

# Full Plate Press

Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank

Summer 2010

A quarterly publication of Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank which includes the Western Upper Peninsula Food Bank, Houghton; Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank, Ishpeming; Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank, Sault Ste. Marie; the Manna Project, Petoskey; Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank, Cadillac; Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank, Grand Rapids; and Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank, St. Joseph.

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## "CAN'T WASTE GOOD TASTE"

Why smart businesses gives us tons of good food

Sure, giving to the Food Bank is great PR. But savvy business leaders know there are also bottom-line reasons to give us surplus goods instead of throwing them away.

Here's the scoop from our corporate food donors on why giving food makes good business sense.

**Reason 1: Wasting costs more than giving.** Seriously. Landfills charge for dumping. It takes fuel, man-hours and fleet wear-and-tear to take food to the dump.

But Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank will send trucks to your factory, farm or warehouse to pick up edible surplus food at no cost. We'll even meet your truckers on the road to unload suddenly unwanted goods. Problems solved.

"Lots of times we have mustard and ketchup we can't use because the labels are crooked or little things like that," says Bob Voss, who heads the warehouse at the H.J. Heinz factory in Holland. "I make one phone call to Russ (Sweet, logistics manager at the Food Bank's main warehouse) and he has a truck down here within a couple of days."

Bob continued, "Once we had four truckloads of vinegar to donate and Feeding America's national operation came and got it. They're very professional, and get things done right away."

**Reason 2: Donors know we do things right.** Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank meets the highest standards set by government and the food industry, including those of the U.S.D.A., the Michigan Department of Agriculture, the Grocery Manufacturers Association and the Food Marketing Institute.

The Food Bank has the facilities and fleet to handle foods safely and rush perishables where they're needed. And if they're experts in handling manufacturer recalls. On top of all that, a federal

### In good company

Some top food donors of 2009:

Quaker/Tropicana  
CountryFresh Dairies  
Walmart/Sam's Club  
Spartan Stores  
Kraft  
ConAgra  
Gordon Food Service  
Kellogg's  
Hearty Fresh Produce  
General Mills  
Nestle

WhiteWave Foods  
Welch's  
Sara Lee  
Dannon  
W. M. Bolthouse Farms  
Scherer Fruit Farms  
Old Orchard Brands  
Proctor & Gamble  
H.J. Heinz  
Sysco Frost Pack

"Good Samaritan" law protects corporate donors from liability for donations made in good faith.

"I know they have the expertise to distribute our food responsibly, in the most professional and economical way to get it to the people who really need it," says Kevin

Begin, general manager of Country Fresh Dairies/Dean Foods.

### Reason 3: Big tax deductions.

The Food Bank offers a unique tax advantage: Not only are your costs tax-deductible from your state and federal taxes, but so is 50% of your normal mark-up. That's not the case with some food charities.

### 100,000 more reasons.

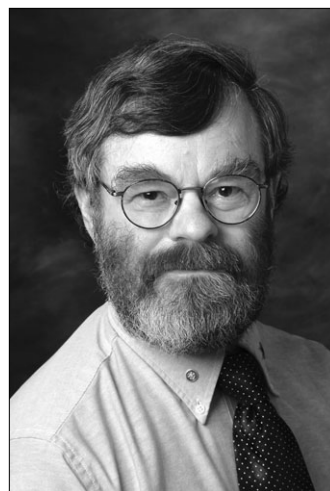
About 1,300 food charities serving 100,000 families in 40 West Michigan counties now rely on Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank for hunger relief.

According to Kevin Mahoney, vice president of marketing for Sysco Food Services of Grand Rapids, "For our company, the Feeding America West Michigan footprint covers our distribution area ... all the way up to the UP, down to the Indiana border and all points west. It covers where all of our customers live and people who work for our company."

Bob Voss of H.J. Heinz says, "I think the thing I like the best and our employees like best (about donating) is we know the food's going locally. Helping our neighbors in need makes it a little extra special."

If your company sometimes has surplus edible food, consider a tax-deductible gift to Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank. Contact Linda Vanderbaan at 800.563.1233 or [lindav@feedingamericawestmichigan.org](mailto:lindav@feedingamericawestmichigan.org).

