Longtime donor shares why she’s given monthly for 32 years

Support from the start

Helping kids grow up healthy

Food Bank programs fill gaps for children at risk of hunger
Dot Foods does it again!

From the President

G

Dot Foods does it again! neighbors in need throughout our 13-county service area!

grateful for this ongoing support that helps us efficiently deliver nutritious food to

donation to bolster Northern Illinois Food Bank’s transportation fleet. We are so

uted 57 million meals in Fiscal Year 2015, to reach this goal.

meals to our neighbors in need by the

strategic plan aimed at providing 75 million

ty service area.

close the meal gap throughout our 13-coun-

we at Northern Illinois Food Bank strive to

Make no little plans, they have no magic to stir men’s blood.” This famous quote from Daniel Burnham is one I keep coming back to as we at Northern Illinois Food Bank strive to close the meal gap throughout our 13-county service area.

One year ago, we launched a new strategic plan aimed at providing 75 million meals to our neighbors in need by the year 2020, and in the 12 months since we’ve been busy laying the groundwork to reach this goal. I’m pleased to announce that we distributed 57 million meals in Fiscal Year 2015, setting a new record for our Food Bank! On one hand, 57 million meals is a great accomplishment. On the other hand, it illustrates we still have a lot of work to do in order to reach our lofty goal. This is where the details of our strategic plan come into play.

We believe we can reach our $75 Million Meal Goal by strengthening the five pillars that make up our strategic plan. These pillars involve providing more meals, igniting the community around the issue of hunger, strengthening leadership at the Food Bank and within our network, building bridges to help our hungry neighbors on the path to self-sufficiency, all while maintaining high standards of frugality and trust.

In the past year, we started relating everything we do at the Food Bank back to how it will help us strengthen these pillars and set us on the path toward reaching our goal. In this issue of The Full Plate, you’ll see examples of our strategic plan in action. Articles about our Mobile Pantry Programs and Child Nutrition Programs illustrate how we are working to provide more meals to our neighbors in need. Updates on how you can get involved in Hunger Action Month during September illustrate ways we are working to ignite the community. An inspiring story about the work being done at People’s Resource Center sets an example for how our network of food pantries and feeding programs can help build bridges to social services and empowerment programs our hungry neighbors need to get back on their feet.

Over the coming months, look for more examples of our strategic plan in action and more updates on how our efforts are coming along.

We at Northern Illinois Food Bank are blessed to have incredible support from our donors and volunteers. When you combine this support with the amazing team we have working to solve hunger every day here at the Food Bank and throughout our network of food pantries and feeding programs, it gives me the utmost confidence our biggest plans of providing every meal, every day, for every hungry neighbor can and will be achieved.

Warmly,

Julie Yurko, president and CEO

It’s a sun-splashed May morning in West Chicago, and several dozen people are already lined up when Northern Illinois Food Bank’s Mobile Pantry truck arrives. Included in the line are Sandra, her younger sister Jasmine and their grandfather Saferino. For them, the Mobile Pantry represents hope and support as their family strives to make ends meet in the wake of losing a loved one.

Sandra and Jasmine’s father passed away almost three years ago, leaving a family that includes their mother and two other younger sisters to pick up the pieces amidst the grieving process.

“It really changed our lives when he died,” Sandra said. “All of a sudden we were paying the bills, taking care of the cars and making all of the decisions.”

Sandra, 20, is working two part-time jobs in the kitchen at a local resort and in the bake shop at a local grocery store in addition to going to school. Her income helps support her mother, who is also working. Jasmine, who graduated high school in May, looks forward to helping the family as well by finding a job while attending community college.

The family visits Wayne Township Food Pantry once a month, but that isn’t always enough to help keep the cupboards full. That is why they made sure to not miss the Food Bank’s mobile pantry, a traveling food pantry that provides nutritious food to high-need communities.

Set up much like a farmers’ market, where neighbors in need can choose the food that meets their dietary preferences, the Food Bank’s Mobile Pantry provides more than 7,500 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables, frozen meat and non-perishable foods to up to 300 families per visit.

“We don’t receive any SNAP benefits, so if we’re running low on food, we’re grateful we can come here,” said Sandra, who added she has received food from the Food Bank’s Mobile Pantry four or five times. “The truck gives us good variety. We have a big family, and when there are a lot of bills to pay, we sometimes can’t afford some of the more expensive food, like meat.”

