

Full Plate PRESS

THE NEWSLETTER OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**[®]
West Michigan

2017 Fall Newsletter
& 2016 Annual Report



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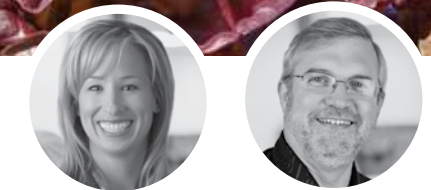
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2016 ANNUAL REPORT



Letter from Board Chair and President & CEO

2016 was a record year for Feeding America West Michigan. For the fourth consecutive year, we reached a new milestone in food distribution, sending 29.2 million pounds of food, the equivalent of 24 million meals, into our network.

That's a testament to the commitment and compassion of our partner agencies, our financial supporters, our volunteers, and our staff. It hasn't always been easy. We've had to adjust our processes and make hard decisions. We've asked more from our supporters than ever. But the result of all that effort is undeniable.

The question is, where do we go from here?

Our board has spent the better part of 2017 laying out a new strategic plan in order to answer that question. And the answer is this: It's time to move from merely filling the meal gap to addressing the root causes of the need itself. This will involve a shift in thinking.

As a regional food bank, we tend to look at food insecurity at the macro level. We focus on the number of meals we're providing relative to the number of people in need in each county. Last year we provided an average of 74.9 meals per person in need in our 40 counties. That's a good benchmark, but it's not enough. People don't experience food insecurity at the county level. They experience it in their daily lives in neighborhoods and housing complexes, in churches, schools, and workplaces. And we all recognize that just because the need is being met in St. Joe or East Grand Rapids doesn't mean it's being met in Benton Harbor or the Baxter Neighborhood.


Working with our board member Dr. Steve Borders and his students at Grand Valley State University, we have identified the highest-need Census Tracts within our 40 counties.

Our commitment to equity demands that we serve all neighborhoods according to their needs, no matter where they are. Thanks to this research, we are now targeting additional resources to those communities.

We're also making progress, even now, on the root causes of food insecurity by supporting and building on the work of our 913 local partner agencies. Partner agencies like JobStart, a program of Steepletown Ministries, which is teaching young men the skills they need to land and keep a job. Community centers like Streams of Hope, which enriches their neighborhood with afterschool activities, a community garden, and holistic health programs. And schools from Fennville to Marquette County, where we're supporting education by providing fresh fruits and vegetables through our Mobile Food Pantry program.

This new way of thinking is embodied in our vision for the big, sprawling 40-county community we serve, as a place in which all neighbors are nourished and empowered within an equitable food system.

We know that vision is attainable — if we work together. Are you with us?

Sincerely,

 Kelly Crosse
 President of the Board


 Ken Estelle
 Chief Executive Officer

Take a Stand this September

This September, you're invited to take a stand against hunger during Hunger Action Month 2017. No matter who you are or where you live, there's a way for you to get involved.

Donate.

Make a gift online Sept. 12-Oct. 10, and our friends at Weingartz will double your donation. That means \$50 will provide 400 meals!

Volunteer.

Grab a friend and sign up to volunteer. You can repack food in our warehouse and even pick fruits and vegetables at a local farm.

Advocate.

Public food assistance programs are under threat. You can speak out against cuts to hunger-relief programs by calling or emailing your legislators. Visit our website to get started.

Raise a Glass.

Take part in the Hops Against Hunger campaign. Dozens of breweries and restaurants across Michigan are donating portions of their sales to local food banks this September.

Visit FeedWM.org/HAM for more information.

Hunger Action Month is sponsored by Meijer and Spectrum Health.



PARTICIPATING BREWERIES:

- New Holland Brewing Company
- HopCat (all 6 Michigan locations!)
- Grand Rapids Brewing Company
- Arcadia Ales Kalamazoo
- Greenbush Brewing Company
- Ore Dock Brewing Company
- Beards Brewery
- Creston Brewery
- Pigeon Hill Brewing Company
- and many more!



2016 Top Food Donors

Feeding America West Michigan receives food from hundreds of grocery stores, farms, processors, and brokers, who donate every conceivable type of food from fresh lettuce and frozen turkey to breakfast cereal and milk. In 2016, these partners provided a total of 29,899,126 pounds of food.

Top 25 Food Donors of 2016

Walmart/Sam's Club	2,882,931
Meijer	2,264,448
General Mills	1,283,440
Kellogg Company	931,610
Gordon Food Service	857,839
Country Fresh	619,937
SpartanNash	575,042
ConAgra	429,243
Coca-Cola Company	356,177
Pero Family Farms	353,238
Kerlikowske Family Farms	353,078
Superior Sales	315,683
Sysco Grand Rapids	312,030
Tyson Foods	285,065
Target	278,946
Gavin Orchards	259,293
National Food Group	246,944
Mondelez International	236,723
Aldi	217,719
H.J. Heinz Co.	214,215
Heeren Brothers	213,465
Welch Foods	199,234
Arbre Farms	196,494
Marker Farms	187,290
Roskam Baking Company	177,510

Top 25 Total 14,247,594



A network of agencies.

