Technology makes reporting “smart”
New app propels Food Bank and agencies into the future

Gearing up to serve more hungry neighbors
New South Suburban Center opening soon in Joliet
Hunger knows no season

With summer vacation around the corner, it’s hard not to count the days until we’ll finally be able to spend more time outdoors with our families and friends. For many of our neighbors, summertime means just the opposite—relaxation, vacations and cookouts—it often means different child care arrangements, more financial strain, and uncertainty about where lunch or dinner will come from each day.

Throughout the school year, Northern Illinois Food Bank serves nearly 7,700 children per day at 161 Afterschool Snack and Supper Program sites. Once school is out and kids no longer have access to a daily source of nutritious food through free or reduced-price school lunches or our afterschool snacks and suppers, it becomes even more important that we find ways to expand the reach of our Summer Meals Program and fill this meal gap.

While we’re proud to serve more than 120 summer feeding sites, we also know that seniors across Northern Illinois continue to face hunger and lack adequate access to the nutritious foods they need to stay healthy and strong. We’re thrilled to be making strides in our fight against senior hunger this year through our Senior Grocery Market, which is providing much-needed nutritious foods to hundreds of seniors in Rockford. We have also launched our Healthy Harvest Box Program this year with the KishHealth System, a part of Northwestern Medicine, to provide fresh produce for chronic disease patients who are food insecure.

As you’ll read on pages three and four, these programs and new technologies like our FoodBank Manager app are making it even easier for our community partners to serve more of our hungry neighbors.

With that in mind, there are a few ways you can help make summer vacation brighter for our neighbors:

**Donate to our summer hunger campaign:** We’re incredibly grateful to have support from the William and Muriel Elliott Foundation, which is matching gifts made to the Food Bank in May up to $100,000. What better time to donate than when just a $1 donation can equal not $8, but $16 worth of groceries for our hungry neighbors? Donate today!

**Beat the heat and volunteer:** Spending just a couple hours sorting and repacking food for our hungry neighbors will brighten anyone’s day. Plus, you’ll make an especially big impact during the summer when volunteering typically slows down, but the amount of food that comes through our doors does not.

**Spread the word:** Share your experiences working with us to serve our neighbors with friends and family and inspire them to join our mission of solving hunger in Northern Illinois.

However you choose to make a difference this summer, know that your action truly makes an impact in the lives of our hungry neighbors, and that we could not achieve what we do without your year-round support.

Warmly and with gratitude,

Julie Yurko, President and CEO

South Suburban Center

Gearing up to serve more hungry neighbors

Across our four southernmost counties—Grundy, Kankakee, Will and Milan—more than 89,000 neighbors face food insecurity, including 42,420 children for whom hunger can limit physical, academic and social development.

While we provided more than 13.2 million meals last year across the four-county area, we have been working hard to find new ways to provide every meal, every day, for every hungry neighbor in this region. And thanks to the outpouring of support and generosity from these communities and from individual and corporate donors, we’re thrilled to announce that we will open a new South Suburban Center (SSC) in Joliet later this summer.

The center will allow us to provide increased access to key perishable foods such as fresh produce, dairy, proteins and bread, and will create additional donation opportunities for local food donors. We anticipate the new center will allow us to provide an additional one million meals per month to hungry neighbors across the four-county region, and that it will unite the community by providing local organizations with additional volunteer opportunities and public meeting spaces.

Though we are approaching our fundraising goal, more help is needed to open the South Suburban Center! Visit www.SolveHungerToday.org/SSC for updates on the Center, or to make a donation. And thanks to the McCormick Foundation, gifts made to the South Suburban Center will be matched to accelerate the completion of our fundraising campaign and enable the Center to open as planned.

**Questions?** Contact Hester Bury at (630) 443-6910 ext. 124, or hbury@northernilfoodbank.org.

Northwestern Medicine, to provide fresh produce for chronic disease patients who are food insecure.

**Build Healthy Communities**

**Igniting the Community**

**Providing More Meals**

**Strengthening Leadership**

**Maintaining Frugality and Trust**

**Using app technology to better serve our neighbors**

When thinking about how to better serve our hungry neighbors, we often think “how can we distribute more meals?” But sometimes, a more impactful question is, “how can we improve the client experience at our network partner sites?”

Thanks to grant funding and donations from Feeding America, the John Arnold Foundation and Epsilon, Northern Illinois Food Bank recently became one of just five Feeding America food banks to pilot a three-year initiative to improve client data tracking. The initiative enables partner agencies to better understand who their clients are and how to better meet their needs through the use of app-based mobile technology.

The app platform, called FoodBank Manager, helps agencies better understand who their clients are by using customized digital intake forms to collect required demographic information, but can also include some optional personalized and qualitative questions about each client’s specific situation and needs.

**Time savings**

As a result, participating agencies can easily and accurately track key metrics such as number of households being served, SNAP recipients, languages spoken, dietary needs, and more—in real-time.

