

Full Plate Press

Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank

Winter 2011-2012

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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TAX CREDIT: GET IT BEFORE THEY SHED IT. (We wouldn't want you to regret it!)

"Five ... four ... three ... two ... one ... Happy NewOOPS!"

No one wants to start a new year with regrets. To help you avoid them, we humbly offer two suggestions:

- Go easy on the bubbly and other potent beverages.
- Make your Food Bank donation before your celebration begins.

Because of Michigan's new tax reform law, December 31, 2011 is the last chance for individuals and couples to earn a 50% Michigan Food Bank Tax Credit.

In other words, when you give \$200, you could get a credit of \$100 against your Michigan taxes. So your donation really costs you only \$100. (There is a \$100 maximum credit for single taxpayers and a \$200 maximum tax credit for couples filing jointly).

And with the \$200 you give, we can provide enough food for 700 meals!

Some 35,000 Michiganders received the tax credit in 2010, earning an average tax credit of \$93 apiece.

Now, we know you don't support to the Food Bank just because of the tax credit. After all, depending on how you look at it, there are 100,000 other

reasons (the families you help feed through the Food Bank) or even 86,450,000 reasons (the number of meals you helped provide food for last year).

But of course, the tax credit is a nice bonus—kind of like a kiss at midnight. And once that the big sparkly ball hits bottom in Times Square, the popular state tax credit will be in the past—right next to last year's diet and exercise resolutions.

But there's still time to get yours! Just don't forget to make

your donation to the Food Bank at FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org before midnight on December 31, 2011— or mail it in time to be postmarked the same day. (You can use the reply envelope enclosed in this newsletter.)

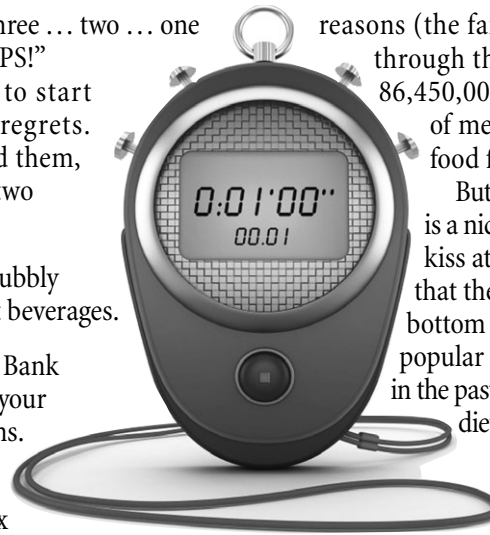
Don't miss this last chance to get your Michigan State Food Bank tax credit before it goes away.

In other words:

"Should auld tax credit be forgot and ne'er again be thine?"

Yes, but make thy gift New Year's Eve to earn it one last time."

To learn more, contact Linda Vanderbaan at 616.784.3250 or email lindav@FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org.



Ken's Keyboard



It's hard to believe summer and fall are already in the rearview mirror, and we are in the year-end holiday season. At the Food Bank, this is when we see a larger demand for food and grocery products than any time of year.

This year, we anticipate greater need than ever for emergency food as a result of reduced government support and higher food costs. One way we are preparing to respond to this growing need is by becoming more 'lean' in managing our processes in our main warehouse and branch facilities. 'Lean process improvement' is an approach that focuses on doing activities that add customer value and eliminating activities that don't. In October we spent a day with

Chris Wilson from Nonprofit Process Excellence to learn more about lean process techniques. We targeted a process, then formed a small team to map it and brainstorm ideas on removing waste. The team came up with more than 130 ideas to improve the process, of which 62 were determined to have high impact and low implementation difficulty. The team set a 30-day action plan, which is now in the works. They are already seeing results from some of the changes.

Our ultimate goal is to double the amount of food we can distribute within our current warehouse infrastructure. We know this is a lofty goal, but we also know that we need to do more to help the nearly 1300 pantries, shelters, soup kitchens and community agencies that depend on our Food Bank.

Thank you to all who have volunteered and supported us financially. We value your partnership and your encouragement. We are focused on our mission to end hunger in our area and we need your help. If you have not had the opportunity to visit our main warehouse or one of our branch warehouses, please don't delay! Now is a great time to get involved and become a part of this fight to end hunger in West Michigan.

The EPA helps companies measure the cost of their food waste.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the second largest waste stream in the United States is food waste—second only to paper.

