In This Issue

New decade, new hope
Celebrating our growth; looking forward to the decade ahead

Protein Packing Room a fresh opportunity
Volunteers pack much-needed food items
Dear friends,

2020 marks the start of a new decade, and in looking forward to what the next decade will bring, it’s also a natural time to look back, reflect, and celebrate how far we’ve come in the past 10 years. From building the West Suburban Center in Geneva to opening the new South Suburban Center in Joliet and piloting countless programs to better serve our neighbors – Northern Illinois Food Bank’s growth is clear. We provided 22.7 million meals in FY09, and in FY19 we surpassed 69 million meals – an incredible 204% growth in meals distributed to our neighbors over the course of the decade. Our network has also grown tremendously, from 520 community food pantries and partners to more than 900 today – each working to serve the community and ensure that every neighbor has every meal, every day. As we look ahead to the next 10 years, we know the Food Bank will continue to evolve and grow, and we’re counting on your continued partnership because we know that we cannot do it alone. We’ll continue providing nutritious meals to our 7,000-square-mile, 13-county service area, and we’ll work to ensure our neighbors have the resources and tools they need to not only survive, but to thrive.

In this issue, we’ll take a closer look at just how far we’ve come, and we’ll also meet Cherelle, a mom of three girls who has relied on our network to make ends meet. I hope you’ll feel inspired to get involved this year; whether it is volunteering in the warehouse (perhaps in our new Protein Packing Room in Geneva), or joining us at one of our special events, we hope to see you!

As we look forward to the next 10 years, we know the Food Bank will continue to evolve and grow, and we’re counting on your continued partnership because we know that we cannot do it alone. We’ll continue providing nutritious meals to our 7,000-square-mile, 13-county service area, and we’ll work to ensure our neighbors have the resources and tools they need to not only survive, but to thrive.

Thank you for joining us on this journey and for caring about our community and each individual neighbor. We are excited about what the next 10 years hold, and we know that with your support we can do even more.

Gratefully,

Julie 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

Financial support (% resources that go toward programs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEN (FY09)</th>
<th>NOW (FY19)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96%</td>
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Neighbors served annually

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEN (FY09)</th>
<th>NOW (FY19)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>500K</td>
<td>500K</td>
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Total meals distributed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEN (FY09)</th>
<th>NOW (FY19)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22.7M</td>
<td>69.1M</td>
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Member agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEN (FY09)</th>
<th>NOW (FY19)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>500+</td>
<td>900+</td>
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Volunteer hours donated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEN (FY09)</th>
<th>NOW (FY19)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60.5K</td>
<td>136K</td>
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BackPack Program sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEN (FY09)</th>
<th>NOW (FY19)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Seniors served through monthly Food Box Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEN (FY09)</th>
<th>NOW (FY19)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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Food recovery (in pounds)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEN (FY09)</th>
<th>NOW (FY19)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.6M</td>
<td>37M</td>
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Food recovery partners/retailers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEN (FY09)</th>
<th>NOW (FY19)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80+</td>
<td>350+</td>
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Mobile Pantry stops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEN (FY09)</th>
<th>NOW (FY19)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>184</td>
<td>451</td>
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</table>
Pantry is a blessing for families in need

In September 2018, H.E.A.L. (Healthy Eating and Living) Riverwalk Food Pantry opened on the bottom floor of an apartment building at Riverwalk Homes, a housing complex along the Des Plaines River in Joliet. Open to all Will County residents, this client-choice pantry aims to help neighbors in need lead healthy lifestyles that are not defined by the challenges they face.

Many neighbors live nearby in the Riverwalk Homes apartment building. One such neighbor is Cherelle, who first heard about the pantry from the housing office. Since then, she and her three young daughters have become regular visitors, stopping by each week to shop. “When you hit tough times, you have this to help you out,” she says.

While Cherelle pushes her shopping cart through the pantry, picking up staples like cereal for breakfast, her girls turn the outing into an adventure, full of smiles from the volunteers.

“That kids like the food,” Cherelle shares with a smile. “The veggies are my favorite, but I like [everyday] – it's all really good food.” That good food, combined with the love she feels from the volunteers, makes each shopping trip a positive experience, she says. “It's really great – a blessing to those that don’t have a lot, [and] to the residents,” she says. “Thank you!”

With help from donors, volunteers, and community partners, H.E.A.L. Riverwalk Food Pantry and other Food Bank member agencies are making a difference for neighbors like Cherelle every day. Thank you for what you do to help us solve hunger.

Get Involved: Help us pack protein for neighbors in need!

