

THE FULL PLATE



How your friendship changes lives

When life challenges us, nothing matters more than having friends we can rely on. This is true during larger crises like COVID-19...and it's true when the crisis is deeply personal, like Barbara's.

As Barbara planned for her retirement, she never imagined she'd have three senior roommates. But with the high cost of living, pooling resources seemed like the answer.

Barbara's story continues on page 2.

“The food from the food pantry makes a big difference.”

—BARBARA

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**A message
from our
President
and CEO
Julie Yurko**

If I had to choose one word to sum up our experience with COVID-19, it would be “more.”

More uncertainty and more need—absolutely.

But also: *more* compassion, *more* energy, and *more* determination.

Early on in the pandemic, we faced a new hurdle every week. Panic-buying emptied grocery store shelves, leaving our community partners with about 75% less food to donate. Then, when shelter-in-place orders were issued and restaurants and businesses closed, there was a sudden surplus of produce that needed to be distributed as quickly as possible.

Friends like you made our nimble response possible every time! You also helped us innovate, as we created safe ways to get food to the rising number of neighbors who needed it. Our drive-through food distributions—including mobiles and Pop-Up Markets—have served as many as 5,000 families a week. We continue deliveries each day to our courageous network of agencies and feeding programs.

Looking ahead, we know the impact of this crisis will be felt for a long time. Unemployment rates have been staggering, and the return to work is still uncertain for many of our neighbors.

With your continued support, Northern Illinois Food Bank will be here for the duration—and beyond. For *more* struggling families, *more* homebound seniors, *more* hungry kids, and countless *more* neighbors in need.

What a privilege it is to work on the front lines with you!

Gratefully,

Julie Yurko, President and CEO

Continued from cover



Hunger prevented, thanks to friends like you

“We cut back on everything, we drive less,” Barbara explains. “But at the end of the month, there’s still not enough money for food.”

You can imagine how upsetting this must be for Barbara. Seniors like her have worked hard all their lives. Their golden years were supposed to be a reprieve.

Fortunately, they can rely on friends like you to help ease their hunger and worry.

Healthy food, thoughtful care

“The food pantry helps us when we come up short at the end of the month,” Barbara says with a smile of relief. Just as important, the food you help provide includes many healthy options to support the three seniors in her home who live with diabetes.

“This food makes a big difference,” says Barbara. “It also means we don’t have to choose between food and other necessities.”

“The food pantry helps us when we come up short at the end of the month.” –BARBARA

When members of a household need to be able to afford medicine, eliminating these impossible choices is critical! Fortunately, that’s something you and Northern Illinois Food Bank do best.

Thank you for your generous support. You’re helping neighbors like Barbara weather both personal crises and those that impact our entire community.

To help solve hunger in our community, please visit SolveHungerToday.org today.

You're a part of Ernie's Food Bank family

Ernie's world was upended 10 years ago when he suffered a sudden heart attack. His career in transportation came to an abrupt end, and the road ahead would be full of medications and visits to his primary care doctor and a heart specialist.

It wasn't long before Ernie and his wife were swamped with medical bills.

Fortunately, they have caring friends like you, who help make sure our neighbors in need are always able to put healthy food on the table.

At the Luke 3:11 Share Center, our member agency in Lake Villa, Ernie can pick up fresh produce, meat, and canned goods—everything he and his wife need to make complete, nutritious meals. Ernie appreciates the extra time and care the staff put into helping him, too. When he comes through the drive-through distribution, they ask how he's doing and securely stow his groceries in his trunk for him.

"It's not just a food pantry here," Ernie says. "It's family. That's important to me. They always make me feel welcome."



"It's like family here. They always make me feel welcome." —ERNIE

Your compassion is at the heart of every warm welcome we give. Thank you for caring so much about neighbors like Ernie! To help even more neighbors facing hunger, please visit SolveHungerToday.org

Member Spotlight

Providing vital support for our essential workers



Brown Bear Daycare & Learning Center, located in McHenry County, is a Food Bank member agency with a special role to play during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Typically licensed to care for 306 children, Brown Bear's capacity was reduced to 110 when Illinois' original shelter-in-place order took effect in March—and all 110 are children of essential workers.

Director Sheila Henson says Brown Bear serves meals to children Monday through Friday, and also offers an on-site food pantry that is open not only to the families of enrolled children, but to the outside community as well.

"Right now, we're doing the pantry once a week, when previously we would do it once a month," Sheila says. "But now more people are in need, and we're trying to serve that need. The city of Harvard, other pantries and childcare providers, the police station, churches—we're all working together to get people what they need for their families."

You're a key member of the team that's ensuring kids and families have enough to eat right now. On behalf of essential workers in our community, thank you!

"We're all working together to get people what they need."

—SHEILA HENSON

Help keep our pandemic response going strong

A few months back, one of our neighbors came to pick up a box of food at our pop-up market in Geneva. Then she got right back in line a second time. “I came back because when I saw what you were giving out, I thought of five homebound seniors in my neighborhood who need food like this!” she explained.

Just like your gifts, the selfless actions of this neighbor perfectly demonstrate the spirit of our community: We take every opportunity to take care of one another.

Our member agencies are seeing up to double and triple the number of neighbors in need since the pandemic began. Some are neighbors who were already struggling to make ends meet. Many others have never needed help before in their lives. They are moms, dads, children, and grandparents. They are the people who make Northern Illinois a wonderful, vibrant place to call home.

Please give a generous gift to Northern Illinois Food Bank today. We are committed to providing the food our neighbors so urgently need, but we can't do it without your help. Because we are good stewards of the funds you entrust to us, every \$1 you give helps provide \$8 worth of groceries. Thank you again for taking care of one another!



Your gifts help provide emergency food for out-of-work parents and their hungry kids. Please give again today!

It's Hunger Action Month

Every September, Feeding America and food banks across the country join together to go orange, take action, and raise awareness about hunger in our communities. Our goal? To solve hunger, and make sure every neighbor has access to the food they need to stay healthy. But we can't accomplish this goal alone—we need you! This month, wear orange (the color of hunger awareness) and get involved.

Please visit our website at SolveHungerToday.org/HAM for upcoming events and activities. Together, we can solve hunger!



Thank you to everyone who participated to provide meals!

Foodie 5K x 2 = Success!

Our Foodie 5K races went virtual this year! We weren't together in person, but we were definitely together in spirit: Over 1,000 participants joined us from all over Northern Illinois on April 18 and June 6 to walk, jog, run, and help provide meals to neighbors in need. We're blown away by the results! In total, our Foodie 5k

participants raised \$237,000—enough to provide \$1.9M worth of groceries to help make sure everyone in our community has access to the food they need. Thank you to each and every person who joined us this year, to our presenting sponsor Kellogg's, and to everyone who helped make Foodie 5K 2020 a success.



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