

Full Plate Press

Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank

Summer 2011

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, Benton Harbor.

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POSTAL CARRIERS MORE THAN DOUBLE FOOD DELIVERIES

2011 "Stamp Out Hunger" donations up by an astounding 100%

The growing need for food in West Michigan just won't quit. The good news is, it looks like West Michigan – especially postal customers and their hard-working carriers – won't quit fighting back.

On Saturday, May 14, Grand Rapids-area postal workers brought in 193,736 pounds of food donated by customers along their routes during the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) annual "Stamp Out Hunger" Food Drive.

The total more than doubled last year's total contribution of 96,652 pounds.

Bigger bags help meet bigger need

A week prior to the food drive, Grand Rapids-area postal customers received old-fashioned, biodegradable paper grocery bags specially designed for filling with surplus, non-perishable pantry items. (Bags were donated by the Grand Rapids chapter of the AARP.)

On May 14, the official pick-up day, route workers gathered the food along with outgoing mail. Many carriers filled their trucks several times during the day, requiring repeated trips to their branch offices.

Most carriers worked hours longer than their scheduled shifts. The eight participating branch locations received donations until almost 8 p.m.

Volunteers vital in drive

Some carriers were accompanied on their routes by family members, who helped load donations into the postal trucks.

Community, church, corporate and student volunteers at the branches boxed the food and

loaded it onto Food Bank trucks. Volunteer groups came from Sparta High School, Kenowa High School, Chase Bank, U.S. Signal, Boy Scout Troop 334, Immanuel Reformed Church, The Community Church, Mayfair Christian Reformed Church and Organizing for America.

"I had a hand in coordinating approximately 125 volunteers. That doesn't even include all of the retired postal workers, their friends and family and other individuals who just showed up," says Dena Rogers, the Food Bank's volunteer coordinator.

"All together, we had about 150 volunteers plus our 40 staff members – not to mention all the incredible extra effort by the mail carriers themselves."

New Food Bank CEO Ken Estelle attended Saturday collections at three post office branches. "In spite of the long day, I never heard any complaints from postal workers or volunteers," he observed.

Humble heroes

For 19 years, letter carriers have sponsored the "Stamp Out Hunger" food drive on the first Saturday in May. Even before doubling the pounds received this year, giving had grown fairly steadily.

Postal worker Larry Ames, who has coordinated the NALC food drive in the Grand Rapids area for the last 16 years, gave credit to postal customers for the record results.

With typical humility, he said, "I'm extremely gratified to know that citizens of Grand Rapids gave record-breaking contributions this year."

But of course, it took postal workers to set the giving in motion. They're the ones who really "delivered the mail."



A life re-routed

Ken Estelle was reconsidering his stratospheric career. Then John Arnold announced his retirement.



Ken Estelle is the new Chief Executive Officer of Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank.

On April 27, the Food Bank welcomed Kenneth R. (Ken) Estelle, former Rockwell Collins Vice President and General Manager, as its new Chief Executive Officer – following the retirement of the Food Bank's long-time leader, John Arnold.

As an executive with Smiths Aerospace, Ken lived in West Michigan from 1998 to 2007. He and his wife Kathy, dedicated anti-hunger volunteers, became aware of the Food Bank as they helped organize church Mobile Pantry distributions.

In mid-May, Ken sat down with us to share his first impressions, his priorities – and the path that led him here.

Q: Just weeks ago, you were running worldwide operations for a giant international company. Whatever possessed you to take a job in our regional food bank?

A: For about a year, I had been reconsidering my career path. The aerospace industry had been good to me and my family, but over the past year, I had felt a growing need to do something more directly significant to people's lives. Then I read in this newsletter that John Arnold was retiring. I thought, "Wow, this is a non-profit I've admired for many years!" So I threw out a chance inquiry, thinking it was a long shot. I thought I might get a courtesy response at best.

Q: What did you think when the Food Bank board expressed serious interest?

A: (Laughs). I thought, "Wow, they must be desperate! Didn't anyone else apply?" I was so different from what I thought they'd be looking for. But I learned that they actually

were open to someone a little different. Looking back, it makes sense. This Food Bank had always had extraordinary leadership. So of course the board would consider out-of-the-ordinary candidates.