## FROM THE DESK OF JOHN ARNOLD



*When diesel fuel prices are below \$2.50 a gallon, we have generally been able to sustain our operations without asking for "extra" additional help. But when diesel fuel is over \$3.00 a gallon as it has been throughout the first five months of 2010, any financial help you might send us would be very much appreciated! 100% of the food we handle arrives on trucks, about 70% of it goes back out on trucks to our branch*

*warehouses or out on mobile pantry trucks, and sometimes even our branch warehouses do some delivering of product, again on diesel-burning trucks. When you serve 1,300 charity agencies scattered across 40 counties and 30,500 square miles with about 2.1 million pounds of food per month from seven different warehouses, it doesn't take much of an increase in fuel prices to give our operating budget a case of indigestion! So if you could, your sending us some financial support this spring will really help us as we deal with the record requests for food aid we are facing. Thank you very much in advance for any help you can send.*

*As you may recall, in 2009 we achieved the largest increase in our distribution we've ever achieved in the food bank's 28-year history. This year, through the end of April, we are holding even*

*with that record amount, but now in May things have picked up such that we may well distribute 300,000 lbs. more this May than we did in May, 2009.*

*If you've not visited our website [FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org](http://FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org), you might want to take a look at how we've upgraded it, thanks to Jeff Thomas of Nonprofit Innovations, Inc. who did that upgrading. There is a lot of good content on the site, very nicely arranged.*

*I know we're mentioning it elsewhere in the newsletter, but I would like to make special note here of Teresa Pawl-Knapp's 20 years' service on the food bank's staff. As our Assistant Director, she does a lot of work that I get credit for, so here before the entire world I would like to acknowledge that, and thank her for the wonderful work she has done all these many years.*

*At the moment I am doing better than expected with my cancer adventure. A way of measuring prostate cancer activity is via a blood test that measures what is called the PSA. Last fall my PSA numbers rose from 1 to 6 to 11 to 28. We then changed my medicines and radiated a particularly painful tumor in my arm (a silly place to have prostate cancer in the first place!), and so since January my numbers have fallen to 16 and now down to 11. The "11" that looked quite ominous in the fall looks quite lovely in the spring! Heaven only knows what the next test will show, but every day is a gift, and each of those days so far in May we have distributed an average of a little over 107,000 lbs. of food aid.*

*Thank you very much for your support of the food bank, and for your support of me personally.*

## President's award for our "Food Box King"

During National Volunteer Week this past April, Food Bank volunteer Gerald "Gerry" Syrba was honored with the President's Call to Service Award from the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation.

The honor is reserved for those who have volunteered 4,000 hours or more over a lifetime. Gerry reached that level last November after 15 years of Food Bank volunteering, helping to pack more than 8,000 boxes with some 240,000 pounds of food.

Food Bank service alone qualified Gerry for the prestigious award, which includes a personalized certificate and letter from President Obama. However, "the Food Box King" doesn't restrict his efforts to the Food Bank. He also donates time to the Spectrum Visiting Nurses Association and the Sight Seer Radio Reading Service for the blind.

A retired teacher, Gerry is the father of four and grandfather of nine. He and his wife Fran live in Grand Rapids where, in addition to volunteering, he enjoys gardening, "but not so much mowing the lawn."



*Executive Director John Arnold presents volunteer Gerry Syrba with White House certificate and letter.*

## Teresa's big Two-Oh!

### "Indispensable" Assistant Director celebrates 20 years

On April 8, 1990, an energetic new director of agency relations arrived at the Food Bank. Today, she's our Rock of Gibraltar.

"From the beginning, Teresa has done absolutely heroic work," says Executive Director John Arnold. "I remember in '92 we had a messy situation ending an unsatisfactory contract with a St. Jo(seph) private warehouse and opening our own. Teresa had to re-certify all of the dozens agencies in the area that relied on us for food."



*Teresa's family (including grandbaby Isabella) surprises her at 20th Anniversary festivities.*

As director of agency relations, Teresa oversaw a dramatic increase in the number of agencies served: from 300 to nearly 1,000. This was a giant step towards the Food Bank's goal of making its food available within 10 miles of every person in its 40-county, 30,510-square-mile service area.