2016 Top Agencies



Agency	City	Pounds Dist.
Muskegon County Cooperating Churches (Mobile Pantry)	Muskegon	886,664
Community Food Club of Greater Grand Rapids	Grand Rapids	496,545
Love in Action of the Tri-Cities (Mobile Pantry)	Grand Haven	373,920
Salvation Army Social Services	Grand Rapids	261,096
Rotary Charities of Cadillac (Mobile Pantry)	Cadillac	249,611
Project Hope of Allegan County	Dorr	236,406
Good Neighbor Services (Mobile Pantry)	Manistique	223,962
Love INC - Newaygo County	Grant	220,372
Family Network (Mobile Pantry)	Wyoming	208,442
Ishpeming Mobile Pantry	Ishpeming	189,966
TrueNorth Community Services Food Pantry	Fremont	174,050
South End Community Outreach Ministry	Grand Rapids	172,862
Meals on Wheels Western Michigan NE Food Pantry	Grand Rapids	171,955
Hannahville Indian School (Mobile Pantry)	Wilson	167,219
Streams of Hope Food Center	Grand Rapids	164,777

Local Farmers Are Feeding West Michigan

Visit FeedWM.org to read about Schreur Farms and Michigan Celery's commitment to addressing local hunger."



2016 County Distribution Totals

County	Agencies Active in 2016	Total Pounds	County	Agencies Active in 2016	Total Pounds
ALGER	5	86,313	LAKE	11	381,764
ALLEGAN	18	793,467	LEELANAU	6	207,917
ANTRIM*	9	620,471	LUCE	5	99,497
BARAGA*	7	167,398	MACKINAC	10	118,113
BENZIE	6	243,103	MANISTEE	10	178,466
BERRIEN	69	1,501,225	MARQUETTE	14	406,224
CASS	16	485,075	MASON	6	218,095
CHARLEVOIX*	14	392,945	MECOSTA	12	508,102
CHIPPEWA	30	358,196	MENOMINEE	5	305,249
DELTA	7	498,291	MISSAUKEE	8	185,749
DICKINSON	13	280,519	MONTCALM	23	784,373
EMMET*	18	818,959	MUSKEGON	34	1,434,129
GOGEBIC*	7	330,686	NEWAYGO	26	1,512,463
GRAND TRAVERSE	30	772,970	OCEANA	8	381,996
HOUGHTON*	26	606,538	ONTONAGON*	7	163,582
IONIA	19	569,318	OSCEOLA	10	337,980
IRON*	9	221,202	OTTAWA	57	1,673,143
KALKASKA	8	155,404	SCHOOLCRAFT	4	288,013
KENT	299	7,740,196	VAN BUREN	24	586,010
KEEWEENAW*	1	34,114	WEXFORD	22	672,665