Q: How was it that you were getting our Food Bank newsletter?

A: My wife and I had lived in West Michigan for nine years, and we were active anti-hunger volunteers. We helped start Mobile Pantry distributions at our church in Cutlerville. That made us aware of the Food Bank and its programs. Then we moved to Allegan County and volunteered for our church pantry there.

Q: Why were you here, and why did you leave?

A: We lived here when I worked for Smiths Aerospace, which became GE Aviation. Then we moved to Cedar Rapids, Iowa when I accepted my job at Rockwell Collins. But we never forgot the Food Bank and its practical, consistent service to so many hungry people. So we kept supporting it from a distance, financially.

Q: But even in Cedar Rapids, you and your wife were busy volunteers.

A: Yes, we became very involved there in relief, cleanup and reconstruction after the historic Iowa floods in 2008. But we have long had a real passion for fighting hunger.

Q: How did feeding the hungry become such a passion?

A: I think it really started when our three children were in school in Phoenix (Ariz.), where we lived when I worked for Honeywell (Aerospace). Due to the warmer climate, there were many people on the streets. We would often see someone holding a sign saying "Will work for food." Our kids often kept food from their lunches and gave it to people at the intersection. This really drew our attention to the need for food right here in this country.

Q: Do you think the existence of hunger in the U.S.A. surprises people?

A: I think it's still shocking to many Americans. It's easier to understand hunger from famine in a faraway area like Africa. But here in our country, with the amount of food

we grow and our general prosperity, it's hard to see how we can let people go hungry.

Q: What are your top priorities for addressing hunger in West Michigan?

A: Of course, after just two weeks, I'm still developing my perspective! But it's obvious as we look at the first part of 2011 that we have significant challenges. There is a continuing need for food in our area, which could likely increase as government support programs are under increasing pressure at national and local levels. So we can expect a lot more people turning for help to our agencies. We need to be ready for that.

At the same time, we have seen our costs grow—fuel and transportation costs being the larger impacts. Although there is still significant surplus food existing throughout the country, the process of acquiring this food is becoming more complex and costly.

To make sure we can meet the growing needs, my top priorities are developing new and effective sources of donated food, and building strong corporate partnerships. I also want to protect and enhance a sense of trust with the food pantries and other agencies that distribute food in our communities. I want to be sure we focus sharply on meeting people's real needs, beyond just measuring the tonnage of food we move – especially in our most under-served counties.

Q: How does your for-profit experience help you here at the Food Bank?

A: My experience in marketing and business development is very useful. A lot of for-profit sales is presenting a value proposition, that is, "What is the value we can bring to you as our customer? Why should you partner with us?" Here at the Food Bank as well, we have to be clear in presenting the value we bring to potential partners.

On the management side, I hope to help embrace our vision for a challenging future with action plans that align with clear strategies. Also, we'll need to clarify our key metrics, the ways we measure our performance in terms of the outcomes we expect.

All of that is right out of the for-profit handbook. I'll be using the same tools, just applying them to a different mission.

(A life re-routed, continued)

Q: And how does the Food Bank seem different from the for-profit world?

A: One thing that has really impressed me is, people are here because they want to be part of this mission. In my for-profit days, I mentored people who were focused on their careers. When I asked, "What's your goal?" they said things like, "I want to be a V.P." When I ask the same thing of people here, they just say "I want to feed hungry people."

Also, people in this organization jump in to do whatever needs to be done. We've got truck drivers running forklifts. People just roll up their sleeves to do what's necessary.

In for-profit work, there was more of the attitude, "That's not in my job description." But here people work together as needed regardless of what their job is. They don't forget what matters most, which of course is the mission.

Q: That all sounds very encouraging.

A: It is! There is definitely a positive side. We have the wonderfully committed and capable staff across West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula that is genuinely focused on fighting hunger. We also are privileged to see many gifted and motivated volunteers working in our

warehouses and supporting the many agencies that depend on the food bank. The generosity of spirit and concern for each other as neighbors is truly remarkable in this region.

Q: So what can we as "West Michiganders" do to help our region?

