2016 HIGHLIGHTS

62.5M meals distributed
166,854 gallons of fresh milk distributed
32.4M pounds of food rescued through our Food Recovery Program
173,196 meals served to hungry seniors
403 mobile pantry deliveries
2.5M meals served to hungry children
155,182 volunteer hours

Dear Food Bank Friends,

Year in and year out, we share that hunger is here, and hunger is real. It’s in every community, in every county that we serve. It impacts our neighbors, our friends and our families. As we end another year, we reflect on how we may have helped. Hunger may be here – but we believe that hunger is solvable. And we’re solving it together by working to provide every meal, every day, for every hungry neighbor.

When we committed to solving hunger in Northern Illinois, it was clear that this would be a challenge. We’re proud of what we have accomplished thus far. This year, we served 62.5 million meals to those in need – to families who shouldn’t have to choose between keeping the lights and heat on, and putting a meal on the table. Throughout the year we continued to evaluate how we can do more by focusing on the five pillars of our strategic plan.

As we aim to provide more meals for our hungry neighbors, we developed robust county strategies that allowed us to hone our resources so we can provide the right foods to the right areas. We are constantly analyzing the need in our service area against our distribution as we work to successfully meet the meal gap.

We continue to build healthy communities through collaboration with like-minded partners focused on the health of our hungry neighbors. One of many programs developed and piloted was a Diabetes Prevention series for those at risk. These classes teach mindful diabetes prevention through eating, exercise, stress relief and other day-to-day practices.

We strive to strengthen leadership and empower our team and member agencies to be innovative and creative, which led to the Access, Capability, Engagement Conference (ACE). We also focused on staff development through Franklin Covey trainings and the creation of a new Food Bank book club to ensure the best, most effective version of our team is working toward meeting the meal gap.

From volunteers to donors to staff, it’s because we’re able to ignite the community that we can feed our hungry neighbors. Thanks to the generosity of our many donors and partners, we received nearly 65 million pounds of donated food – more than ever before – turning those much needed donations into nutritious meals. We raised $12.7 million in contributed revenue and had more than 155,000 volunteer hours.

While these accomplishments have made an amazing impact, we still have more work to do as we get closer to meeting the meal gap.

Finally, we always focus on frugality and trust. Our fiscal responsibility and mission performance were recognized by Charity Navigator with a 4-star rating for the 13th consecutive year and again we received Better Business Bureau accreditation. We place the utmost importance on food safety, and received our first American Institute of Baking International recognition at our North Suburban Center in Park City and Northwest Center in Rockford this year, joining the West Suburban Center in Geneva in this achievement. With continued resolve, we are able to put 97 percent of the resources we have back into programs that feed our hungry neighbors, so supporters can trust that we’re responsibly allocating what they graciously provide to us.

As we work toward solving hunger in Northern Illinois together, it’s important to remember that every person matters. What you do matters to our community and to our hungry neighbors. YOU are helping us solve hunger. Thank you for making a difference.

Warmly,

Julie Yurko
President and CEO
Northern Illinois Food Bank

Karen Joyce
Board Chair
Northern Illinois Food Bank

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“I know that every dollar I contribute or every hour I volunteer will result in more food making it to our local agencies to feed folks in my immediate community that are in need.”

– Karen Alvis Joyce, Vice President Client Services, Nielsen
“How grateful I am to have such a facility and great people to afford me this gift – [this food] is truly a gift of survival for me. Thank you!”

– Linda, Naperville
"I never realized there are so many people in our area in need of such basic items like food. After volunteering at the Food Bank, I no longer take food for granted and I know that even a short amount of time volunteering can make a difference in someone’s life."

— Jose, Itasca
West Suburban Center
273 Dearborn Court
Geneva, IL 60134
T: 630.443.6910

Northwest Center
765 Research Parkway
Rockford, IL 61109
T: 815.639.1257

North Suburban Center
440 Keller Drive
Park City, IL 60085
T: 847.336.3663

South Suburban Office
3033 W. Jefferson Street
Suite 210
Joliet, IL 60435
T: 815.846.1041

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