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Dear Friends,

2018 marks an important milestone in our history—35 years of solving hunger together in Northern Illinois! This celebration couldn’t come at a better time—we’ve wrapped another fiscal year, during which $8 million (thrifted to share) was distributed to nearly 66 million meals to precious families across our 13-county service area.

In 1983 the Food Bank was a dream for our founder Sister Rosemarie Burian. She saw a need in her community of Wheaton, and knew that there was enough food to feed everyone. With that knowledge and a vision to do what mattered, she set out on a mission to help feed her neighbors. The inspiration for Northern Illinois Food Bank—originally named Bethlehem Center Food Depository—was born. Every day, we work to honor the mission Sister Rosemarie set forth and shared with everyone she came across.

We’ve grown from a simple 6,400 square-foot warehouse to four distribution centers, including our headquarters in Geneva, a 150,000 square-foot facility. In our first year, 64,000 pounds of food were distributed to our neighbors. This year, we provided 79,200,000 pounds of food. But what’s most important is every pound of food since day one...every meal...every full belly. Like Sister Rosemarie and our very first supporters, we believe no one should be hungry.

We have come a long way in our work to solve hunger across Northern Illinois. It has taken commitment, perseverance, passion, and a bit of good luck. But, no matter how many years have passed since our humble beginnings, one thing remains constant—how vital your support is to us and to the communities we serve.

We work to ensure no one in Northern Illinois is hungry.

Warmly,

Julia Yurko
President and CEO

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: Provide More Meals Ignite the Community Build Healthy Communities Strengthen Leadership Be Trusted Financial Stewards

DURING A MORNING MEDITATION one day in May 1982, the idea to do something that mattered came to Sister Rosemarie Burian in a flash:

“I would have a Food Bank. I had no background, but I was going to do it,” she recalled. “If I want to apply for the job now, I wouldn’t have hired myself—I wasn’t qualified for this.”

After opening a Food Pantry at St. Mark’s Church in Wheaton, Sister Rosemarie recognized the continued need to serve people and provide community assistance. But because she lacked knowledge on how best to address it, she began networking with local leaders and educating people about hunger and her vision to rescue and redistribute food.

“There was a tremendous lack of awareness about why food pantries were needed,” Sister explained. “There was also an attitude toward people in need, and a perception that ‘that kind of stuff’ doesn’t exist here [in DuPage County].”

She also noted that in seeing food pantries sourcing food and sometimes driving to the city to get food, she knew there was another way—through food rescue. A meeting with Bernie Klinea, then Executive Director of Hope Fair Housing Center in Wheaton, cemented the idea of a food bank as another way—through food rescue. She went on to have a three-day meeting with businesspeople. I have a passion for helping people understand what they are doing here [on earth],” she said. “You’ve got the house. You’ve got the car. But what are you doing with your life? How are you going to make it count?”

Northwestern University

The power of one

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.

Northern Illinois Food Bank

You can make a lasting difference

To learn more about how to leave a legacy, contact one of our development officers:
gramarosso@northernilfoodbank.org or (630) 443-6910 ext.130.

When a dream becomes a reality: 35 years of solving hunger

Meeting Sister Rosemarie Burian

Sister is a testament to the will of one person. To step out in courage, just like our neighbors do. She not only provided food, but also provided inspiration for people.

Julie Yurko, President & CEO, Northern Illinois Food Bank

“...a flash: The name Bethlehem, meaning “House of Bread” was chosen as the Center’s first name. In August 1982, Sister gathered a community of supporters (who became the first Board of Directors) at a weekly meeting about the new Center, which resided inside a board member’s accounting firm in Glen Ellyn from November 1982 until the first warehouse opened at 170 Easy Street in Carol Stream in March 1983. The Center also became an affiliate of Greater Chicagoland Food Depository in order to share donated food and serve the suburbs. During a dinner with a couple close friends, Sister received the Center’s first donation—$100—which they’d raised through a garage sale. When soliciting additional donations and asked if she’d raised money yet, she proudly shared, “oh yes, I have $100 right here.” The Center’s first employee, Mary Hayes, started that year as well. A longtime resident of Glen Ellyn, Mary often picked up food and delivered it to those in need. In the summer months, she could be found delivering meals to 50 children a week in her white Nissan. Later, in 1994, Mary led the effort to join Feeding America and become part of the national network to solve hunger. She went on to have a more than 25-year career at the Food Bank. She passed away in January 2018 at the age of 78, having left a lasting legacy at the Food Bank, just shy of one year after Sister’s call to do what mattered, the Center held its first distribution on April 28, 1983, when Family Shelter in Glen Ellyn picked up 288 pounds of food.