A: Please don't forget that hunger is still rampant here. One in six Michigan families is facing hunger—and as many as one in four children, especially in summer when school lunches aren't available.

Spread the word about how the Food Bank uses surplus food to fight hunger. Growers, manufacturers and retailers can call us to pick up non-expired products. We'll arrange pick-up and they'll get tax deductions and liability protection.

Remember, we rely on volunteers to receive, sort, repack and store food so it's safe and useful for families.

Of course, financial support for our fuel, warehousing and shipping costs is still vitally needed. For every dollar we receive, we can provide enough food for six meals. Donors can feel especially good about their gifts having such a big impact.

Whether you are a volunteer or a financial

supporter, you are an important part of the solution to end hunger here in Michigan. Our mission is to defeat hunger in our service area, and with our staff, volunteers, agency partners and supporters I am convinced we can accomplish this mission.

How you can help.

Give food* If you're a grower, manufacturer, wholesaler or retailer, you can earn significant tax breaks by donating usable grocery products to the Food Bank. You'll save disposal costs and be protected from liability by "Good Samaritan" laws.

Give funds* Every dollar you can spare for the Food Bank can provide as many as six meals for hard-hit West Michigan families.

Give time** Volunteers help us sort, store, repack and ship food safely, saving hundreds of thousands in personnel costs.

*To learn more about donations, call Linda Vanderbaan at 616.784.3250 or email lindav@FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org.

**To learn more about volunteering, call Dena Rogers at 616.784.3250 or email denar@FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org.

TYSON AND MEIJER GIVE FOOD BANK 30,000 POUNDS OF PROTEIN

On March 24, Arkansas-headquartered Tyson Foods and Meijer, the Michigan-based retail chain, jointly donated 30,000 pounds of boneless chicken to Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank.

According to food banks nationwide, meat is the most requested – and least available – food. Health experts say that nutrient-dense meat and poultry can be especially helpful to people who need more protein, including growing children, pregnant women, the elderly and anyone undergoing severe stress disease or disability.

"Feeding America West Michigan relies on generous corporate donors like Tyson," said Teresa Pawl-Knapp, Feeding America West Michigan's assistant director. "With generous gifts like this, we can help provide much-needed protein to literally thousands of hard-hit

families in our 30,000-square-mile service area."

"There are millions of hard-working adults, children and seniors who simply cannot make ends meet and are faced with the realities of hunger and malnourishment," said John Tyson, chairman of Tyson Foods. "We are trying to make a difference in their lives."

Over the past decade, Tyson Foods has donated more than 77 million pounds of protein – the equivalent of 300 million meals – to anti-hunger organizations including Feeding America member food banks.

The company, along with the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) recently commissioned a study on public perceptions of hunger. Among other things, it found that 24% of those surveyed worry they will have trouble putting food on the table this year.



The five disciples

Muskegon churches follow in feeding the multitudes

One of the Bible's best-known stories is Jesus feeding 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two fishes.

Today in Muskegon, five churches from four different denominations are following in his footsteps, feeding literally thousands of people. Fortunately, they start with somewhat more food, which rolls in monthly on a Mobile Pantry from Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank.

Five united. Known collectively as "Northside Churches Outreach," the program is run by Muskegon's First Christian, First Evangelical Lutheran, Fifth Reformed, Laketon Bethel Reformed and Prince of Peace Catholic churches.

For more than 10 years, this multi-denominational group has jointly sponsored the food distributions. They serve refreshments and often include other services, such as toy and clothing exchanges and social service sign-up assistance. Hackley Community Health Partners and the non-profit Wheels of Mercy conduct health screenings, and WalMart optometrists offer vision screenings.

The atmosphere is fast-paced, overwhelmingly positive – and often quite festive.

A big event. On the third Friday of each month, clients arrive at Fifth Reformed Church parking lot as early as 5 a.m. (The distributions officially begin at 10.) Some 200 to 300 people usually show up throughout the morning, according to Walter Hayes, the Prince of Peace parishioner who heads the program.

Walter himself usually arrives around 6:45, and another 50 volunteers typically join him later in the morning. Just like Walter, about half of the volunteers have worked the distributions for years.