Last year, the Food Bank underwent an extensive process to convert our dry bulk repack room into a protein packing room (PPR). In mid-July, we became the fifth food bank in the Feeding America network to launch such an initiative. We took on this project for several reasons:

• In our manufacturing-rich area, we have many companies that can donate bulk protein – a frequently-requested yet challenging-to-secure item. Thanks to this room, we can receive these products (dried meat, frozen chicken, ham, etc.) and repackagge them into individual and family-friendly portions that are easier to distribute.

• Not only does this better meet the needs of our neighbors, but we’re also better able to support the larger Feeding America network by becoming a regional protein packing center. This means we can share resources with other food banks that don’t have this type of room, product, or level of access to the food manufacturing industry locally.

However, this new initiative will only be a success with YOUR help! We are excited to offer this unique volunteer opportunity, but need your help to fill PPR shifts.

Volunteering in the PPR comes with extra, required safety measures, including:

• The room is kept at approximately 55 degrees at all times to adhere to food safety standards.

• Shifts are 2–3.5 hours long. Volunteer tasks may include making boxes, weighing or counting product, labeling packages, sealing product into bags, and packing finished products into boxes.

• Volunteers are provided with knee-length cotton coats, gloves, hairnets, and shoe covers.

• We recommend volunteers dress in layers (such as a sweatshirt or light jacket, plus closed-toe shoes).

The ideal group size for Protein Packing Room is 20 volunteers. Shifts are currently available Monday–Thursday mornings, and Tuesday–Thursday afternoons.

We have an urgent need to fill all Protein Packing Room shifts – and YOU can help! Call or email the Volunteer Team today to sign up at 630-443-6910 or volunteer@northernilfoodbank.org.
2020 Events

Upcoming Food Bank Events

A Taste That Matters
Thursday, May 14, 6:00-10:00pm
Drury Lane, Oakbrook Terrace
The Food Bank’s premiere event returns to Drury Lane for a 9th year! Join us for an evening of entertainment, food tastings, and an extensive silent auction. To purchase tickets or learn more, visit www.SolveHungerToday.org/ATasteThatMatters, or contact Chris Fisher at cfisher@northernilfoodbank.org, or at (630) 443-6910 ext. 221.

22nd Annual Hunger Scramble presented by West Suburban Bank
Tuesday, August 25
Cantigny Golf Club, Wheaton
A fun, scramble-style outing, including on-course tastings, giveaways, and scenic views, immediately followed by the 19th hole reception featuring food, open bar, a silent auction, and raffle prizes. This event will sell-out! For more information about tickets or sponsorship opportunities, or to donate a silent auction or raffle item, contact Chris Fisher at 630-443-6910 ext. 221.

Our Wheaton Foodie 5K has gone virtual due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Visit SolveHungerToday.org/Foodie5K for more details!

AROUND THE FOOD BANK
The final months of 2019 were full of festivities that benefited our neighbors in need! Highlights include football stars and vintage cars at the 7th Annual Stars and Cars, hosted by Brian McCaskey and the Chicago Bears Foundation at the DoubleTree Hotel in Libertyville (top half); a musical night in Gurnee with the Canadian Pacific Holiday Train (bottom left); and a special day of volunteering with Food Bank donors, friends, and family members at the West Suburban Center in Geneva (bottom right). Thank you to everyone who helped make days and spirits bright at the end of the year!
Volunteer today!

Food Sort & Pack Shifts

Much of the donated food Northern Illinois Food Bank processes must be inspected, sorted, and packaged before it’s distributed to our neighbors in need. But we can’t do it without YOU, so gather your friends and coworkers and schedule a shift today!

Food Sort & Pack volunteer shifts by center:
- West Suburban Center (Geneva) – M–Th (AM & PM); Sat AM
- South Suburban Center (Joliet) – Tu, Fri & Sat AM; Wed PM
- North Suburban Center (Park City) – Tu & Sat AM; Wed–Th PM
- Northwest Center (Rockford) – Wed (AM & PM)

Visit SolveHungerToday.org/Volunteer to sign up for any of the opportunities listed on this page. Groups of 25+ must register by contacting the Volunteer Team at volunteer@northernilfoodbank.org or at 630-443-6910.

Other Volunteer Opportunities

Direct Service (Grocery Distribution)
- **My Pantry Express** – currently available in DeKalb, Lake, and Winnebago Counties only
  Volunteers help ensure a welcoming experience for our neighbors while they pick up their groceries from a partner location in the community.
- **Winnebago Community Market (WCM)**
  Volunteers at WCM in Rockford ensure a welcoming, positive experience for our neighbors by keeping the Market’s shelves stocked and assisting shoppers with their groceries.
- **Mobile Pantries** – locations vary
  Volunteers help ensure a welcoming, positive experience for our neighbors, and assist in distributing meat, produce, and non-perishable foods from our traveling food pantry truck.
  * denotes opportunities that take place outdoors