In 2009, an estimated **33 million tons** of food waste went to landfills or incinerators. About half of this waste happens in people's homes. The rest takes place in food processing, manufacturing, restaurants, and retail operations, where waste and shrinkage expenses directly affect the bottom line.

Yet, as the EPA points out, excess food could be used to feed hungry people (our choice!) or to feed animals, make bio-fuels or be composted—saving the companies money and saving the environment.



To learn if your company could save money by reducing its food waste, go to www.epa.gov/foodrecovery, where the agency's WasteWise Food Recovery Challenge includes a food waste audit sheet and cost calculator. The site's easy-to-use tools are meant to help participants reduce waste and donate and recycle as much food as possible.

Before your company makes another trip to the dumpster, consider donating surplus food and supplies to food banks, pantries, shelters and kitchens. Call Ron Groen or Katie Auwers at 616.784.3250 to expedite the process or to learn more. And feed families as you starve landfills.



Our spokespeople: Six Food Bank staff members and volunteers got together on Saturday, October 15 to ride from Comstock Park to Rockford and back—a 14-mile round trip with a stop at Arnie's restaurant in Rockford, which donated 28 pounds of baked goods. Along the way, the riders decided to make the bike ride an annual fundraising event. Stay tuned for details!

HOW DO YOU LIKE THOSE (HILLSIDE) APPLES?

You'll love 'em mixed with sweet potatoes in this easy winter dessert.

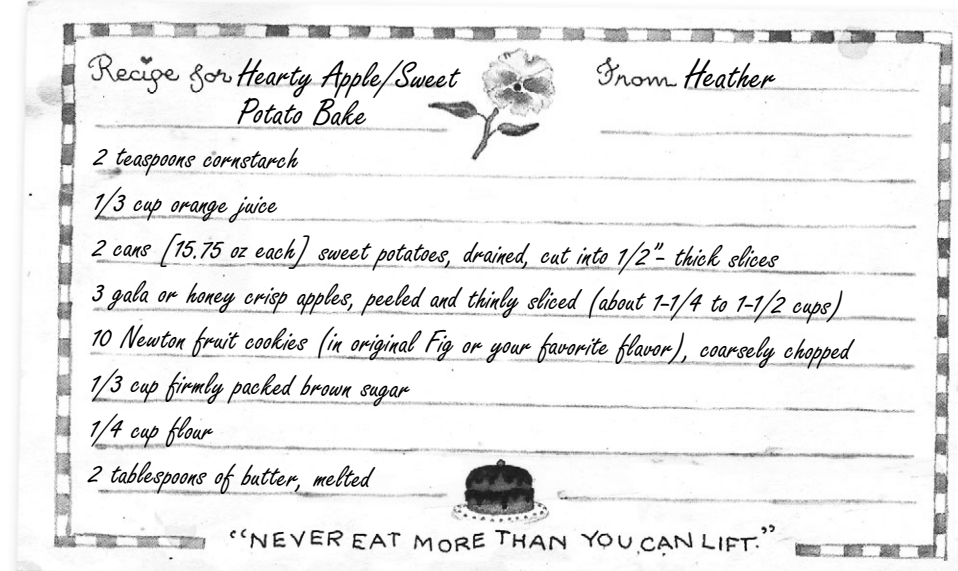
Periodically, Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank highlights a major food donor (Food Partner) in our Partners' Recipe Contest. This time, the donor was Hillside Orchards in Berrien Springs, and our winning recipe includes their crisp apples.

The latest contest winner is Heather Powell, who has worked in the Food Bank's main warehouse Reclamation department for four years. Judging from her wonderful recipes, she must spend her off-hours in the kitchen.

Heather submitted three delicious dishes featuring apples from Hillside Orchards.

All three recipes were great, but our judges chose this yummy, easy dish for its "hit the spot" potential on a cold winter's day.

Heather, who has a husband, daughter and son, says she enjoys cooking and baking with apples because "They're very flavorful and also healthy for my family."



PREHEAT oven to 350 F. Mix cornstarch and orange juice in a medium bowl. Add sweet potatoes and apples; toss to coat. Spoon into 9-inch square baking dish; set aside.

Mix chopped cookies, brown sugar, flour & butter until well blended; sprinkle evenly over sweet potato mixture.

Bake 25 to 30 minutes or until sweet potato mixture is heated through and topping is golden brown. Store leftovers in refrigerator.