Because the Mobile Pantry functions as a small open-air market, clients choose their food from tables set up in the parking lot. But even more activity takes place in the church's large gym, where additional services are offered – and coffee, tea, lemonade, cookies and fruit are served.

"We not only meet people's basic needs, we also try to promote fellowship among our neighbors. Often, people who meet there find ways to help each other," Walter says.

The organization of inspiration. Northside Churches Outreach is governed by a Board of Directors, with members from each of the five churches listed above. Other churches in the region contribute to and coordinate with the core group on the food drives and other programs (e.g., special fund drives, back-to-school backpack giveaways and

Christmas initiatives).

Some churches sponsor food distributions in their own neighborhoods, and Walter often shows up to help churches who haven't hosted before. The churches all promote each others' work to their congregations and through their publications.

How have so many different congregations managed to work so harmoniously for so long? "We all listen to each other. We're open to all ideas," Walter says. "We may have our own agendas, but each of us knows we don't have all the answers."

"What really matters is, we're all Christ's disciples."

Keeping up. The needs of Muskegon's north side have evolved since the program began. "We used to have more elderly people, but now we have lots of young families," Walter observes.

More and more clients are Hispanic, so churches send volunteer translators to help them with instructions and paperwork.

But even as the demographics change, the goals – and rewards – of the program remain the same. "In many ways, people are all the same," Walter says. "They don't want to be there asking for help. Sometimes they even cry."

"But when you smile at them, they smile back at you. If that doesn't make your heart sing, nothing will."

To attend a distribution. To volunteer, call Walter Hayes at 231.744.8289. Families who need food can go to the Fifth Reformed Church on Holton Road in Muskegon on the third Friday of every month. Distribution takes place from 10 a.m. until noon, but since food is offered "first come, first served," clients may want to arrive earlier. (In bad weather, the church gym is open to "early birds" at 8 a.m.)

To sponsor a Mobile Pantry visit. Community groups throughout West Michigan can sponsor Mobile Pantry distributions. A pantry can deliver up to 10,000 pounds of fresh food – a three- to four-day supply for about 200 families. To learn more call Nancy Ullrey, Agency Relations Manager, at 616.784.3250.

"In many ways people are all the same. They don't want to (ask) for help. Sometimes they even cry."



Walking the walk.

For the 34th year in a row, hundreds of anti-hunger advocates gathered in downtown Grand Rapids to raise funds and awareness.

In this year's 5K walk on May 7, about 1,000 participants raised more than \$100,000 in pledges – the equivalent of about 600,000 meals.

Access of West Michigan joined the event's long-time organizer, the Grand Rapids Area Council for Ecumenism (GRACE) to co-sponsor the event. Country radio station WTNR (94.5 FM) was the event's media sponsor.

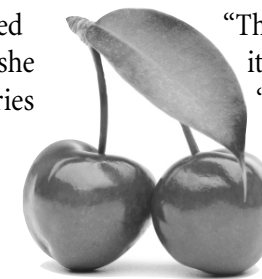
Funds from the walk, which has raised more than \$5.5 million over the years, are distributed to 18 West Michigan anti-hunger agencies and four international programs.



PRETTY PLEASE...WITH GAVIN ORCHARDS CHERRIES ON TOP.

Marla Tulett submits winning recipe in quarterly Partners' Recipe Contest

Grand Rapids resident Marla Tulett, an accomplished caterer, loves working with fresh, local produce. So she knew exactly what to do with Michigan sweet cherries from Coopersville-based Gavin Orchards and Produce, long-time food bank partner and sponsor of our Spring/Summer recipe contest.



"This dessert is surprisingly low in processed sugar, but it's still a wonderfully indulgent treat," Marla says.

"The incredible natural flavor of Michigan sweet cherries means you can use less than a cup of sugar for the entire, eight-serving dish."

Marla's Cherry Cobbler

6 cups pitted Gavin Orchards sweet cherries*

7/8 cup sugar (1/8 cup for cherry mixture, 3/4 cup for topping)

1 1/4 cups flour

2 tsp. baking powder

1 egg lightly beaten

6 tbsp. butter melted

4 tbsp. butter, cut up into small pieces

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Put cherries and 1/8 cup of the sugar* into a medium sauce pan. Heat over medium-low heat, gently stirring occasionally, until sugar dissolves and cherries are warmed through, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat and

add 1/4 cup flour and 4 tbsp. (one half stick) butter, cut up.

