Glen Ellyn Food Pantry remodels to meet rising need
Finding new ways to do more

Volunteers pack more than 94,250 meals for hungry neighbors
485 volunteers attend September Pack-A-Thons
Starting the Season with thanks

When you believe in the holidays, they are here, and we are closing the books on another successful year in our work to solve hunger in Northern Illinois.

As we head into one of the busiest times of year—full of travel, getting-togethers with friends and family from near and far—shopping trips and gift-giving, it’s important to keep the spirit of the holiday season grounded in gratefulness.

At Northern Illinois Food Bank, we are more than thankful for ever the generosity and support shown all year long by you—our amazing donors, volunteers and partners.

Together, we were able to provide 62,5 million meals to our hungry neighbors this past fiscal year, including 2.5 million meals to children and more than 180,000 meals to seniors.

Instead of nearly 79 million pounds of food going to waste, retailers, manufacturers and farmers across our service area chose to give their surplus food to the Food Bank so, together, we could put nutritious meals on tables all year long for our neighbors.

I so appreciate our outstanding volunteers who donated more than 155,000 hours to sort and repack this wonderful food for redistribution to our feeding sites, and our financial donors whose generosity makes our work possible.

And finally, a huge shout out to our agency members and feeding sites, who partner with us to serve our families in need, every day, with love and understanding.

Now is the time of year to be thankful, and I certainly am. Everyone that touches the Food Bank makes a difference. Whatever you do all for us, and for your neighbors in need, matters.

And as I sit down at my own holiday table in the next few weeks, I’ll be thinking of you, grateful for all that you’ve done.

Wishing you a joyful holiday season,

Julie Yurko, President & CEO

P.S. – I’m proud to share that Northern Illinois Food Bank has just received its 13th consecutive 4-star rating from Charity Navigator—a milestone reached by less than one percent of all 1.5 million U.S. charities evaluated.

So when you chose to invest in the Food Bank, you can be confident your gifts will be used wisely to serve our neighbors in need.

Giving Opportunities

Still time to Give What Matters

While donations are gratefully received all year round, giving during the final weeks of the year can be especially rewarding.

Here’s how your gift might help a hungry neighbor:

• $30 can provide a Holiday Meal Box with turkey and trimmings for a family in need.
• $100 can provide 2 gallons of milk to help one person have a healthy meal daily for a year.
• $250 can stock the shelves of a school pantry with $2,000 worth of groceries.
• $500 can provide a weekly food-filled backpack for three kids for the entire year.

Gifts received by December 31 may offer tax benefits. But the greatest benefit of all is knowing that your gift is helping to solve hunger in Northern Illinois!


Northern Illinois Food Bank is working toward its strategic goal of providing 75 million meals to our neighbors in need by the year 2020. Look for the following icons throughout this issue of The Full Plate accompanying stories that highlight the five pillars of our strategic plan:

Build Healthy Communities

Igniting the Community

Providing More Meals

Strengthening Leadership

Maintaining Frugality and Trust

A fresh space to serve more hungry neighbors

The excitement is palpable as you walk into the newly-remodeled Glen Ellyn Food Pantry, nestled in the lower level of Grace Lutheran Church in downtown Glen Ellyn.

At the end of the bright, sunlit hallway is the check-in and waiting room, which smells deliciously of the baked goods that line the shelves in the back corner of the room. In the shopping area, fully-stocked shelves featuring a variety of beans, grains, canned goods, cereals and non-food household items are organized, waiting to be plucked from the shelves. Refrigerators in the back of the room are filled with milk, eggs, and on this day, are overflowing with family-sized bags of fruits and vegetables—foods often considered to be a luxury for those in need, despite being some of the most needed.

The pantry, which took 9,000 appointments and distributed 800,000 pounds of food in 2015 alone, is back to business as usual after closing Memorial Day weekend and reopening its doors August 1.

The Pantry underwent two months of renovations which included new floors and shelving, and reconfiguring the space in order to meet the rising needs of those in the community it serves, including Glen Ellyn and surrounding towns of Wheaton, Lombard, Carol Stream, Lisle and Glendale Heights.

Executive Director Susan Paparski, who has led the pantry for the past eight of her 12 years with the organization, notes that there were two main goals for the pantry remodel:

• Get more food to the growing number of those in need, and provide a better “client choice” shopping experience.

• “Before, our clients used a paper shopping list and it was such a small, confined space that they couldn’t really shop around and put items in the cart themselves,” Paparski says. “But now, they shop each aisle and put things right in their bags while our team fills other special items on their list, like produce.”

She adds that they now have the ability to handle more walk-ins, and due to greater awareness in the community, there has been new traffic to the pantry. In fact, in just the first two months after reopening its doors, they have already served 45 more appointments per week—an increase of 37.5 percent.

And although the remodel has quickly proved to be effective, Paparski already has her sights set on some new goals—like a record-setting Holiday Meal Box season. “The additional inventory space and ability to recover more product from our amazing retail partners will allow us to distribute over 600 meal boxes this holiday season,” she says. Beyond that, Paparski is also evaluating ways to add more appointments to their schedule. She notes that just two more appointments per week would serve an additional 750 families per year, ensuring even more of our hungry neighbors don’t have to miss a meal.

“We are very blessed by the support of local retail partners, community organizations, churches, schools and individuals in our community who helped make it possible for us to better help those in need!”

—Susan Paparski, Executive Director, Glen Ellyn Food Pantry
A LOOK BACK AT 5 YEARS IN GENEVA

While we have a rich 33-year history of serving our hungry neighbors across Northern Illinois, in 2016 we celebrated the 5th anniversary of our Geneva distribution center. Here's a look at its impact:

36 MILLION LBS.
OF FRESH FRUITS & VEGETABLES DISTRIBUTED
That's like having 3,000 acres of land to grow our very own produce like apples or corn!