Preparation Time: 40 minutes

Servings: 10 1/2 cups

About Hillside Orchards

Hillside Orchards, one of our most loyal food donors, is a family-owned and -operated fruit farm in Berrien Springs. Along with apples, Hillside produces peaches, nectarines, apricots, sweet cherries, blueberries, raspberries and chestnuts.

Although the farm dates back to 1836, it's known today for its innovative, environmentally conscious farming,

including integrated pest management (which includes pruning and organic materials to minimize pesticide use). When necessary, they use low-leaching, short-lived insecticide, spraying early in the morning or late at night to reduce drift. They also employ a laser measuring device to target the spray area and avoid spraying empty air.

The farm is laid out with spray buffer areas and a five-acre woodlot for wildlife. Additionally, about half of the farm is left unplanted each season, to allow the soil to renew itself. Open fields are not mowed until after pheasants have hatched and left the

area. Brush piles are left after harvest to provide wildlife cover and food for the winter.

Co-owner Paul Thelen has been named Conservation Farmer of the Year by the St. Joseph River Conservation District, which has also recognized him with the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship award.

Hillside has been "environmentally verified" by the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program and certified sustainable by the National Food Alliance.

30TH ANNIVERSARY GALA GOES RETRO, MOVES US FORWARD



Stacie Schreuder, Barry Nobels and Kristi Hekker.

Scores of Food Bank supporters slipped into '80s garb and gathered to celebrate the Food Bank's 1981 founding at the "Don't Stop Believin'" Gala on October 14.

The popular '80s band Starfarm headlined the evening at Noto's Old World Banquet Center in Grand Rapids. Fox-17 news anchor Michele DeSelms made a welcome repeat appearance as the event's emcee. The event netted approximately \$42,000 for Food Bank programs.

A silent auction featured fine art, a Caribbean getaway, a private suite at a West Michigan Whitecaps game and more than 50 other in-demand items from area businesses, artists and craftspeople. (For a list of auction donors and the event's underwriters, see page 6.)



Michael Jackson and fans.



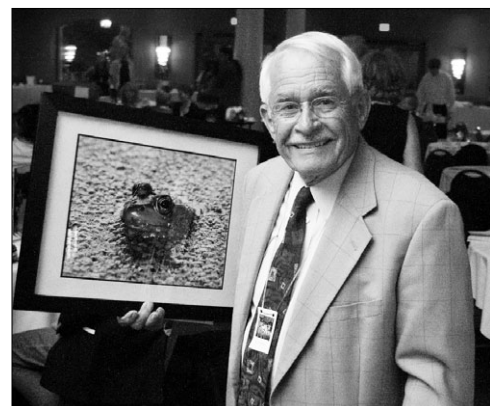
Dancing with the stars...no, wait! We meant Starfarm.



Guests checking out some of the 50-plus silent auction items.



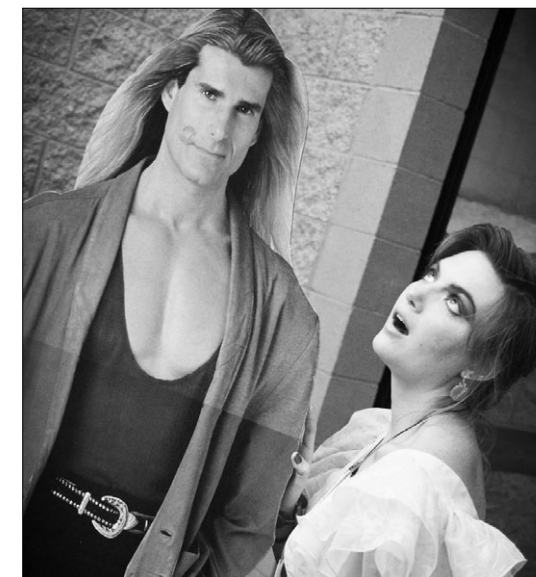
Clint Turbin



Dallas Erickson with silent auction purchase.



Food Bank CEO Ken Estelle with event organizer Linda Vanderbaan.



Alex Smith swoons over special '80s guest Fabio.



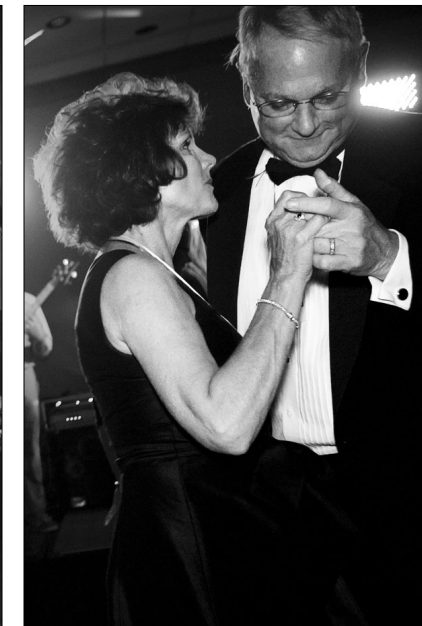
Tables were decorated with '80s hit albums.