Combine flour, baking powder, and 3/4 cup of sugar in a medium bowl. Stir in egg with a fork, then use your fingers to work in egg until topping is crumbly. Set aside.

Melt 6 tbsp. of butter. Put cherry mixture into a greased 8" by 8" baking dish, then add topping in an even layer. Drizzle melted butter over topping and sprinkle top with 1 tbsp. sugar. Bake until golden brown, about 20 minutes. Set aside on a rack to cool briefly before serving or serve at room temperature as is, with whipped cream or ice cream.

*This recipe can also be made with Michigan sour cherries if you increase the amount of sugar in the hot cherry mixture to 3/4 cup.

About Gavin Orchards and Produce

The Gavin family's sustainably managed, three-generation, 240-acre farm is in Coopersville, about halfway between Grand Rapids and Muskegon. They produce apples, peaches and sweet cherries in their fruit orchards. On another 80 acres, they grow a variety of vegetables, with an emphasis on produce popular in Hispanic cuisine. Their products are available at select locations throughout Michigan, Indiana and Illinois.

For more information on Gavin Orchards and Produce, including its multiple environmental initiatives, visit www.gavinorchards.com.

ABOUT THE PARTNERS' RECIPE CONTEST

Every quarter, Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank highlights a major food donor (Food Partner) in our Partners' Recipe Contest.

The summer/fall contest will feature fresh Ida Red apples from Hillside Orchards in Berrien Springs. You can find Hillside Orchards at www.hillsideorchards.us.

Please submit your original recipe featuring Ida Red apples from Hillside Orchards (or another Michigan grower) to Linda Vanderbaan at lindav@FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org. You can also enter on our website, FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org. Entries must be received by August 31, 2011.

Food Bank Ice Cream Social set for July 30



Calling all Food Bank supporters, mark your calendar now for 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, July 30 – the date for the first Feeding America West Michigan Ice Cream Social.

The event is sponsored by Country Fresh – one of Michigan's favorite dairy brands and a major Food Bank Partner – to celebrate your sweet success helping us fight

hunger for more than 30 years.

So bring your family, your friends – and your sweet tooth, too – to the Food Bank's main warehouse, 864 West River Center Drive in Comstock Park. For more information or to RSVP, call Linda Vanderbaan at 616.784.3250 or email lindav@FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org.

Forest Hills Foods puts compassion in store

Grand Rapids grocery backs Food Bank in 3 innovative ways

Long-time locals and big-city transplants alike find lots to love at Forest Hills Foods in Grand Rapids. There's an enviable deli, sushi made fresh onsite, a Cadillac-sized meal bar and multiple wide aisles of wine.

Yet even as it has grown, Forest Hills Foods has managed to remain a friendly, navigable, neighborhood grocery store. And after three generations, it's still family-owned, just as it was when it was founded in 1959.

As such, it has an unusually loyal customer base. And it offers customers multiple ways to support community causes – including Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank.

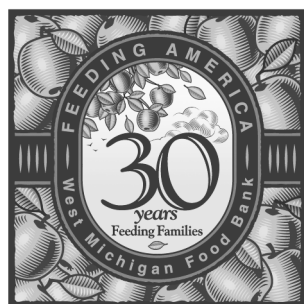
"We know we're lucky to be in such a great community that supports us so well. So it's only natural for us to support our community," says Nicole Burns, community relations director and granddaughter of store founder Howard Vandenberg.

The store now offers its customers three easy ways to help feed hungry families:

- **Loyalty card giving.** Forest Hills Foods customers who spend at least \$100 a month can use their "Fresh Rewards" cards to donate 1 to 2% of their monthly qualifying purchases to the Food Bank.
- **Tote bag sales.** The store features and sells reusable Feeding America West Michigan food totes to help raise Food Bank funds.
- **Scannable donation cards.** Customers can pick up laminated cards in the store to scan for one-at-a-time donations.