That accomplished, Teresa served as office manager before becoming Assistant Director now managing the day-to-day operations of all seven Food Bank warehouses. "She basically runs the operation while I ride trains!" John says

(via mobile phone from a train on his way to meetings in Chicago).

"Seriously," John added, "Teresa has been indispensable, particularly since my cancer diagnosis four years ago. My treatments have brought



mind-numbing fatigue, and Teresa has done most of the heavy lifting. If it weren't for her, I would have had to resign years ago."

John noted that he and Teresa both believe in "pursuing our passion through our life's work." For more than 20 years, Teresa has passionately fought hunger, and now commands the battle throughout our 40-county service area.

## KRAFT GIVES US COOL NEW MOBILE PANTRY.

A brand-new, refrigerated, 10-bay mobile pantry truck rolled up to Feeding America West Michigan's main warehouse on May 12 – courtesy of the Kraft Foods Foundation. Grants from the foundation funded new mobile pantries for eight Feeding America food banks nationwide.

In the near future, the Kraft truck will be based at the new Benton Harbor warehouse (see related story on page 6), from which it will distribute fresh produce, dairy products and other food directly to people in need at in Berrien, Cass and Van Buren counties. Plans call for four to six distributions per week – about a million pounds per year.

This new mobile pantry is the latest in a fleet of 10, which bring much-needed surplus food to no-cost "shopping" events in areas of urgent need throughout the Food Bank's service area.

Feeding America West Michigan pioneered the mobile pantry concept, inspired by a beer truck, in 1998. The idea has since been implemented nationwide and is now being promoted in Africa, India and the Middle East.

To arrange a mobile pantry distribution in your area, contact Jerry Knapp at (616) 784-3250 or [jerryk@feedingamericawestmichigan.org](mailto:jerryk@feedingamericawestmichigan.org).



# Jenison nurse wins Waddell & Reed drawing – and so do we!



When Karen Hoelsema accompanied her husband John to a Waddell & Reed “career celebration” dinner on January 21, she

entered a drawing to win \$2500 in gift cards for herself and \$2500 for her charity of choice.

We were as thrilled as she was to learn she won – and named us as her charity of choice.

“This was a drawing with thousands of entries from throughout the Midwest,” says Todd Schilthuis, a financial advisor in Waddell & Reed’s Grand Rapids office. “It was fun to make the presentation to Karen at Sunset Manor (the Jenison

care facility where she works). All her co-workers and even the residents got a huge kick out of it.”

Karen chose the Food Bank because “Both John and I felt the Food Bank had the greatest need in this economic climate.



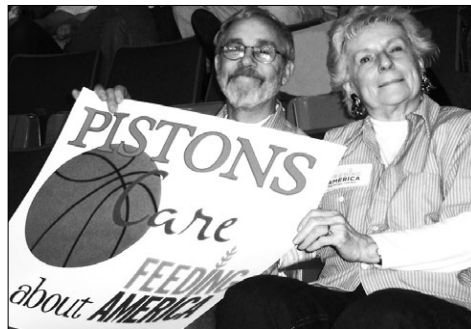
Karen Hoelsema and fellow Sunset Manor employees share the excitement.

## Pistons telethon raises \$405,000 for Michigan food banks.

This year’s Detroit Pistons telethon proceeds went to the Food Bank Council of Michigan for distribution to food banks throughout the state, including ours.

Beginning at 6 a.m. with live radio and TV broadcasts, the March 2 telethon continued throughout the Pistons’ evening match with the Boston Celtics, raising more than \$400,000 – all of which will reach hungry families

The Pistons began the annual event, titled “Pistons Care,” in 2008. The first team in the NBA to sponsor a charity telethon, the Pistons have raised more than \$1,000,000 for Michigan causes.



## GIRLS’ PENNIES FUND MOBILE PANTRY.

The Calvinets, a girls’ club at LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids held a penny drive on April 21, earning \$450 to fund a mobile pantry distribution at their church.