The evening's emcee, Fox-17's Michele DeSelms.



Costume contest winner Clint Turbin indulges his rock star fantasy.



Beloved volunteer Jennifer Edwards and her husband Joey.



Board member Dick Haslinger, second from left, with friends.



Starfarm musicians pose with vintage DeLorean.

Bodacious Gala donors.

Here are the generous folks who made this year's Gala possible. Please join us in showing them your appreciation.

Event underwriters and in-kind donors:

\$10,000 Level

Richard and Ruth Postma

\$5,000 Level

BISSELL
Star Truck Rental
Spartan Stores

\$2,500 Level

Meijer
Chase Bank
Berends, Hendricks, Stuit
Steve and Cindy Van Andel Foundation
BDO
Amway

\$2,000 Level

Rita & Jim Kirkwood

\$1,250 Level

Fifth Third Bank
Dave and Carol Van Andel Foundation
Terryberry
Tim and Kelly Crosse
F&M

Other friends:

Michigan Tools
Pathway Benefit Services, Inc
ACCESS
Model First Aid
Overhead Door
Dennis & Linda Grady
Charles & Barbara Carriere

Clarence & Zita Harris
Julia Saganski
Henry & Phyllis Schulz
Mary Anderson
Phillip Battershall
Jonathon & Grace Bradford
Kathleen Burns

Edward Dalquist
James Duff
Joan Garety
Paul Kellermann
Paul Nelson
Rose Mieras
Kevin Mahoney
Allegra Marketing, Print, Mail
Country Fresh
Judy Bean, Writer
Beautiful Wedding Photography
Grand Rapids Press
Mary Jo Cooper, Mojo Driven Design
WXMI Fox 17 TV
Old Orchard
Subway
MaryAnn's Chocolates
Matt & Doug - Delorean on display
The Green Well
Kristi Hekker

Silent auction donors:

Amaryllis, Grand Rapids
Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids
John Arnold
Beautiful Wedding Photography,
Grand Rapids
Rick Beerhorst, artist
Bonnie Bierma/Prizm Classical Ensemble
Blue Door Antiques, Grand Rapids
Brewery Vivant, Grand Rapids
Camp Blodgett, West Olive
Cannonsburg Ski Resort
Castle in the Country Bed & Breakfast,
Allegan
City Antiques, Grand Rapids
Clark's Landscape Design/Dan Clark
Coiffeteria, East Grand Rapids
Richard Cooper, artist
Cheeky Green Designs/Kristi Dekker
Dad's Tents, Rockford
Mike DeBoer, photographer
Eastown Antiques/Mike Dykhous
Elite Island Resorts
Kathy Florentine, yoga instructor
Forest Hills Foods, Grand Rapids
Frames Unlimited/Bob Heffron
The French Baker/Sarah Huisman,
Saranac
Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island
The Grand Rapids Press
Green Well Pub, Grand Rapids
Anna Greidanus, ceramic artist
Connie Hanson

Hidden Valley Golf Course
Hopscotch Children's Boutique,
Grand Rapids
Kennedy's Flowers, Cascade
Keeki Pure & Simple
Lafontsee Gallery, Grand Rapids
David Lubbers, photographer
Marie Catrib's Restaurant, Grand Rapids
Marla's Catering, Grand Rapids
J.W. Marriott Hotel
Martha's Vineyard, Grand Rapids
Nawara Brothers Appliance and Home
Store, Grand Rapids
Noto's Old World Restaurant,
Grand Rapids
Number the Stars Band
Old Orchard
Opera Grand Rapids
The Pampered Chef
Peninsula Trading Company
Phil's Junk, Grand Rapids
Reds on the River, Rockford
Romence Gardens, Grand Rapids
Rooks Landscaping
Schuler Books, Grand Rapids
Rita Shields, potter
Dave Tobias/Toby the Clown
Nancy Ullrey
Annica Vander Linde, artist
Walmart/Eric and Joe Woods
West Michigan Whitecaps
Wolverine YMCA

Farmers Market food donations surpass 10,000 pounds.

