Walmart Foundation awards grants to 10 agencies
Equipping our agencies to build capacity

MORE Center Food Pantry provides relief to families facing uncertainty
Eliminating skipped meals for kids and parents in McHenry County
FROM THE PRESIDENT

Embarking on a promising new year

It’s a new school year in Northern Illinois, and thousands of our girls and boys are taking the next step toward a successful future. It’s an exciting time for kids and families in the communities we serve as the promise of new teachers, new friends and new learning opportunities define the back-to-school season. But for many kids living across Northern Illinois, the reality is that hunger finds its way onto this list too.

There are many reasons why this happens, but the bottom line, and what we believe, is that no child should ever go without nourishing food, and that’s why we work hard day in and day out to ensure we’re able to provide kids with the food they need to grow and succeed, both during the school day and beyond.

As you read this issue of The Full Plate, know that what you do matters—whether your support comes in the form of food, funds, or time—every item, every dollar, every hour, matters. You may be inspired to learn how donors like Walmart are helping our network agency partners grow their capacity to serve more hungry neighbors, or to know that your support makes afterschool feeding sites like YWCA Elgin’s School-Age Child Care (SACC) program possible—meaning moms and dads across Northern Illinois don’t have to live with the fear and worry that comes from being unable to afford groceries for their kids.

Though we are still finalizing Fiscal Year 2017 numbers, we do know that we would not have been able to achieve 65.5 million meals—more meals than ever before—without your continued generosity and support.

So as always, thank you from the bottom of my heart for choosing to support our precious families and for helping provide lasting solutions to hunger in our community. Every donation you make brings us one step closer to fulfilling every empty plate in Northern Illinois.

Warmly and with gratitude,

Julie

Julie Yurko, President and CEO

THE FULL PLATE

Hunger Action Month 2017

Gearing up to Go Orange

It’s hard to believe Hunger Action Month (HAM) is just a few weeks away, but be sure to save the date and join us for at least one key Hunger Action Month event this September and help us raise awareness of the issue of hunger—one that affects more than 600,000 neighbors across Northern Illinois.

Hosting Hunger Action Month event at your agency or organization?

Add it to our official HAM events calendar by contacting Teresa Schryver at tschryver@northernillinoisfoodbank.org or call (630) 443-6910 ext. 160.

Walmart Foundation

Building capacity to serve more neighbors

Gary Cheney, Director of the New Lenox Family Service Foundation, which oversees the Food Pantry, says the impact of their grant funding has been profound, especially since the equipment came at the perfect time—when the 400 square-foot pantry was undergoing a larger expansion project.

In addition to outgrowing their existing space and several residential-sized freezers, the Food Pantry was also seeing increased need in the community from new and existing clients, and growing need spurred by nearby neighborhood developments.

“We really needed more freezer space to accept more donations and meet the demand,” Cheney says. “But the community came together as it always does, and helped us raise funds, and then Walmart stepped up, which was so uplifting to everyone in the community.”

The new equipment arrived just in time for the completion of the Food Pantry’s new, 1,500 square-foot expansion in November, and was installed with the help of volunteers and local Boy Scouts—a true demonstration of “it takes a village.”

Kathie Johnson, Director of Family Services at New Lenox Township, echoes that the freezer and cooler have been a blessing—nothing they often sent food to their partners at the nearby Franklin Township Food Pantry when shelves were filled to capacity and unable to take more.

“It’s made such a huge difference in what we’re able to order from the Food Bank, including being able to provide more meat to our clients and do so much more with our Direct Connect partners,” she says. “You just can’t beat an improvement like that freezer.”

Cheney agrees. “All I can do is sing praises to Walmart for giving us the opportunity to serve the people who need us—I can’t thank them enough.”

Northern Illinois Food Bank is working toward solving hunger in Northern Illinois for our neighbors in need. 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

September 9 – Foodie 5K, Lewis University
September 14 – Go Orange Day
September 15 – Park City Pack-a-Thon
September 22 – Rockford Pack-a-Thon

For more information on how to get involved and take action against hunger, or to participate in an event, visit our website at www.SolveHungerToday.org.

2017 Walmart Foundation Grant Recipients

Abiding Love Food Pantry, Zion
Alpine Chapel Food Pantry, Elgin
Calvary Food Pantry, Algonquin
Community Christian Food Pantry, Waukegan
FISH of Carpentersville Food Pantry
Forest Park Community Center, Joliet
Marie Wilkonsen Food Pantry, Aurora
Neighborhood Food Pantry at Immmanuel Presbyterian Church, Waukegan
Rock River Valley Food Pantry, Rockford
Service First Army Food Pantry, DeKalb

IF YOUR ORGANIZATION OR FOUNDATION IS INTERESTED IN PROVIDING A GRANT OPPORTUNITY FOR NORTHERN ILLINOIS FOOD BANK, CONTACT HESTER BURY AT HBURY@NORTHERNILLFOODBANK.ORG OR 630-443-6910 EXT. 124.

www.SolveHungerToday.org
“[The kids] are always hungry when they get here... for some of them, the snack is all they get.”
- Milly Acevedo, lead teacher, Elgin YWCA School-Age Child Care (SACC) program

Helen and her partner, Mario, live together and raise their two children—Atalayah, age 3, and Mario Jr., who just turned 1 in January. They visit the MORE Center Food Pantry in Marengo twice a month to get food for their young family, as having unexpected medical bills have made it difficult for them to make ends meet.