“Some of our agencies see 1,500 to 2,000 clients a week,” said Jacqui Hebein, Director of Agency Relations at Northern Illinois Food Bank. “That’s a lot of paperwork to process each month for reporting, and FoodBank Manager alleviates the stress and time burden of completing these reports.”

Prior to FoodBank Manager, agencies submitted hard copy signature sheets for monthly reporting, which took several weeks to manually process. The new app not only stores data in real-time, but automatically tallies key reporting metrics and allows agencies to submit signature sheets electronically, thus saving countless hours for agency and Food Bank teams alike.

**Road to the future**

Though FoodBank Manager launched in December 2016, the development process began last summer, when the Food Bank conducted a survey to assess the technology needs of its Emergency Food Program (EFP) agency-partners and used the results to allocate grant funding and technology resources to participating agencies.

The Food Bank has trained 11 partner agencies on FoodBank Manager thus far and will add more by the end of fiscal year 2017. All 108 EFP sites will be using the program by the conclusion of the pilot phase in 2019.

Hebein says the hope is to eventually roll out the app to all Food Bank agencies, and to add in other features like tracking agencies’ inventory and non-Food Bank donations in the app to help the Food Bank better track its progress in meeting the meal gap in Northern Illinois.

The app is so easy to learn and use. It’s afforded us huge time savings—similar to when we switched to web-based ordering and reporting with Agency Express and Meal Connect. “

— Jacqui Hebein, Director of Agency Relations

St. John Lutheran Church Food Pantry

The full plate

JACQUI HEBEIN AT THE CLIENT DATA TRACKING INITIATIVE IN 2017 AND BEYOND, CONTACT JACQUI HEBEIN AT JHEBEIN@NORTHERNILFOODBANK.ORG.
Lois is a bubbly, friendly woman who you instantly feel like you’ve known for years. She has been coming to the Crystal Lake Food Pantry for a couple of years to shop for her and her husband, and says she appreciates the selection, environment and volunteer group at Crystal Lake. Before retirement, Lois worked as a secretary for an assembly line, and her husband worked as a hardwood floor installer. She also live in subsidized housing.

They are just one of thousands of families across Northern Illinois that make tough choices about spending trade-offs each month—75 percent of households in McHenry County, where Lois and her husband live, have had to choose between paying for medicine and food in the last 12 months, while 72 percent of area families have had to choose between paying for housing and food.

Lois says her father used to work for Frank Lloyd Wright, so at times she says it’s hard to believe that she is here now, and in the position of needing and receiving help from a pantry.

“I never thought I’d be here, but I’m so grateful for what I have and always make the most out of it,” she says with an optimistic smile.

Lois says she most looks forward to the selection of canned goods and the fresh produce she is able to bring home after each visit to Crystal Lake Food Pantry. On this particular day, the pantry’s produce section was filled with delicious fruits, salads and vegetables.

To all the donors who help make the wonderful selection of foods possible, Lois expressed her gratitude once more, saying “I really appreciate what they do!”

Summer Meal Program

Fueling kids’ futures inside and outside the classroom

Award-winning summer meal program gears up for 2017

Ask a kid what their favorite part of summer is, and you’re likely to get this answer: no school.

But, no school means no school lunches, which for some kids in Northern Illinois means no lunch at all.

Tanae, a mother of four from Zion, knows the struggle of providing food during the summer all too well.

“In the summertime, the kids are enjoying themselves and I’m happy they’re happy, but I’m looking at the fridge and the cabinets and thinking, ‘Where is the food going?’”

Tanae said during a visit to Abiding Love Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen in Zion.

Thanks to Northern Illinois Food Bank’s Summer Meal Program, families struggling to make ends meet like Tanae’s can find a sense of relief.

Through the Summer Meal Program, families can get access to breakfast, lunch, and snacks for their children at more than 120 sites across Northern Illinois. The Summer Meal Program is open to all children under the age of 18, though some site-specific requirements or restrictions may apply.

Last year alone, the program served more than 285,000 summer meals to children in need by working with summer youth programs at parks, churches, schools, and other sites throughout the community. The program is expected to continue growing this year, meaning more kids can enjoy their school-free summer with a full belly to fuel their adventures.

“We’re proud to share that in April 2017, the USDA named Northern Illinois Food Bank one of the nation’s top 10 leading Summer Meal Program sponsors with its “Turnip the Beet” award, dedicated to recognizing summer meal programs with the highest quality food. The Food Bank was ranked as one of 10 Gold awardees, and was the only awardee in Illinois. According to the USDA’s website, awardees demonstrated “excellence in areas such as program fresh fruit daily; conducting taste tests with the children (and incorporating the feedback into the menus); serving a variety of whole grains and offering nutrition education activities along with the meals.”

The Summer Meal Program is offered in partnership with the USDA’s Summer Food Service Program and administered by the Illinois State Board of Education.

If your youth program is interested in becoming a Summer Meal Program site for next year, please call Jessica Willis at 630-443-6910 ext. 144, or at jjwillis@northernillinoisfoodbank.org.