Nicole points out that the giving options are all hassle-free – with no receipts or vouchers required. "The bottom line is, we're here to help feed families. So it's almost a 'no-brainer' for us to support the Food Bank," Nicole noted. "The more we can help, the better."

For more information on supporting the Food Bank through Forest Hills Foods, contact nburns@ForestHillsFoods.com.



Every 2 dollars lets us provide about 3 meals for a family of four. Please add this to your cart and help a family eat for a day. To learn more, visit FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org

Feed Families. Starve Landfills. Buy a Bag.

Just \$2.99 buys you this beautiful tote and reclaims surplus food for hungry West Michigan families.

\$1.00 per bag sold goes to food reclamation and distribution here in West Michigan.



Above: In-store poster. At left: scannable one-time donation card.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

"Fun-size" Carole finds joy feeding West Michigan

Among the Food Bank's hundreds of regular warehouse volunteers, there are multiple Carol(e)s, but long-time volunteer Carole Griffeth, was nicknamed "fun-size Carole" by Food Bank staff for her petite size that belies her big heart.

A volunteer for three years, "Carole comes whenever we need her," says Volunteer Coordinator Dena Rogers. "She is truly like family to us."

Carole agrees. "I just really love it here. I enjoy being busy and around these people, who are so friendly and fun. Some have become good friends. They never would have come into my life if I hadn't volunteered here."

Her favorite task is sorting and cleaning truckloads of miscellaneous products from large donors, including Spartan Stores and Sam's Club. "When you go home, you feel, 'Wow, we got a lot done today!'"

Carole, who also volunteers for Gilda's Club in Lowell and Calvary Church in Grand Rapids. "I guess I just have a heart for people who are having a hard time," she says.



Volunteer Carole Griffeth (center front) celebrates her birthday with (back row, L to R) Jason Berringer, Heather Powell and Stacie Schreuder (Reclamation Department staff), volunteer Jennifer Edwards and Dena Rogers.

Retired Executive Director, others, greet new CEO

Retired Executive Director John Arnold was among dozens of guests who attended the "Meet and Greet" event to welcome Ken Estelle as the Food Bank's new CEO at the main warehouse in Comstock Park.



John Arnold, Sharon VanLoon, Ken Estelle and Kelly Crosse

John said he was pleased with what he accomplished prior to retiring, and approved of the Food Bank's new leader. "I've spent many hours with Ken," he said. "I can tell the Food Bank is in good hands."

Bank Roles

Nancy Ullrey and crew go "all out" for agencies



She's a registered dietician (R.D.), and a certified food safety instructor. But despite her impressive credentials, Agency Relations Manager Nancy Ullrey puts on no airs.

She describes her job of almost 11 years as "kind of like a sales manager, but without the selling." Specifically, she recruits and helps open new agencies, makes sure they follow Food Bank policies and takes the phone calls – and resolves the problems – if things go wrong.

Simple as she makes it sound, the scope of Nancy's work is almost overwhelming. Within the responsibilities she casually outlines lie literally hundreds of specific tasks – for some 779 food pantries, shelters, meal

programs and other hunger relief agencies in the nine counties surrounding Grand Rapids – the most populous in the Food Bank's entire region. (She also assists with agency relations in the counties served by the Food Bank's branches.)

With the help of three other Grand Rapids-based employees, Nancy arranges site visits to each member agency at least once every two years. They continuously monitor member agencies for food safety, equipment function, sanitation, staff certifications and qualifications and even their tax-exempt status – all of which are required by food donors as well as by state and federal law.

But they don't just scrutinize – they also provide service. That's where the sales manager perspective comes in. "When we visit agencies, we don't just 'monitor' them,"

says Nancy. "We also find out what they need to help them feed their clientele."

Nancy also teaches classes for agencies in food safety (including the ServSafe Certification course developed by the National Restaurant Association) and civil rights training (required to distribute U.S.D.A. commodities).

What's her favorite part of her job? She doesn't hesitate. "It's the agency people! The people who run pantries (and other agencies) are the most compassionate, kind people anywhere."

About her job overall, Nancy says, "I just love the mission, linking food with people in need. And that's what I see in the agencies, too. Even if they have a complaint or a bad day, they are all just advocating for the people they serve."

"If you remember that, this job is easy!"