As the morning progresses, more than 100 other families join Sandra, Jasmine and Saferino in filling shopping carts with food from the Mobile Pantry. Volunteers from the Bartlett Rotary Club, which sponsored today’s Mobile Pantry distribution, offer assistance as the families make their way around the refrigerated truck.

A big smile breaks across Sandra’s face when a volunteer hands her a carton of eggs. “We’re running low on eggs, so this helps a lot,” she says.

Broccoli, granola bars, frozen meat, cereal and potatoes are some of the other items Sandra puts into her cart.

Last year the Food Bank distributed 3.4 million pounds of nutritious food through more than 400 Mobile Pantries, helping families like Sandrick’s at every location. The generosity of all the donors and volunteers who make the Mobile Pantry possible isn’t lost on Sandra, who envisions a day when she can give back. “Thank you to everyone who provides for people who don’t have enough to provide for themselves,” she said. “When we have a chance, we look forward to helping out, too.”

For more information, contact Hester Bury at hbury@northernilfoodbank.org or 630-443-6910 ext. 124.

Mobile Pantry Program

Providing hungry neighbors with an extra boost

Look for the following icons to accompany stories that highlight our strategic plan in action in this and upcoming issues of The Full Plate:

Build Bridges
Ignite the Community
Provide More Meals
Strengthen Leadership
Maintain Frugality & Trust

 autumn

Fall 2015

THE FULL PLATE

www.SolveHungerToday.org

For more information, contact Hester Bury at hbury@northernilfoodbank.org or 630-443-6910 ext. 124.
Making sure families and individuals have access to nutritious food in times of need is Northern Illinois Food Bank’s mission. Of equal importance is making sure these same hungry neighbors have the resources and support they need to get back on their feet.

While this empowerment happens every day at many food pantries and feeding programs across northern Illinois, People’s Resource Center in DuPage County stands out as one of the leaders within the Food Bank’s network in helping neighbors in need on the path to self-sufficiency.

Job search assistance, adult learning and literacy, computer access and training, clothing, access to social services and art classes are among the offerings available at PRC’s facilities in Wheaton and Westmont. Both PRC locations distribute nutritious food through food pantries, and these pantries often serve as a gateway to every thing else the organization has to offer.

“Food drives everything,” said Melissa Perez, PRC’s senior director of programs. “Until you get a family stabilized so they aren’t worrying about having enough money to get through the month, they can’t even think about the empowerment programs we offer. Once they get food taken care of, they can start focusing on other areas of their life.”

For PRC, 2015 is a year filled with mile stones. Not only is the organization observing its 40th anniversary, but it also celebrated the opening of a new and permanent home in Westmont. The welcoming new space is owned and operated by PRC, replacing the smaller rented facility that housed its southeast DuPage outreach for more than a decade.

People’s Resource Center was founded in 1975 when a group of friends rented a small house in Wheaton, filled up shelves with food and clothes, and welcomed neighbors in need. That first year, 125 families were served. Today, more than 31,000 people from all comers of DuPage County participate in PRC’s programs. “I think it’s fair to say that never in those 40 years has the organization lost track of who we are and why we started,” said Kim Perez, executive director at PRC. “It was always about neighbors helping neighbors.”

Kim credits PRC’s growth over the past four decades to the organization’s dedicated volunteers and longtime supporters, several of whom have remained involved since the start. PRC’s relationship with Northern Illinois Food Bank dates back to 1983 when the Food Bank first started procuring and distributing food to local pantries. In addition to supplying PRC with more than 2.5 million pounds of food in the past year, the Food Bank also provides support on several other levels.

“Throughout the years I can think of multiple ways there has been really great synergy between the organizations,” Melissa said. “The Food Bank offers fabulous training for our volunteers and staff in areas such as food safety. I think the partnership has been fruitful on both sides.”

Adds Kim: “It’s not just a client-vendor kind of relationship. I appreciate that we are able to have conversations where we look ahead strategically and compare notes with the Food Bank on how to really move the issues forward.”

Making sure kids like Jordan and his younger sister Grace have access to healthy food throughout the year is the focus of Northern Illinois Food Bank’s Child Nutrition department. For the past six years, Jordan and Grace have had a home away from home at York Community Resource Center in Lombard. In addition to being a safe place for kids from low-income families to do homework and play, the Resource Center also participates in the Food Bank’s After-School and Summer Meal Programs.

Back when Jordan and Grace first started going to the Resource Center, times were particularly tough for their mom Sandra, who at the time was a single parent working to support her two growing children. Sandra remarried in the past few years and now has two more young children, but the Resource Center remains an important part of Jordan and Grace’s lives.

