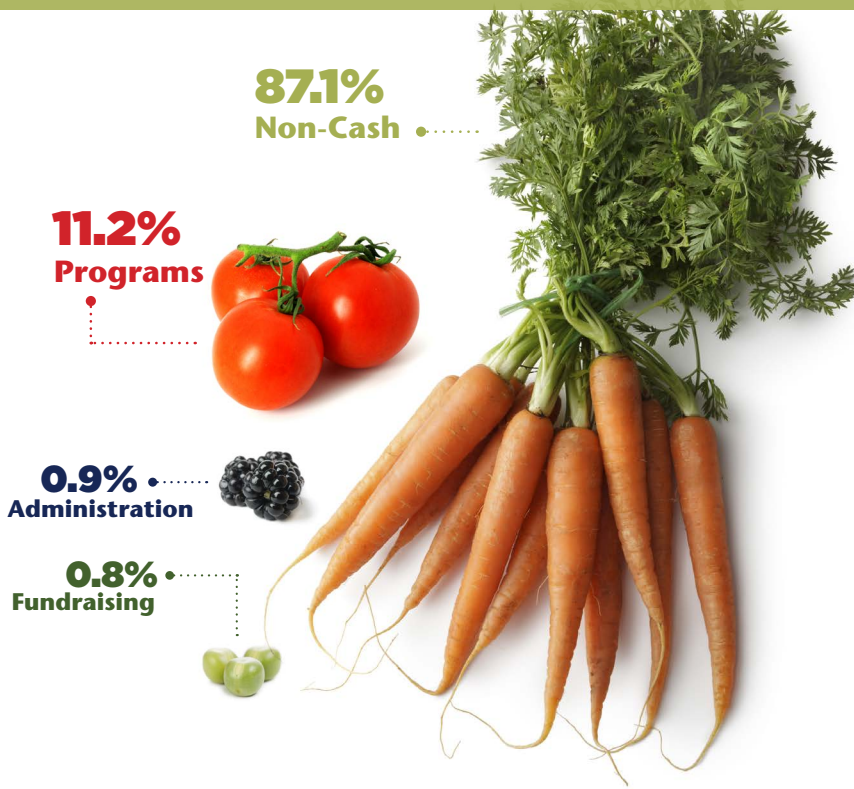
Pounds of Food Distributed in 2015

Counties	Food Bank Branch	Number of Agencies	Pounds of Food Distributed
ALGER	Ishpeming	3	67,620
ALLEGAN	Comstock Park	23	804,367
ANTRIM	Manna Food Project	10	547,644
BARAGA	Western UP Food Bank	9	180,217
BENZIE	Cadillac	7	253,770
BERRIEN	Benton Harbor	95	1,448,592
CASS	Benton Harbor	20	452,021
CHARLEVOIX	Manna Food Project	13	267,774
CHIPPEWA	Sault Ste. Marie	52	198,235
DELTA	Ishpeming	12	210,071
DICKINSON	Ishpeming	16	219,854
EMMET	Manna Food Project	14	808,190
GOGEBIC	Western UP Food Bank	6	381,096
GRAND TRAVERSE	Cadillac	18	751,939
HOUGHTON	Western UP Food Bank	25	629,828
IONIA	Comstock Park	20	597,747
IRON	Western UP Food Bank	7	202,675
KALKASKA	Cadillac	6	168,382
KENT	Comstock Park	376	7,697,127
KEWEENAW	Western UP Food Bank	1	41,637
LAKE	Cadillac	10	264,312
LEELANAU	Cadillac	5	216,701
LUCE	Sault Ste. Marie	10	109,551
MACKINAC	Sault Ste. Marie	14	67,508
MANISTEE	Cadillac	11	181,385
MARQUETTE	Ishpeming	29	447,308
MASON	Cadillac	8	241,504
MECOSTA	Comstock Park	13	515,327
MENOMINEE	Ishpeming	3	138,749
MISSAUKEE	Cadillac	8	142,933
MONTCALM	Comstock Park	26	722,560
MUSKEGON	Comstock Park	49	1,805,876
NEWAYGO	Comstock Park	30	1,681,955
OCEANA	Comstock Park	10	412,002
ONTONAGON	Western UP Food Bank	6	188,695
OSCEOLA	Cadillac	13	267,562
OTTAWA	Comstock Park	82	1,857,617
SCHOOLCRAFT	Ishpeming	4	96,953
VAN BUREN	Benton Harbor	28	494,389
WEXFORD	Cadillac	26	689,299
Total		1118	26,470,972*

*An additional 1,161,392 pounds was distributed to partner food banks.