4 / 5

MEALS DISTRIBUTED

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36 MILLION LBS.
OF FRESH FRUITS & VEGETABLES DISTRIBUTED
That's like having 3,000 acres of land to grow our very own produce like apples or corn!

608,492
hours donated by
105.9K
VOLUNTEERS

Equivalent to having an additional 58 full-time staff members each year for the last 5 years!

244.5 M
MEALS DISTRIBUTED
across 13 counties of Northern Illinois since 2011.

89.3% increase

1,945 mobile pantry stops provided

16 MILLION MEALS

Each mobile pantry truck holds approximately 10,000 pounds of food and feeds an average of 100-150 families.

Hunger Action Month 2016

Hunger to do more drives big results in September

From making an appearance on ABC 7 Chicago’s morning news to celebrate Go Orange Day, to hosting not one, but three Pack-A-Thons at our centers, to the numerous agencies who went orange or hosted Food and Fund drives, Hunger Action Month was bigger and better than ever before at Northern Illinois Food Bank this September! In total, the Food Bank hosted 27 events and raised awareness of hunger in our area to nearly 10,000 community members.

The main highlight of this year’s Hunger Action Month were our three Pack-A-Thons, inspired by the success of last year’s inaugural Pack-A-Thon at our Northwest Center in Rockford, when volunteers packed more than 50,000 pounds of food for our hungry neighbors in just one day. Although impressive, we knew we could do even more this year—and we did!

Rockford
(2nd annual)
137 volunteers
36,308 lbs. canned food

Park City
(Inaugural)
186 volunteers
50,392 lbs. meat

Lewis University
(Inaugural)
160 volunteers
26,405 lbs. potatoes

= 113,105 LBS

Thank you to all the individuals and groups who joined us. We look forward to seeing you at next year’s Pack-A-Thons!

Other Hunger Action Month highlights from across the Northern Illinois Food Bank network included but are not limited to:

• Northern Illinois University, in partnership with DeKalb County Food Security Council, held a Hunger Action Panel discussing the impact of hunger on students and local residents.

• Six Flags Great America turned the iconic American Eagle rollercoaster orange throughout September for all to see that they support Hunger Action Month.

• Cresta Public Library sported a display urging visitors to “Go Orange” outside their front entrance, and shared how prevalent hunger is in their community with visitors.

• The Humanitarian Service Project in Wheaton organized a number of small awareness activities throughout the month, culminating in a bowling fundraiser, Strike Against Hunger.

• The Village of Plainfield held a community-wide food drive and collected nearly 7,200 pounds of food to benefit Plainfield Interfaith Food Pantry and St. Johns Food Pantry – two Food Bank agencies in Will County.

• A special thank you to the Village of Plainfield, DeKalb Community Foundation, and SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY for their funding and support.

We distributed 33 million meals one year we moved into our Geneva distribution center. In 2016, we distributed 62.5 million meals.

62.5 million meals.
The Bimbo Bakeries USA team from Glen Ellyn, a longtime partner of the Food Bank, celebrates after completing a successful round of golf at Cantigny during the Hunger Scramble.

Chick-Fil-A Wheaton/Lombard provided breakfast of chicken biscuits and yogurt parfaits for Hunger Scramble golfers.

The Bimbo Bakeries USA team from Glen Ellyn, a longtime partner of the Food Bank, celebrates after completing a successful round of golf at Cantigny during the Hunger Scramble.

The 18th annual Hunger Scramble Golf Outing presented by West Suburban Bank, and to all who helped make the event a success. Be sure to save the date for next year’s outing on August 22, 2017 at Cantigny Golf Club. See you there!

Many thanks to Co-Chairs Brian McCaskey and Steve Foley Jr., and all who attended Stars and Cars on October 5. With your help, we raised over $137,000—which equates to over $1 million worth of food for our hungry neighbors. We are so grateful for your continued support!

The team from Elgin takes a quick break before teeing off on the 8th hole.

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The Dr. Pepper/Snapple team (Northlake) celebrates after a great hole on the green.

The Bimbo Bakeries USA team (Glendale Heights), a longtime partner of the Food Bank, celebrates after completing a successful round of golf at Cantigny during the Hunger Scramble.

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Upcoming Activities

Save the date for our 2017 events!

ONGOING (THROUGH DECEMBER)
Host an online Food & Fund Drive this holiday season!

Create your own fundraising page and virtual food drive on Northern Illinois Food Bank’s website. Share your page with family, friends, and colleagues to get them involved and help feed our hungry neighbors!

Visit www.SolveHungerToday.org/FoodDrive to get started

FEBRUARY
Full on Faith
February 11-18
We invite all faith-based organizations to serve their community by participating in our week-long initiative dedicated to raising awareness of hunger through volunteering, hosting food and fund drives, discussing hunger and more.

Learn more at www.SolveHungerToday.org/FullOnFaith.

MARCH
A Cup of Hope, hosted by Northern Illinois Food Bank’s Executive Women’s Council
Sunday, March 5
Hotel Arista, Naperville
Networking opportunities with like-minded women, while enjoying an extensive and descriptive selection of loose teas, sparkling wine, finger sandwiches, fresh fruit, and assorted pastries and scones.

Learn more at www.SolveHungerToday.org/CupofHope.

APRIL
Foodie 5K Wheaton
Saturday, April 1 – 9 a.m.
Cantigny Park, Wheaton
Help us kick off our 4th annual Foodie 5K season at Cantigny Park in Wheaton, featuring a post-run festival with entertainment, food trucks and a kid’s zone to benefit Northern Illinois Food Bank.

Learn more at www.SolveHungerToday.org/Foodie5K.

See our complete calendar of events at www.SolveHungerToday.org