Helen and Mario’s daughter Atalayah is the lead teacher at the YWCA Elgin’s School-Age Child Care (SACC) program. She’s held this position for most of her career, and on weekends is still a challenge for many parents to buy groceries all the time. She loves these kids like her own.

She shares that many of the girls and boys she works with can’t always count on an evening snack. The kids are excited to have a delicious meal before returning home each day. “The kids are always hungry when they get here...” she says. “For some of them, the snack is all they get.”

This school year, Milly knows she will once again see firsthand the huge impact you gifts make on the children she serves. Speaking on behalf of the parents, guardians and children who benefit from your kindness, Milly expresses her sincere and heartfelt gratitude to you. “It’s been helpful. Before, I would eat once a day so that my kids could eat. With this help, it’s been great.”

Helen shares that she and Mario moved their family to the area from Chicago in search of a better life—it’s quiet, the kids can play outside safely in the many parks, and she says their neighborhood has a much greater sense of community to it.

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It’s somewhat cliché but it’s true, the best thing (and when) did Tyson’s partnership with Northern Illinois Food Bank come about? Our partnership with the Food Bank has existed for several years. What started as a natural relationship between a company that makes food and its community food bank has evolved over time and become an integral part of our company culture, our values and our desire to raise the world’s expectations for how much good food can do.

Why is this important for companies like Tyson to support the Food Bank?

Food companies have a unique synergy with food banks. We both serve people that are hungry and we operate similar food supply chains. We’re both at the epicenter of human experience over food and we know how much a meal can matter. Therefore, we have a lot to give and to share with the Food Bank. Furthermore, food banks represent a consumer that is underserved by food companies.

The more we learn about the needs of the Food Bank, its agencies and clients, the more we can help alleviate food insecurity in our community.

What has been the best part about working with the Food Bank?

It’s somewhat cliché but it’s true, the best part about working with the Food Bank is the relationship with the people. In a time when folks rarely seem to work collectively for community good, it’s our relationship with our friends at the Food Bank that reminds us how much we can accomplish with mutual goals and a desire to create an impact with food that results in so many positive outcomes in our community.

To read the full interview with Matt Pakula, please visit The Full Plate Blog on our website.
Follow the Food Bus Tour

On May 6, we hosted 21 donors and volunteers on our second annual Follow the Food Bus Tour. Departing from our North Suburban Center in Park City, the bus made several stops in Lake County where attendees learned about Food Recovery, our mobile pantry program, and visited a food pantry and community garden. Watch out for our next Follow the Food Tour date and plan to join us!

The second stop of the day was Wildwood Presbyterian Church in Grayslake, which hosts a monthly pop-up mobile pantry distribution for 100+ area residents.

Follow the Food Bank’s help, Luke 3:11 Share Center installed 13 new community garden beds in April where hungry neighbors can grow and harvest their own produce.

Thank you to the nearly 1,000 guests who attended our 6th annual A Taste That Matters event, presented by Jewel-Osco, on May 18. Thanks to your generosity, this year’s event provided nearly $3.5 million worth of groceries for hungry neighbors across Northern Illinois!
Upcoming Activities

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

Stars and Cars

5th Annual Stars & Cars
Wednesday, October 11 – 6:00 p.m.
Steve Foley Bentley, Cadillac, Rolls-Royce of Northbrook

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.

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

Pizza & Progress Report Lunch with the CEO
August 29 – Northwest Center, Rockford
September 5 – North Suburban Center, Park City
September 7 – West Suburban Center, Geneva

Join President & CEO Julie Yurko for a pizza lunch as she gives an insider update on the Food Bank’s recently completed fiscal year and a preview into key strategies for the year ahead. RSVP at www.SolveHungerToday.org/pizzatour.

Foodie 5K Will County
Saturday, September 9 – 9 a.m.
Lewis University, Romeoville

Join us at our 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.

OCTOBER

Estate Planning Seminar
Thursday, October 26, 2017
Location TBD

Stay tuned for information on our annual estate planning seminar at www.SolveHungerToday.org/estate.

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn to find out the latest happenings at the Food Bank
Send comments/questions about articles in this issue to communications@northernilfoodbank.org