“I always consider it a blessing to have the Resource Center available, but when I was raising my kids as a single mom, it made a huge difference,” Sandra said. “And the food provided at the Resource Center is a big part of that. Knowing my kids are going to eat and be taken care of really gives me tremendous peace of mind.”

This is one of the Food Bank’s Child Nutritio n programs as a safety net for kids at risk of hunger. Filling the gaps after the school day, over the weekend and during the summer when parents may struggle to make sure their children have enough to eat.

On the days when Sandra was running late from work to pick up her kids, she could not easily know Jordan and Grace had a nutritious snack to hold them over until supper time, when the school year ended and her kids no longer had access to the Federal School Lunch Program, Sandra found comfort knowing the meals served at the Resource Center during the summer would lessen the impact on her already thin food budget.

“You think it’s just lunch, but every day over the summer those costs can add up,” Sandra said of the Food Bank’s Summer Meal Program. “It really does help so much to know these lunches are provided and my kids will be able to eat well.”

Thanks to the Food Bank’s participation in the USDA’s Summer Food Service Program, the Food Bank is on pace to serve more than 350,000 meals this summer. When school starts in the fall, the Food Bank hopes to surpass last year’s total of almost 6,000 kids who enjoyed after-school snacks or cold suppers daily at one of 155 participating sites. On the nearly 700,000 meals served after school last year were made possible through the Food Bank’s participation in the USDA’s Child and Adult Care Feeding Program.

幫助 children grow up healthy

The nearly 700,000 meals served after school last year were made possible through the Food Bank’s participation in the USDA’s Child and Adult Care Feeding Program. Meals and snacks provided through the Food Bank’s After-School and Summer Meal Programs meet USDA nutrition guidelines, and these vital programs represent two important ways Northern Illinois Food Bank works to make sure Jordan, Grace and many of the 200,000 children at risk of hunger in the Food Bank’s 13-county service area have access to the healthy food they need to grow, learn and thrive.

Public or non-profit groups that offer enrichment activities for kids in low-income areas may be eligible to participate in the Food Bank’s After-School and Summer Meal Programs. Contact Tracy Kelsey at 830-443-6910 ext. 107 or by e-mail at tkelsey@northernilfoodbank.org for more information.
Food Bank expands environmental stewardship

The Food Bank estimates it will divert 12.5 tons of nutrient-rich food scraps back into the environment each month, which is a mere two percent of the 576 tons of produce it distributes on average throughout its network each month. Another benefit is the lower cost of waste removal for compost-ready items compared to landfill waste. “The premise of food banking was built on finding new life for nutritious, quality food destined for a landfill due to blemishes, overruns and short shelf lives,” said Donna Lake, the Food Bank’s director of communications and philanthropy. “Now, Northern Illinois Food Bank will also be able to give new life to the scraps that are not fit for distribution to hungry neighbors by turning them into rich compost.”

The Food Bank already sorts packing materials such as plastic, cardboard, glass and metal for recycling, and it donates some food that becomes unfit for human consumption to a wildlife refuge. Additionally, the Food Bank’s West Suburban Center was the first new-construction food bank in the country to receive LEED Gold Certification for its sustainable and energy-saving features.

Helping hungry neighbors from the start

Northern Illinois Food Bank is blessed to have many long-time supporters, but it is hard to top Margaret Patterson’s track record of generosity. Every single month since November 1983, Margaret has mailed a donation to support our mission. Her first check went to 170 East Street in Carol Stream, which is where only six months earlier the Food Bank first began distributing to local food pantries under the name Bethlehem Center.

Every step of the way over the past 32 years as the Food Bank expanded, changed names and moved to new addresses, Margaret’s support never wavered. “To me, it’s almost not about charity but justice,” Margaret said. “I just can’t imagine a child trying to pay attention in class when his stomach is rumbling. I can’t imagine somebody having the energy to go out and look for a new job when they’re hungry. What the Food Bank provides is such a basic need that I couldn’t imagine not doing something.”

The daughter of a journalist and a teacher, Margaret called Wheaton home for most of her life. She followed her father into journalism and spent more than 34 years as a copy editor, eventually retiring after a long run at the Chicago Tribune.

Margaret, who now lives in Lisle, recalls that she was still cutting her teeth as a small weekly paper in Wheaton when she made her first donation to the Food Bank. While she can’t remember the exact circumstances around that first donation, she does remember having second thoughts. “The first time I donated, I felt a little uncomfortable because I was not making much,” Margaret said. “I didn’t start out giving that much, but I soon realized I didn’t miss the money. I see the end; food is something everybody has to have, and that’s the same motivation I have today.”