The Full Plate, a Summer Meal Program feature: To visit the Full Plate, please call 630-443-6910 ext. 144, or visit riseandshineillinois.org or call us at 630-443-6910.

In this issue of The Full Plate, we feature NorthShore-Highland Park Hospital which supports Northern Illinois Food Bank and our North Suburban Center in Park City in a variety of ways.

We spoke with Hania Fuschetto, Community Relations for Glenbrook & Highland Park Hospitals to learn more about how the company chose to get involved with the Food Bank.

When and how did NorthShore University HealthSystem’s Highland Park Hospital first get involved with Northern Illinois Food Bank?

In late 2010, Highland Park Hospital heard about the great work that Northern Illinois Food Bank does in supporting local food pantries and providing lunch for distribution to community organizations over the summer. The Food Bank’s outreach closely aligns with the hospital’s values to help the underserved in our community.

How does NorthShore-Highland Park Hospital currently support the Food Bank?

We provide financial assistance to help supplement the Food Bank’s increased demand for food resources, and our staff and their families volunteer at the Park City center three times a year.

Do you have a favorite Food Bank moment or memory?

The staff at NorthShore as a whole, including Highland Park Hospital, have a generous volunteer spirit and are always interested in giving back to the community and helping families and individuals of need. Volunteering has been a wonderful bonding experience for staff and family members who participate.

Why does NorthShore-Highland Park Hospital continue to support the Food Bank?

Highland Park Hospital recognizes the valuable service that Northern Illinois Food Bank provides in the region. It is a natural fit for us to partner with Northern Illinois Food Bank to help the community that we are privileged to serve.

Anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for all that you do to support the townships, schools, families and individuals in our community!

MAY IS OLDER AMERICANS MONTH. TO FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN HELP US SOLVE SENIOR HUNGER, VISIT WWW.SOLVEHUNGERTODAY.ORG/SENIORGROCERYPROGRAM.

You Matter to Us

I want you to know that you matter to us.

Thank you for all you do to support the townships, schools, families and individuals in our community.

Anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for all that you do to support the townships, schools, families and individuals in our community!

www.SolveHungerToday.org

www.FullPlate.org
A Cup of Hope

Thank you to the more than 225 guests who attended A Cup of Hope: A Garden Tea to Solve Hunger on April 5 at Hotel Arista in Naperville.

A Cup of Hope gathered gardeners and Food Bank supporters for a salutary afternoon tea complete with an extensive selection of sparkling wines, loose teas, appetizers and café vinyl.

AROUND THE FOOD BANK

Ready, set, race!

Thanks to all our sponsors, volunteers and more than 1,600 participants who joined us April 1 for the Foodie 5K in Wheaton presented by Meijer.

In addition to a gardening demo and raffle, guest speaker Nancy Hatmaker-Ristau provided tips and best practices on welcoming wildlife and butterflies to your home garden.

In addition, A Cup of Hope raised more than $58,000—worth more than $448,000 in groceries for the Food Bank’s Child Nutrition programs.

With your help, we raised more than $131,000 for hungry neighbors at Cantigny.

Those who registered early for the Foodie 5K in Wheaton and Cantigny at Hotel Arista received a ticket voucher for a Kane County Cougars or Schaumburg Boomers game. Register before August 17 for the Foodie 5K at Lewis University on September 9 to get your official race shirt and other fun swag!

Nearly a dozen food trucks served tasty options during the post-race festival.

The Kid’s Fun Zone featured face painting, sidewalk chalk, a hockey puck challenge with the Chicago Steel mascot and more, which kept kids of all ages entertained after the race.

Nearly a dozen food trucks served tasty options during the post-race festival.

Ready, set, race!

Thanks to all our sponsors, volunteers and more than 1,600 participants who joined us April 1 for the Foodie 5K in Wheaton presented by Meijer.

If you missed the Foodie 5Ks at Cantigny or Independence Grove, sign up for the Foodie 5K at Lewis University on September 9.
SEPTEMBER
Foodie 5K Will County
Saturday, September 9 – 9 a.m.
Lewis University, Romeoville
Join us at a new Will County location to celebrate the start of Fall and close out the Foodie 5K season in style! To register or learn more, visit www.SolveHungerToday.org/Foodie5K.

Hunger Action Month
All Month
Help us raise awareness about the issue of hunger and wear orange, hold a food and fund drive, start a conversation about hunger, or volunteer at one of our Pack-A-Thons. Contact Teresa Schryver at (630) 443-6910 ext. 160 to learn how to get involved!

OCTOBER
Stars & Cars
October 11
Join us at Steve Foley Bentley, Cadillac, Rolls-Royce of Northbrook for our 5th annual Stars and Cars event. Mingle with Honorary Chairs Brian McCaskey and Steve Foley and other local celebrities amongst luxury vehicles while supporting the Food Bank’s hunger relief programs. For more info or to get involved, visit www.SolveHungerToday.org/starsandcars or call (630) 443-6910.