“...a flash: “It was like bells were ringing...marvelous!” recalled Sister. “We had music playing and a big welcome when agencies came.” In its first month, the Center distributed 7,000 pounds of food to seven agencies in DuPage County, and grew to distribute 64,000 pounds of food to more than 40 agencies across 10 counties by the end of its first year.

The Food Bank is one of the top food banks in the Feeding America network, distributing nearly 66 million meals in fiscal year 2018 through more than 800 food pantries and feeding sites, serving more than half a million people annually.

When asked to reflect on the Food Bank’s growth since its founding, Sister Rosemarie gets a bit uncomfortable being called “successful,” instead calling herself “gifted.” I was not a businesswoman, but there I was meeting with businesspeople. I have a passion for helping people understand what they are doing here [on earth],” she said. “You’ve got the house. You’ve got the car. But what are you doing with your life? How are you going to make it count?”
35 YEARS OF SOLVING HUNGER

From our humble beginnings on Easy Street distributing 64,000 pounds our first year to having four Centers distributing more than 75 million pounds of food annually. Join us as we take a look down memory lane at some of the key events that got us to where we are today.

1980s
- The idea to have a Food Bank comes to Sister Rosemarie during a morning meditation.
- Sister Rosemarie calls the first meeting of the “Community” which became the first Board of Directors.
- Sister Rosemarie Burian signs a lease at 170 Easy Street in Carol Stream.
- BCFB becomes a certified affiliate of America’s Second Harvest (now Feeding America).

1990s
- Mobile Pantry Program initiated to provide direct service to low-income areas.
- Bethlehem Center Food Depository changes name to Bethlehem Center Food Bank (BCFB).
- Bethlehem Center Food Bank moves to 147,000 square-foot warehouse facility in St. Charles at 600 Industrial Drive.

2000s
- First Holiday Meal Box Program distributes 3,500 meals to families in need.
- Bethlehem Center Food Bank changes name to Northern Illinois Food Bank (NIFB).
- Lake County branch of the Food Bank opens in Park City in October with 6,000 square feet of space at 473 Keller Drive. Center later moves to 465 Keller Drive in 2010 (pictured).

2010s
- The Food Bank introduces updated logo, mission and vision.
- BCFB moves into new headquarters in Geneva at 273 Dearborn Court.
- Northern Illinois Food Bank moves from Loves Park back to Rockford Center at 765 Research Parkway.

2015-18
- The Food Bank opens its fourth center in May, located at 377 S. Larson Avenue, to better serve its southernmost counties.

Our centers over the years:
- Sister Rosemarie
- Bethlehem Center Food Bank
- Food Rescue Program
- Hunger Connection Food Bank in Rockford becomes a center of Northern Illinois Food Bank with 33,000 square feet of space at 300 S. Austin Street.
- Bethlehem Center Food Bank (BCFB) moves to 147,000 square-foot warehouse facility in St. Charles at 600 Industrial Drive.
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- Bethlehem Center Food Bank (BCFB) moves to 147,000 square-foot warehouse facility in St. Charles at 600 Industrial Drive.
- Bethlehem Center Food Bank opens in Park City in October with 6,000 square feet of space at 473 Keller Drive. Center later moves to 465 Keller Drive in 2010 (pictured).
- The Milk2MyPlate Program launches with six pantries, distributing 1,300 gallons of fresh milk per month.
- The Food Bank moves into new headquarters in Geneva at 273 Dearborn Court.
- Northern Illinois Food Bank moves from Loves Park back to Rockford Center at 765 Research Parkway.

www.SolveHungerToday.org
The founding four: From then to now

For the anniversary issue of The Full Plate, we sat down with our first four member agencies to learn more about how being a part of the Food Bank network has helped their organizations over the past 35 years.

Salvation Army Aurora

Salvation Army has been a vital part of Aurora’s east side community for more than 80 years, and is the Food Bank’s oldest agency. Even today, Salvation Army depends on its partnership with the Food Bank to meet the need of its residents.