At the distribution, more than 100 families obtained much-needed food for their families. The pennies themselves may not have been from heaven, but the many meals they provided must have made angels smile.

# TWO NEW DIRECTORS JUMP ON BOARD.

Two community leaders will soon join the Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank’s Board of Directors: Kelly Crosse and Dick Haslinger.



Kelly is manager of client services in Amway’s Human Resources division. A Grand Rapids resident of 10 years, she first heard about the Food Bank through former board president Jim Siewertsen, who also worked at Amway. “I couldn’t believe the impact!” she said. “It’s amazing that we have such a huge hunger-fighting resource right here in Grand Rapids, and I hope to help get the story out to more people.”

The president of Chase Bank Western Region, Dick Haslinger had been aware of the Food Bank since arriving in West Michigan 11



years ago. His interest grew recently as he encountered our organization more and more: at a bank United Way meeting, through enthusiastic reports by bank employees who volunteer here and when Chase Bank headquarters announced a \$5 million gift to Feeding America nationwide.

“I was impressed by the discipline of the Food Bank, its growth and its steady march towards eliminating hunger,” Dick says.

Former president of the board of the Grand Rapids Community Foundation, he noted that “The Food Bank has been involved in a collaborative basis with the Foundation and with United Way. I’m always impressed when organizations collaborate to solve problems.”

## Food Bank helps neediest families obtain state aid.

Government food aid can make the difference between healthy, functioning families and debilitating hunger. Yet many who qualify for aid don’t receive it – because they don’t know about it, don’t realize they’re eligible or haven’t been able to complete the application process.

In keeping with its mission to end hunger in West Michigan, the Food Bank is using specially trained volunteers to help eligible Michigan residents learn about and apply for state-issued “bridge cards” (food stamps that work like debit cards).

Since early April, the volunteers have been on hand at mobile pantry distributions, where people in greatest need of food aid tend to congregate. The program began in Kent County and will soon expand into Muskegon, Newaygo and Ottawa counties as well.

As of press time, representatives had attended 12 mobile pantry distributions, identifying more than 300 people who may be eligible for bridge cards and telling them exactly what information they need to apply. Those who return to future distributions with the information can complete the state-required application process on-the-spot, with help from specially trained, laptop-equipped volunteers.

According to Agency Relations Manager Nancy Ullrey, Feeding America West Michigan’s goal is to help 200 qualified residents complete bridge card applications by September 30.

A grant from the Food Bank Council of Michigan funds the computers and volunteer training. Nine other member food banks received the grants.

## The great Easter egg drop.

On March 23, Sunrise Acres Egg farm in Hudsonville and Herbruck’s Poultry Ranch in Saranac donated 94,000 eggs to Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank. The donation was part of a nationwide campaign by United Egg Producers that presented 12 million donated eggs to Feeding America.

A couple of good eggs: Steve Herbruck of Herbruck’s Poultry Ranch and Richard Patmos of Sunrise Acres Farm present Easter donation to John Arnold.



## On July 25, beat hunger – with clubs

It’s time again for the Tip-Off Golf Outing at the Alpine Golf Course in Grand Rapids. Sponsored by the Tip-Off Bar and Grill on Alpine Avenue in Comstock Park, this is the establishment’s second annual outing. The first, in 2009, netted \$1,000 for the Food Bank – enough to obtain and distribute about 10,000 pounds of surplus food.

Last year’s event was so popular, the Tip-Off is preparing for even

more participation this year “to support our neighbors at the Food Bank and a great cause, too” according to Tip-Off’s manager, Justin Karamol.

Registration is \$55 per person. All proceeds benefit Feeding America West Michigan. To register or learn more, call Justin at 616-785-0000.



## POSTAL WORKERS REALLY DELIVER: 96,343 POUNDS!

Nationally, this year's National Association of Letter Carriers "Stamp Out Hunger" Food Drive brought in almost 20 million pounds of food for Feeding America food banks.

In Grand Rapids alone, letter carriers from seven branches collected almost 100,000 pounds of non-perishable food donated by postal customers for Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank. That's in addition to their typical Saturday pickups!