The numbers

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION, DECEMBER 31, 2015



EXPENSES

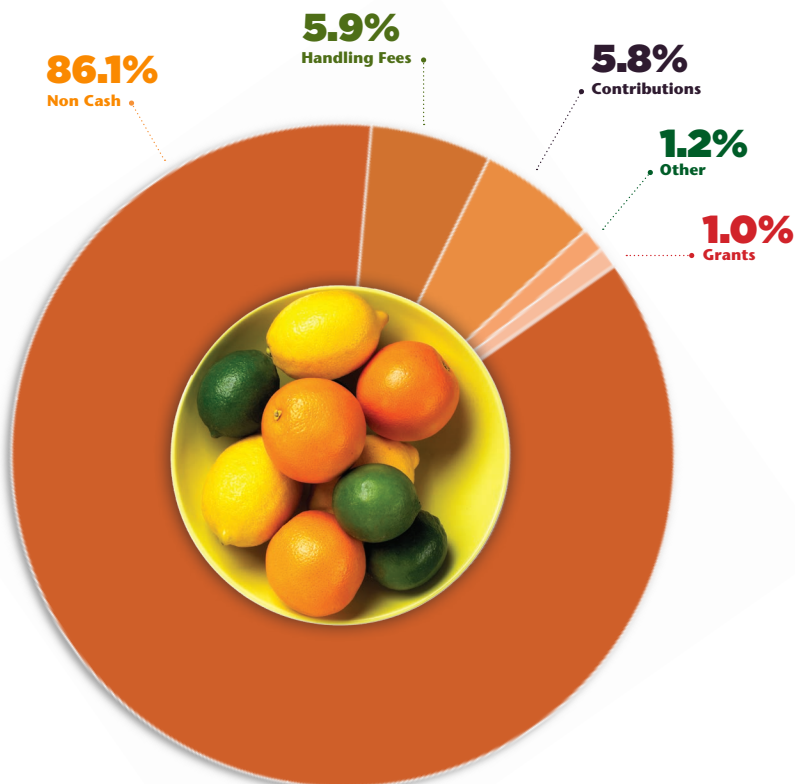
Programs	\$5,209,258	11.2%
Fundraising	\$392,452	0.8%
Administration	\$394,129	0.9%
Non-Cash	\$40,568,504	87.1%
Total	\$46,564,343	100.0%

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: Costs related to administrative and accounting activities, along with other expenses not directly connected to food distribution.

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



REVENUE

Handling Fees	\$2,782,007	5.9%
Contributions	\$2,726,133	5.8%
Grants	\$491,665	1.0%
Other	\$575,772	1.2%
Non-Cash	\$40,703,630	86.1%
Total	\$ 47,279,207	100.0%

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

Contributions: Gifts from individuals, companies and other organizations.

Grants: Income from charitable foundations and government agencies.

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

*Value based on an annual analysis done for Feeding America's national office by an independent auditor.

Food Banker Profile: Beulah Guydon, Board Member



Beulah Guydon holds a masters degree in rehabilitation counseling from Michigan State. In 1997, she founded Positive Options, Inc., a Feeding America West Michigan agency focused on youth in Grand Rapids' Eastern/Franklin neighborhood. She joined our board in 2016.

Q: Why did you want to join the board?

A: The board's mission, the agency's mission, really is the same: To serve the people and make sure no one is hungry. So I'm just hoping to be an asset to the board not only on the service level but on the administrative level.

Q: What is Positive Options?

A: Positive Options is a family-oriented program that offers guidance, referrals, and support. We do a lot of work in character education. We focus on things like trustworthiness, anger management, how to peacefully resolve conflict. In doing that, we also see the need for food.

Q: Why are you passionate about Grand Rapids youth?

A: I've been in this community for many, many years, and I see the need. I see the support that they need. I see a lot of gaps in services. There has been a lot of violence in the community, and a lot of them were youth. I believe the change needs to come from the inside out.

Q: What makes you hopeful for their future?

A: You know, I just believe and have faith that if we continue to support the youth, to provide positive role models, we're making a difference.