Margaret says that writing a monthly check to the Food Bank is now as routine as buttoning her shirt in the morning. Margaret’s willingness to give has helped provide hope and comfort for countless men, women and children facing hunger over the past three decades, and Northern Illinois Food Bank is incredibly grateful for her longstanding support. Margaret also gives regularly to several other charitable organizations, and her ethos is one that can ring true with anyone who has the means to make a financial donation. “Issues like hunger are so huge, and we tend to think, ‘Oh, there’s nothing I can do about it,’” Margaret said. “It’s true, there is nothing I can do about everything. But when a lot of people give a little bit, it ends up making a difference. I find that to be a more hopeful perspective.”

Sustainable Growth

Foodie

Learn more about all of these opportunities at www.SolveHungerToday.org/IndividualGiving

For every $1 donated, Northern Illinois Food Bank provides $8 of groceries to a neighbor in need.

Want to check out the new recycling area and get an up-close look at the rest of our operations? Join us for a tour of the Food Bank on the first Tuesday of every month. Register for a tour at www.SolveHungerToday.org/tour or contact Tr zeit Nichols at benschol@northernillinoisfoodbank.org for more information.

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Fifth graders tackle hunger

Helping hungry neighbors became a hands-on project for fifth graders at Rock Cut Elementary in Loves Park this spring. What began as a writing project about community organizations turned into multiple fundraisers for Northern Illinois Food Bank and a volunteer outing at the Food Bank’s Northwest Center in Rockford as students focused their attention on an issue that hits close to home.

“We have a lot of kids at our school who participate in Northern Illinois Food Bank’s Backpack Program and families who get food from local pantries,” said Jennifer Stella, a fifth grade teacher at Rock Cut. “So we thought it would be a great idea to come up with ways to help people in our community and school.”

For three weeks, students throughout the school took part in a penny drive in which classes competed to raise the most money. The fifth graders also received pledges from family members, neighbors and friends as part of a walk-a-thon that took place on the school’s property in early May.

When the final totals came in, the students raised $1,387. Considering every $1 donated to Northern Illinois Food Bank helps provide $8 of groceries for neighbors in need, the donation had an overall impact of more than $11,000.

“We did a whole study of hunger tying it in with social studies, and we kind of looked at hunger as a worldwide issue,” Jennifer said. “This brings it down to a smaller scale in our community. You tend to think a couple pennies here or there doesn’t make a difference, but I think the students now realize that just a little bit can make a huge difference in someone’s life.”

Rock Cut’s fifth graders presented their donation when they volunteered at the Food Bank on May 13. It was a morning filled with relabeling thousands of canned goods and also gaining an up-close perspective of how the Food Bank operates.

“That’s probably one of the best field trips we’ve had,” Jennifer said. “I love that the kids get to see where food from the Backpack Program and food pantry comes from.”

2015 Volunteer Appreciation Awards

Congratulations to the winners of our 2015 Volunteer Appreciation Awards! All of the winners were recognized at our Volunteer Appreciation Event in July.

This year’s winners are:

- **Don Bartholomay**
  - Volunteer Supervisor of the Year
- **Caryn Piper**
  - Volunteer of the Year: West Suburban Center
- **Betty Black**
  - Volunteer of the Year: North Suburban Center
- **Steve Tamborino**
  - Volunteer of the Year: Northwest Center
- **Slacker Packers**
  - Volunteer Group of the Year
- **ConAgra Foods**
  - Corporate Volunteer Group of the Year
- **Eugene Lim**
  - Youth Volunteer of the Year
- **The Joshua Tree Community**
  - Inspirational Volunteer of the Year

Visit: [www.SolveHungerToday.org/HAM](http://www.SolveHungerToday.org/HAM) for up-to-date Hunger Action Month information

#HungerAction

Help us raise awareness of the issue of hunger during Hunger Action Month.

**GO ORANGE**

- Wear orange on Sept. 3 for national Go Orange Day to help raise awareness of hunger.
- Encourage your co-workers, friends and family to wear orange, light up orange and decorate orange during Hunger Action Month.
- Display our orange Hunger Action Month poster in your community. Posters can be downloaded at [www.SolveHungerToday.org/HAM](http://www.SolveHungerToday.org/HAM).

**SHARE**

- Share your photos and stories with us on Go Orange Day and throughout Hunger Action Month by using this hashtag: #HungerAction. Be sure to tag Northern Illinois Food Bank on Facebook, Twitter #IllFoobank and Instagram.
- Start a conversation about hunger.
- Talk about hunger with your followers and friends on social media.