They also collected \$1007 – which the food bank can use to obtain another 33,000 pounds of food.

Some 140 volunteers donated 454 hours of time to take in and sort the donations. Volunteer groups came from 616 Encounter, Chase Bank, Cascade Fellowship Church, East Kentwood High School, Genesis United Methodist Church, Immanuel Reformed Church, Jerry's Dream and Community Church of Ada.

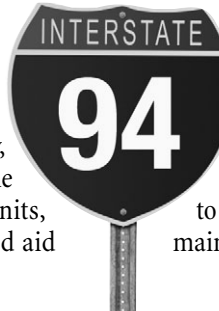
"I'd like to shout out a huge thank you to our volunteers," says Dena Rogers, Food Bank volunteer coordinator. "And way to go, P.O.!"



## New, bigger warehouse in Benton Harbor

In mid-July, our St. Joseph warehouse operations will more than triple in size, and move eight miles down the road to Benton Harbor.

The warehouse is being moved for two big reasons, according to its manager, Rich Glista. The first was capacity, with 20,000 square feet of space (in contrast to 6,000 at the old warehouse), including larger walk-in refrigeration units, more floor storage and a larger agency area (where food aid organizations can "shop" for items they need).



The second big advantage is the new warehouse's location: nearer the center of the warehouse's service area (Berrien, Cass and Van Buren counties) and closer to Interstate 94.

Proximity to the freeway makes it easier for truckers to drop off loads of donated food, which can be distributed to the warehouse's three-county service area or trucked to the main warehouse in Grand Rapids.

## Ceramics students fired up to fight hunger.

On May 12, students in Anna Griedanus' ceramics class at Calvin College held a sale of donated, one-of-a-kind pottery, resulting in a



\$1000 donation to Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank.

This was the second year Anna's class put on the sale. Although participation was voluntary and did not affect students' grades, 100% of students participated. "They were immediately enthusiastic and ... deeply motivated" by the Food Bank's scope and cost-effectiveness, she says.

Students and members of the West Michigan Potters Guild donated about 200 one-of-a-kind ceramic works to the sale. Prices were kept low to "make the art affordable for other students and the community," Anna says. The sale itself raised \$500, and an anonymous donor matched the proceeds for the \$1000 total donation.

"There's a lot of talk in academic circles these days about 'service learning,'" Anna points out. "But putting the concept into practice in a meaningful way can be a challenge. This was a good example of how students can learn while serving the community – both by fighting hunger and making art more widely accessible."

## PAMPERED CHEF PAMPERS US

On March 18, a Pampered Chef fundraising event at The Boardwalk Condos in Grand Rapids raised \$263 for Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank.

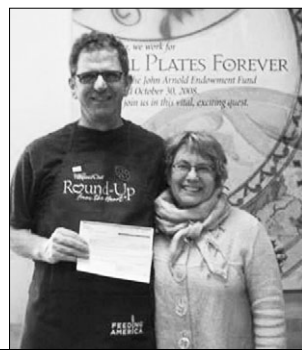
This is the second annual Food Bank fundraising event organized by Clint Turbin, West Michigan's Feeding America coordinator for Pampered Chef, Inc. (which is also a Feeding America national corporate partner).

"At every Pampered Chef party, we invited guests to 'round up' to the next dollar with all proceeds going

to Feeding America," Clint says. "But at these annual fundraisers, we also donate 15% of all proceeds to the Food Bank. Plus I donated another 5% myself, so this year we gave 20% total."

Clint added, "Customers love the wonderful service the Food Bank and all its volunteers provide. One guest wrote a check for \$100 donation on the spot."

The annual spring fundraisers "will definitely continue," Clint says.



## VOLUNTEER'S LEGACY CAN "FEED HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS FOREVER"

Earl VandePoel helped feed hundreds of people as a long-time volunteer here at the Food Bank – one of our beloved Golden Kiwanis weekly regulars.

Earl passed away last year, leaving his estate to his nephew Jim VandePoel and his wife Irene, with the requirement that they donate \$100,000 to charity. Earl's will specified that \$50,000 of that amount should go to the Food Bank, and that Jim and Irene decide what to do with the other half.