Total 913 27,119,920
To Other Food Banks: 2,049,183



RESCUED and REPACKED

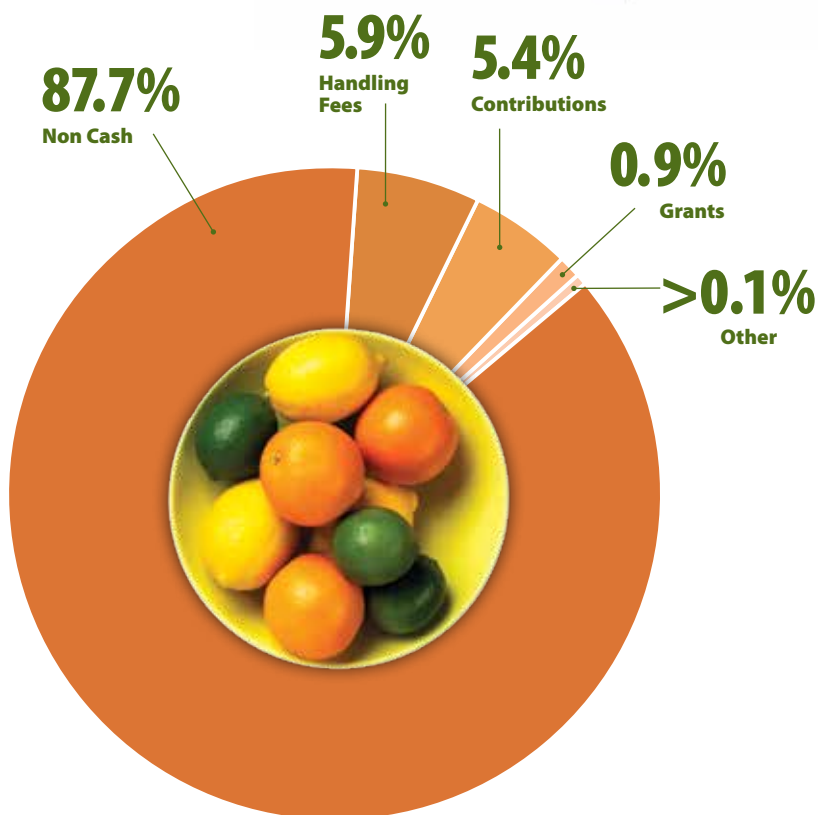
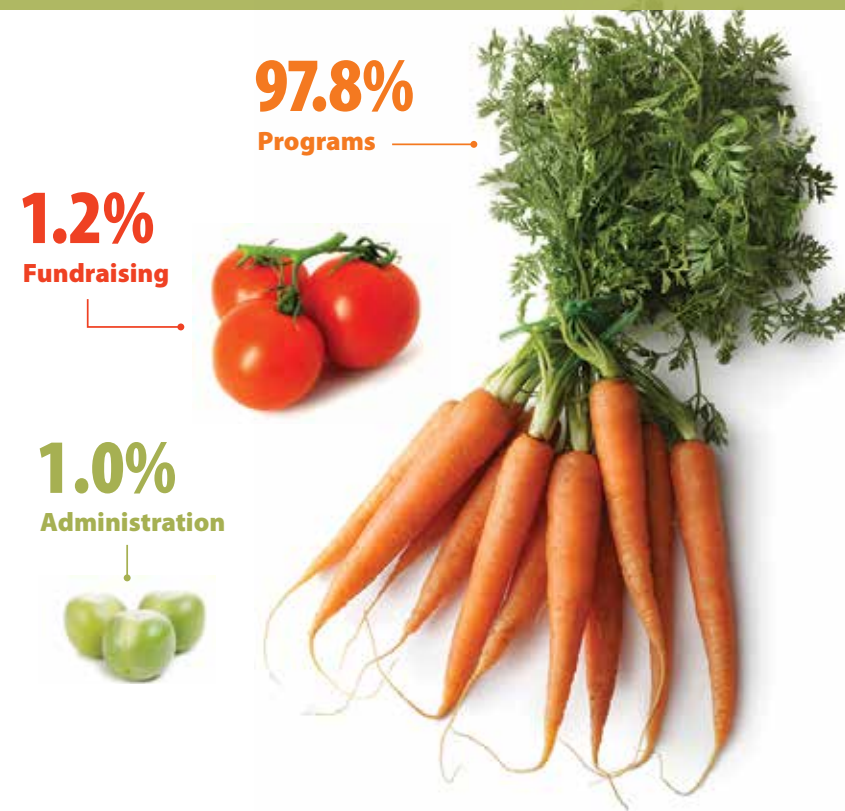
Our volunteers are working hard six days a week to sort, repack and label the food we receive from grocery stores, farms, and processors. In 2016, our volunteers repacked **5,874,194 pounds of food** or **4,895,162 meals**.

1,811 Volunteers
819 First-time Volunteers
24,371 Hours
Meals Per Hour: **200**



The NUMBERS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION, DECEMBER 31, 2016



EXPENSES

Programs	\$46,819,375	97.8%
Fundraising	\$617,501	1.2%
Administration	\$449,486	1.0%
Total	\$47,886,362	100%

Programs: All expenses related to reclaiming, storing and distributing food in the 40 counties we serve. Includes \$41,717,995* of food and grocery items distributed.

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.

REVENUE

Handling Fees	\$2,825,220	5.9%
Contributions	\$2,581,838	5.4%
Grants	\$426,340	0.9%
Other	\$31,915	>0.1%
Non-Cash	\$41,714,576	87.7%
Total	47,579,889	100%

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.

MEET A FOOD BANKER:

Sean Little, Development Associate

What do you do here at Feeding America West Michigan?

My prime role is corporate development and finding new avenues for funding in the private sector.

Why are you interested in hunger-relief and the food system?

When I started college I worked at Sibley Elementary which was the birthplace of Kids' Food Basket (a Feeding America West Michigan partner agency). Time and time again you'd have students come in and if they hadn't eaten breakfast or hadn't slept they were falling asleep in the classroom. Nutrition is key to a child's learning.

I myself in college had experienced bouts of, hey I can afford a loaf of bread and a jar of peanut butter and that's about it. So I know what it's like. It's a nonabrasive subject. Everybody needs food.