They order about 90 percent of their food from the Food Bank, and looks forward to moving into a new, larger building on the Westside in the near future to increase its food storage capacity.

“When I think about this agency and our partnership with the Food Bank, it’s very clear we couldn’t do what we do without all of you.” – Stan Cook, Executive Director, HCS Family Services

Elmhurst-Yorkfield Food Pantry (formerly Yorkfield Presbyterian Church)

Kathie Watts, Operations Manager at Elmhurst-Yorkfield Food Pantry, echoes the sentiments of Salvation Army, noting that families they serve also face transportation or health issues that make coming to the pantry difficult. Thus, making the Backpack Program and Senior Box programs “a lifesaver.”

She also highlights the Direct Connect and MyPlate programs as central to their ability to provide families healthy food options and a client-choice model that allows them to select foods their families prefer.

“The wide variety of fresh food items we are able to rescue is a true bonus. Produce and meats are an expensive part of any family’s budget, so we’re thrilled to offer our families healthy food options.” – Kathie Watts, Elmhurst-Yorkfield Food Pantry

People’s Resource Center (Wheaton)

PRC grew from a group of neighbors handing out bags of groceries to 150 people through a basement window in Wheaton, to two large pantry locations and a school-based pantry that serve nearly 30,000 DuPage County residents annually, according to Executive Director Jeni Fabian.

“That growth has been amazing, and the Food Bank has been an incredibly valuable partner to us along that journey. The focus on fresh and nutritious food has also been especially impactful for us,” she recently shared with us.

“The Food Bank thinks about access to food and collaboration in new and different ways as we seek to address local needs. They’re an amazing resource and connection between organizations concerned about nutrition and hunger.” – Jeni Fabian, Executive Director, PRC

HCS Family Services (Hinsdale)

Stan Cook, Executive Director of HCS says being part of the Food Bank’s network has been a great resource on all fronts—in operations, programs and networking with other local agencies. About 90 percent of the agency’s food comes from the Food Bank—with the majority coming through the Direct Connect program.

“The Food Bank has been helpful in maintaining our Direct Connect partner relationships and exploring new ones,” he says. “They were a strong partner in opening a school-based pantry in 2016, and in launching Foodbank Manager earlier this year. [That program] has been tremendously beneficial to us, our clients and volunteers,” he says.

“When I think about this agency and our partnership with the Food Bank, it’s very clear we couldn’t do what we do without all of you.” – Stan Cook, Executive Director, HCS Family Services

On May 17, we once again welcomed nearly 1,000 guests to Drury Lane in Oak Brook for our 7th annual A Taste That Matters event, presented by Jewel-Osco. This year’s event raised nearly $3.5 million in groceries for hungry neighbors thanks to your generosity!
Upcoming Activities
See our complete calendar of events at www.SolveHungerToday.org/events

Stars and Cars
Stars & Cars
Wednesday, October 10 – 6:00 p.m.
Northbrook
Join us at Steve Foley Bentley, Cadillac, Rolls-Royce of Northbrook for our 6th annual Stars and Cars event. Mingling with Honorary Chairs Brian McCaskey and Steve Foley and other local celebrities amongst luxury vehicles while supporting the Food Bank’s feeding programs. Visit www.solvehunertoday.org/stars or call Kate Thomas at (630) 443-6910 ext. 117 for more information, to get involved or to purchase tickets.

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR 2018 EVENTS!

SEPTEMBER
Hunger Action Month Pack-A-Thons
Friday, Sept. 21 – South Suburban Center, Joliet
Friday, Sept. 28 – Northwest Center, Rockford
Celebrate Hunger Action Month and join our Pack-A-Thons to help us reach our goal of packing 50,000 pounds of food for our neighbors in need! These two-hour shifts of sorting, labeling and repacking food are the perfect activity for individuals, groups and families of all sizes and ages (8+). To learn more or register, visit www.solvehunertoday.org/HAM or contact our volunteer team at (630) 443-6910.

NOVEMBER
An Evening of Financial Wellness
Thursday, November 1 – 6 p.m.
South Suburban Center, Joliet
Join us as Ted Kuczek, estate planning attorney with Kuczek & Associates helps attendees explore the difference between wills and trusts as part of thinking more broadly about financial wellness. To learn more or register, visit www.solvehunertoday.org/financial or call Julia Jones ext. 166.

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