Q: What's one way the larger community could support your neighborhood?

A: The presence of folks. I would like to see people come down and on a firsthand basis see and understand this community. For example, if we do a food drive, people, even if they may not have a lot, they give something. I think that when you really get to know the community, the perception may change.



Donor Leaves Unexpected Gifts for Hunger Relief Agencies

Not even Julie Bates' son knew what she was planning to do with the money in her trust.

"She was, I have to admit, very guarded about her finances," said Jim Bates, laughing. "We didn't have really any specific information about what her intentions were after she passed on."

It wasn't until the thank-you letters started coming in that Jim and the rest of the family realized how much she had directed to charities. To Feeding America West Michigan alone, Julie gave nearly \$40,000, enough to provide 160,000 meals to people in West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula.

Julie was born in Detroit to Italian immigrant parents. She enrolled at Wayne State University and paid her way to an English degree working as an operator at Michigan Bell Telephone. Over the course of her three-decade career with Bell, Julie secured a place in management, saving and investing as much of her money as she could.

"The fact that she was able to accumulate a trust and be able to do things for other people, I think that meant a lot to her," Jim said.

Jim says his mother encouraged his study of violin, which earned him a scholarship to Michigan State University, and he recalls how she regularly cooked meals for an elderly neighbor. After retirement, Julie spent much of her time volunteering. She passed away in December 2015 at the age of 98.

While Julie had no direct contact with Feeding America West Michigan during her lifetime, Jim suspects his mother became familiar with us through her church, East Congregational UCC, which runs a food pantry. In addition to Feeding America West Michigan and East Congregational, Julie made bequests to God's Kitchen and MSU.

Julie leaves behind her son, two granddaughters, three great-grandchildren and a quiet but lasting legacy.

FEEDING AMERICA®

West Michigan

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Feeding America West Michigan exists to ensure safe food is available to the hungry in our community. By working with nearly 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 FeedWM.org.

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



You Can Feed West Michigan

To give online please visit us at FeedWM.org



How Mobile Pantries are Bridging Two Lake Michigan Communities

On a sunny Thursday in May, the twin cities of St. Joseph and Benton Harbor are hosting two very different events. At the new Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course on the north side of Benton Harbor, hundreds of mostly white spectators watch the Senior PGA Championship, while at Trinity Lutheran Church in "St. Joe," a hundred people, mostly black, wait in line to get food.

St. Joe and Benton Harbor are near-perfect opposites. St. Joe is a classic Lake Michigan beach town, full of restaurants and boutiques, while Benton Harbor, golf course aside, is a sprawl of vacant businesses and housing projects. St. Joe is 88 percent white with a median income of \$53,000. Benton Harbor is 89 percent black and half its population lives in poverty.

Debby, Trinity's community outreach director, has lived in the area all her life and has seen Benton Harbor's economy crumble while St. Joe's has flourished.

Some of Debby's guests, like the older white man sleeping under a nearby tree, are homeless. Many are seniors. Others, like Vanity, are cobbling together a living from sporadic employment, federal assistance, and help from family, friends and local charities.

A self-employed hairdresser, Vanity was told that she's making too much money to qualify for food assistance this year. "I said, okay, that's on me. I can take my loss, but I've got two children," she says.

Mobile Pantries like this one, therefore, are a big help. Each truck is loaded with fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products and baked goods — ingredients Vanity can use to make meals for her family.

"I like to cook things that stick around for a few days so the kids, when they

come home from school, they can have something to eat," she says. That's especially important right now because Vanity's oldest is a 13-year-old football player with a big appetite.

When her number is called, Vanity moves through the line filling a duffel bag and an empty box with potatoes, sweet corn and greens. When she's done, she packs the food into her auntie's van and heads back across the river to her home in Benton Harbor's Highland Projects. The food she picked up today should get her family through another week.



While Debby acknowledges that a Mobile Pantry won't solve her guests' problems, she says progress is being made in the community. "I want people to know that there are good people in St. Joe and organizations and churches who really have stepped up to the plate to help our neighbors."

She points to the United Way of Southwest Michigan's Berrien County Food Summit, which brings together local farmers, healthcare workers, academics and staff from Feeding America West Michigan. Its goal is to increase access to healthy, local food in Benton Harbor. It's no overnight solution, but it gives her hope.