In addition to being our development associate, you're also a grad student at GVSU. What are you studying?

I'm in the Masters of Public Health program. Childhood obesity, food insecurity, food waste, all of these things are in the realm of public health. I've had the privilege thus far of being able to delve into areas like food waste, effective community garden initiatives and just in general looking at the



correlations between food quality and general health.

What current projects are you most excited about?

My favorite project with one of the coolest names ever is Hops Against Hunger.* We can just say it, Michigan loves beer. We live in Beer City USA, and to be able to tie that in with hunger advocacy and watch it grow is a beautiful thing.

*Hops Against Hunger is a coalition of Michigan breweries and restaurants working together with local food banks to solve hunger in our state. Learn more at HopsAgainstHungerMI.org.

DONOR SNAPSHOT: Nate and Sarah Sall

Nate and Sarah met as sophomores at Kettering University, in a communications class, appropriately enough. Nate was majoring in mechanical engineering, and Sarah in applied mathematics.

"She's way smarter than me," Nate says.



They started dating and got married a few years later. Their two-year anniversary is this November.

After graduation Nate and Sarah moved to Holland, where Nate was raised and bought a house on the south side. Today, Nate is an options engineer at Herman Miller and Sarah is substitute teaching and working at Marigold Lodge, a property owned by the company.

They're into board games (Dominion, Splendor, Seven Wonders,

anyone?), playing with their puppy Luna (a "maltipoo," Maltese-poodle mix) and craft beer. We first met Nate and Sarah in 2016 when they helped us brew the Grateful Grain at New Holland Brewing Company, every pint of which provided four meals to Feeding America West Michigan. (A second batch will be on tap this September. Visit HopsAgainstHungerMI.org for more details.)

Nate and Sarah made their first financial gift in 2015.

"I literally just googled it," Nate says. "As soon as I got a full-time job and realized we could give more than just to our church."

Rather than make one huge donation in December, Nate and Sarah prefer to spread their giving across the year. Feeding America West Michigan is just one of the organizations they support.

"We give to different nonprofits, and so we try to make sure we're giving to places that impact people in different ways. But food is such a basic necessity that many people don't have," he says.

"And really, a small amount can go a long way."

Westminster's Pantry Provides Food, Community, and Purpose



Scott Smith found the Downtown Food Pantry at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Grand Rapids when he was at one of his lowest points.

The trouble started about 15 years ago, when Scott was working as an office manager for a waterproofing company. He was standing on a ladder hanging Christmas decorations when he fell and injured his back. Scott soon learned the accident had permanently damaged his spine. He couldn't walk.

"They wanted me to have surgery but that wasn't an option as far as finance and insurance," Scott said, adding that he paid for other forms of treatment out of pocket. He required extensive physical therapy and chiropractic work before he could walk again. "It deleted my savings."

It wasn't long before Scott lost his home.

This cascade of bad news would be hard for anyone, but it was especially tough for Scott, who had always taken pride in his work ethic. He had his first job at age 12 and went on to graduate from Michigan State with a degree in in vocal training and musical theatre. He's sung professionally, racked up years of experience in the food and beverage industry and is even a certified hair dresser. But after the accident, he said, "the things that I've perfected and could really make a good living in, I can no longer do."

Westminster, one of Feeding America West Michigan's partner agencies, fed him when he had no food and was living on the street. One volunteer even gave him clothing when he had none. Today, he's overjoyed to be able to give back as a volunteer.

The pantry is staffed largely by volunteers, including clients like Scott. Located in downtown Grand Rapids, Westminster has "a really small geographical area but we have one of the bigger pantries because of our population," said the food pantry director Angie Kelley. "The average household income is between zero and \$700 a month."

Thanks to Section 8 housing and ongoing support from Westminster, Scott's basic needs are largely met, but life is still difficult. He does not yet receive Social Security benefits and continues to struggle with depression, anxiety and physical pain.

"Because people can't see the illness," he said, they assume he's fine. He has to explain to people regularly that he just physically can't do most things anymore. Getting out of the house to volunteer and "seeing other people in need, or someone worse off than you," he said, "touched my heart."

Scott is just one of thousands of volunteers in Feeding America West Michigan's network, working with agencies like Westminster to make sure their neighbors have enough to eat — and doing a little bit to restore their sense of community and belonging in the process.



MOLLY KOOI, *Communications Intern*

A former food pantry client herself, Molly brings a real empathy to her interviews. To read her own story, visit FeedWM.org/2017/05/molly.



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FeedWM.org

We gather and distribute food to relieve hunger and improve food security in West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. By working with more than 900 local hunger-relief agencies, we are able to serve half a million people in need 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