Diligently, the younger VandePoels came to check out the Food Bank. Just as many people are, they were surprised to learn how we reclaim surplus food to help feed 100,000+ families in 40 hard-hit West Michigan counties.

But unlike most people, Jim and Irene were able to write a huge check. Impressed by the Food Bank's scope and cost-efficiency, they doubled Uncle Earl's \$50,000 earmark – turning his entire \$100,000 charitable bequest over to the Food Bank's John Arnold Endowment Fund.

"Earl's incredible legacy is a wonderful boost for our endowment, and takes us a giant step forward towards being self-sustaining," says



Jim and Irene VandePoel with limited-edition Rick Beerhorst print, a "thank you" gift from the Food Bank.

John Arnold, Food Bank Executive Director and endowment fund namesake. He noted that, once the endowment reaches its goal of \$10 million, it will "generate enough revenue to support our primary mission indefinitely" without the need for fundraising.

"Within the endowment, Earl's legacy can feed hundreds of thousands of people forever."

**Remember the Food Bank, and make a difference that never ends.**

*With a legacy like the VandePoel's, your estate plan can help vanquish hunger here in West Michigan – no matter what economic challenges may lie in our region's future.*

*Tell your estate planning professional you want to help Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank solidify its incredible effectiveness through a legacy bequest to its John Arnold Endowment Fund.*

*For more information on legacy giving to the Food Bank and the endowment, contact Linda Vanderbaan at (616) 784-3250 or lindav@feedingamericawestmichigan.org.*

## Christman crews build a big donation

On March 23 and March 25, the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration collected non-perishable food items from construction companies at two statewide training events in Lansing and Livonia.

Christman Construction workers in Grand Rapids brought in the biggest contribution: almost 800 pounds of food and \$735. "They really knocked it out of the ballpark!" says Linda Vanderbaan, Food Bank donor relations manager, of Christman's donation.



Christman's Kerrie Battige led the food drive at three job sites, encouraging all Christman employees and "about 20" subcontractors to bring food in starting March 15. "People loved

seeing the food pile up," she says. "And when they learned how much food the Food Bank can get for a dollar, they started giving money, too. One contractor wrote a check for \$500!"

"It was a really positive experience for all of us, to learn what we could do to fight hunger," Kerrie says.



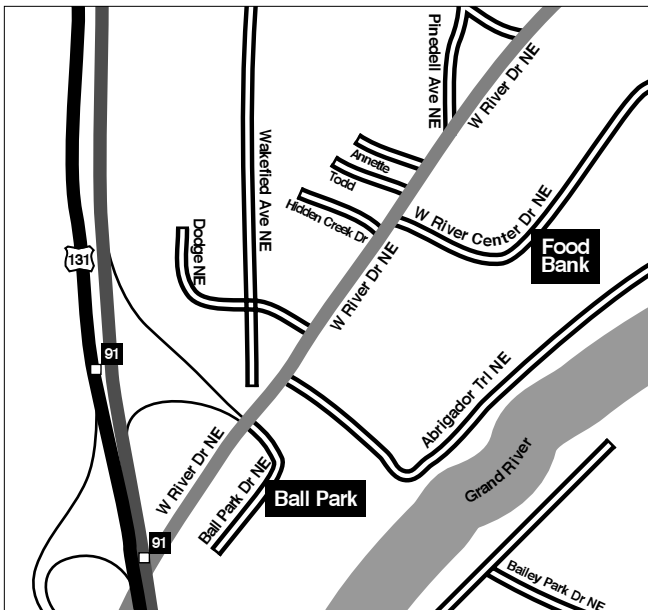
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**VISITING THE FOOD BANK?  
We're easy to find.**

Take U.S. 131 to exit 91 (Comstock Park/West River Drive).  
Turn left on West River Drive. Turn right at the stoplight at  
West River Center Drive (Wendy's on corner). Our address is  
864 West River Center Dr., Comstock Park, MI 49321-8955  
Questions? Call us at 616.784.3250



*Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank is a non-profit surplus food warehouse distributing about 2 million pounds of food monthly in cooperation with 1,300 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 aids 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).*

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.

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