For the third year in a row, a dedicated group of volunteers worked at the Rockford and Fulton Street (Grand Rapids) Farmers Markets to accept food and dollar donations from growers and customers.

This year, the group brought in its 10,000th pound of fresh produce.

The volunteers' visibility also attracts new Food Bank supporters. According to Nathan O'Connell, the group's organizer, "Over the past three years, more than 100 volunteers who have either expressed interest in helping out at the facility, at the markets and with other gleaning projects throughout the summer and fall."

O'Connell expressed thanks to the volunteers, along with the growers and Farmers Market customers "who have helped to make (the program) possible over the past three years. We could not have done it without your continued support!"



SIGN UP FOR OUR FREE E-MAIL NEWSLETTER.

Get the latest news about fighting hunger here in West Michigan. Sign up for the online version of the Full Plate Press. Use this form or log on to www.FeedingAmericaWestMichigan.org and sign up online. Questions: call 616.784.3250.

Yes! We'd like to get our newsletter online from now on. Please send it to this email address:

Email _____

Also, please stop sending us the paper newsletter. (Please provide the information requested below.)

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please send to Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank, 864 West River Center Dr., Comstock Park, MI 49321.

GLEANNING 2011: NEW CROPS, NEW RECORDS



Volunteer Wayne Goddard and Volunteer Coordinator Dena Rogers picking peaches.

It was a great year for growing, according to Volunteer Coordinator Dena Rogers. Gleaning (picking surplus crops after the main harvest) brought about 42,000 pounds of fresh produce into the Food Bank—roughly double the average year's total.

Another big jump: the number of gleaning

volunteers. Usually between 200 and 250 people help pick surplus food. This year, 341 showed up.

To illustrate what a difference volunteers can make: On October 26, 18 volunteers gathered to pick Concord grapes, which are small and difficult to gather quickly. But within two hours, the crew had picked 1,438 pounds of the tiny fruit.

Concord grapes were a new item for us this year. Also for the first time, this year's crops included raspberries, green beans, corn and watermelons—along with the apples, strawberries and peaches we depend on year after year.

Also worth noting: the congregation of Vergennes United Methodist Church planted a community garden this year, where member families learned to grow

their own food and then donated their surplus to the Food Bank.

Gleaning can be an educational and fun family activity. Children as young as three can participate with parental (or another responsible adult's) supervision. (The little ones can be especially helpful picking low-growing crops like strawberries. They're closer to the ground so it's an easy reach!)

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

Have friends who are farmers or who grow their own food? Tell them the Food Bank and families we serve can always use more fresh produce. We'll even send volunteers to come pick it!



Marie Gowell, a regular warehouse volunteer, helping unload gleaned peaches.



Volunteer Kevin Murphy in a watermelon patch.



Students from North Point Elementary helped glean apples.



Annie Kim, a volunteer from Ada Bible Church, picking apples.



The Latham family volunteering at an apple picking. They also help in our main warehouse.



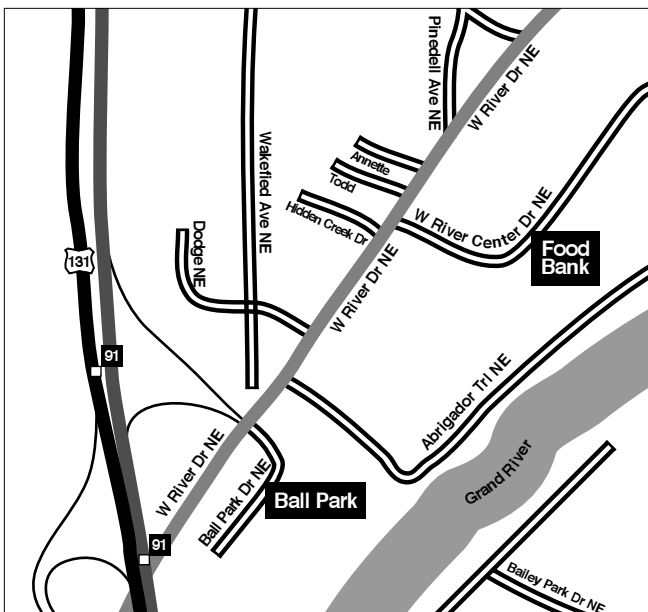
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Formerly Second Harvest Gleaners Food Bank of West Michigan, Inc.

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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.

Graphic Design: Mary Jo Cooper
Contributing Writer: Judy Bean