UPTON FOUNDATION "STEPS UP," WANTS NEIGHBORS TO DO THE SAME

\$20K challenge grant may double donations for Berrien warehouse

Families in Berrien, Cass and Van Buren counties now need more than 10 million pounds of supplemental food per year, experts say.

The Food Bank's new Benton Harbor warehouse could meet that need – but first it needs new refrigerators and other safe food storage equipment.

Warehouse distribution has grown significantly since 2010, when operations were moved from St. Joseph to a larger building in Benton Harbor. However, with its current equipment, the warehouse can meet only about 16% of the area's needs. With about \$290,000 in new equipment, it could provide 100% – all 10 million pounds – of needed food.

To jump-start equipment acquisition, the Frederick S. Upton

Foundation is sponsoring a \$20,000 challenge grant. For every dollar the community chips in, the Foundation will provide an additional dollar – but only once the community's gifts total \$20,000.

"Our trustees saw a great need for Food Bank services in feeding our community," says Lisa Cripps, the Foundation's director. "In Berrien County, the Food Bank has shown it can expand its services, and our trustees want to be part of that."

Donations for new Benton Harbor food warehouse equipment can be made online at www.FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org or sent by mail to Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank at the address on the back cover. For information, call Linda Vanderbaan at 616.784.3250 or email lindav@FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org.

Volunteer Tidbits

A few fun facts from Dena Rogers, the Food Bank's volunteer coordinator:

- In April 2011 (National Volunteer Month), 500 volunteers from Home Depot, Macy's, ConAgra and Starbucks (among other groups) donated 1900 hours to the Food Bank. They processed 345,716 pounds of food.
- In a typical month, Food Bank volunteers process about 300,000 pounds of food.
- About 15-20% of Food Bank inventory requires "hands-on" activity (such as sorting, repacking and labeling).
- Volunteers recently repacked 164 containers of donated pasta, each weighing 800 pounds, into 32,800 four-pound, family-size bags.
- Every morning, a crew of volunteer "regulars" comes in to repack large bags of surplus baked goods picked up the night before from West Michigan Panera Bread stores.
- Annually, Food Bank volunteers donate about 22,000 hours – saving the Food Bank about \$163,000 – equivalent to almost a million meals!



On April 18, Boy Scout troops 3217, 3224, 3239 and 3271 presented the Food Bank with 4,423 pounds (more than 2.2 tons!) of food gathered during the annual "Scouting for Food" event put on by the Gerald R. Ford Council of the Boy Scouts of America. The scouts went door-to-door in 12 West Michigan counties to collect the non-perishable food items.



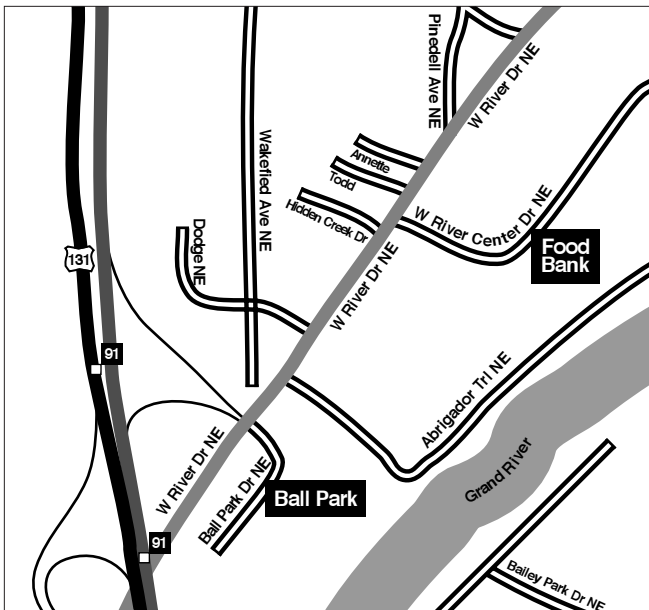
West Michigan Food Bank 864 West River Center
Comstock Park, Michigan 49321-8955
Formerly Second Harvest Gleaners Food Bank of West Michigan, Inc.

Non-Profit Org.
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GRAND RAPIDS, MI
Permit No. 793

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**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.

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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