**TAKE ACTION**

- Open up a calendar with 30 ways to get involved during Hunger Action Month at [www.SolveHungerToday.org/HAM](http://www.SolveHungerToday.org/HAM).
- Pledge to take action during Hunger Action Month at [www.SolveHungerToday.org/HAM](http://www.SolveHungerToday.org/HAM). Allstate will donate $1 for every pledge.
- Start a food and fund drive at your office, church or school.
- Follow the Food Bank’s Hunger Action Month website and Facebook page for information about Hunger Action Month events coming to a community near you.

**VOLUNTEER**

- Sign up and invite a friend to volunteer at one of the Food Bank’s three centers in Geneva, Park City and Rockford.
- Contact your local food pantry and see how you can help.

Interested in bringing a group from your school to volunteer at the Food Bank? Contact Amy Hettinger at 815-443-6910 ext. 167 or ahettinger@northernilfoodbank.org to schedule your volunteer outing.

Hands-On Learning

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Our sincere thanks to everyone who attended our fourth annual A Taste That Matters presented by Jewel-Osco. The event was held in May at Drury Lane in Oakbrook Terrace and raised nearly $394,000, which equates to more than $3 million of food for our neighbors in need!

Celebrity wine makers Charles Bieler (left) and Roger Scommegna poured samples of their Three Thieves premium California wines at A Taste That Matters.

Jewel-Osco’s support helps make A Taste That Matters a huge success. A special thanks to Jewel-Osco President Mike Withers (left) and Food Bank President & CEO Julie Yurko.

We’re 2/3 of the way through Foodie 5K season after hugely successful races in Wheaton and Libertyville this spring! Thanks to everyone who participated.

Star treatment
It’s not every day a former NFL star visits one of our member agencies, but that’s what happened this spring when Ickey Woods helped make sandwiches for hungry neighbors at Shepherd’s Table soup kitchen in Joliet. The appearance was part of a special promotion through Sara Lee® Deli Brand and Jewel-Osco that resulted in the donation of 100,000 sandwiches to Northern Illinois Food Bank!

More than $60,000 were raised to help hungry neighbors through the Foodie 5K at Adler Park in Libertyville.

Don’t miss the unique experience of running/walking inside the apron of the Chicagoland Speedway track at our final Foodie 5K of the year!

- Saturday, Oct. 3 at Chicagoland Speedway in Joliet.
- Start/finish on PIT ROW!
- Post-event festival in WINNER’S CIRCLE includes entertainment, gourmet food trucks and activities for kids.
- Early-bird registration ends Sept. 11. Participants who register on or before Sept. 11 will receive a Foodie 5K shirt.
- Register at www.SolveHungerToday.org/Foodie5K.

Don’t delay … this event will SELL OUT!
AUGUST

Hunger Scramble presented by West Suburban Bank
August 25 (8:30 a.m. shotgun start)
Join Northern Illinois Food Bank for its 17th annual golf outing.
For details, contact Hanah Papp at 630-443-6910 ext. 159 or hpapp@northernilfoodbank.org.
Location: Cantigny Golf Club, Wheaton

SEPTEMBER

Go Orange Day
September 3
See article on page 9.

OCTOBER

Foodie 5K presented by Meijer
October 3
See race information on page 11.
Location: Chicagoland Speedway, Joliet

ONGOING

Join an Event Committee
Our special events department is seeking individuals to serve on planning committees for our six signature fundraising events. For more information, please contact Tiffany King at 630-443-6910 x136 or tking@northernilfoodbank.org.

Stars and Cars
presented by Fifth Third Bank

OCTOBER 8

Join honorary chair Brian McCaskey, Chicago Bears senior director of business development, for this third annual event to benefit Northern Illinois Food Bank. Meet local celebrities, enjoy tastings from top restaurants and view high-end cars at Steve Foley Motors of Northbrook – Cadillac, Rolls-Royce, Bentley. Don’t miss this fantastic evening of helping hungry neighbors. Corporate sponsorships are available. For tickets and more information, contact Monica Marr at mmarr@northernilfoodbank.org or 847-336-3663 ext. 748.
Location: Steve Foley Motors of Northbrook – Cadillac, Rolls-Royce, Bentley

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

“Like” us on Facebook to find out the latest happenings at the Food Bank.
Send comments/questions about articles in this issue to ejacobsen@northernilfoodbank.org