

# THE FULL PLATE



**“Thank you for supporting the Food Bank. Your donations matter.” —ANGEL**

Your kindness was a ray of hope for Angel in hard times.

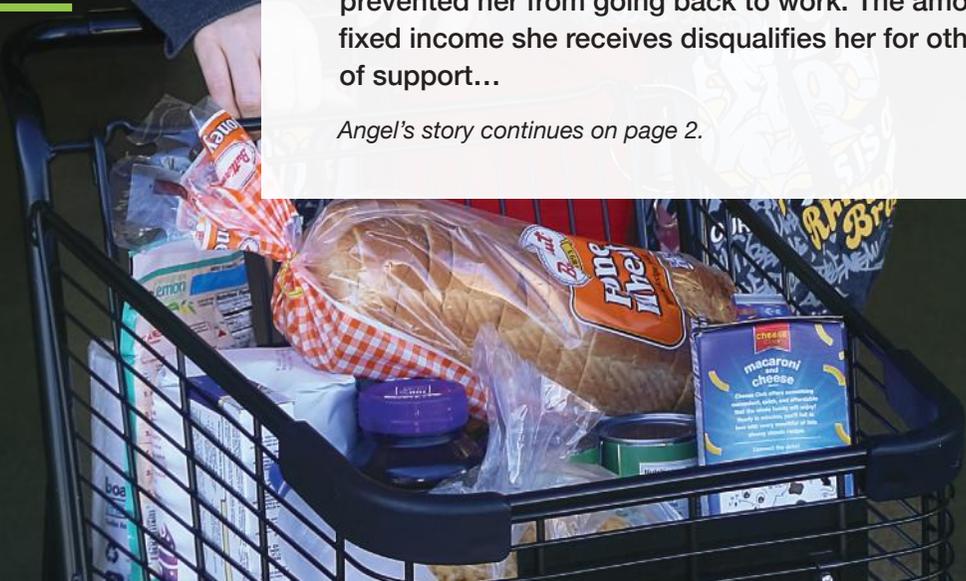
## How you solved hunger for Angel and her kids

Some days, Angel only has one meal. She saves most of her food for her teenage son and toddler daughter.

“I can stay hungry all day, but the kids can’t,” she explains.

Angel suffered a series of setbacks years ago. She lost her job during the Great Recession, and health issues have prevented her from going back to work. The amount of fixed income she receives disqualifies her for other types of support...

*Angel’s story continues on page 2.*



### IN THIS ISSUE



**A message from our President and CEO**

**2**



**Thank you for helping me feed my family!**

**3**



**Give comfort and joy**

**4**



## A message from our President and CEO Julie Yurko

Dear Friend,

Food is at the heart of so many holiday traditions. It's a huge part of the sense of well-being—of hope and possibility—that we feel during this season. And after a turbulent eight months, thousands of our neighbors will need the hope that comes from a holiday meal.

We're committed to serving everyone who turns to us for help. What's more, I'm confident we'll be able to meet the increased need, thanks to the unwavering generosity of friends like you.

Putting your gifts to work for our community has been a joy and a privilege. For example, your support is helping the Food Bank organize as many as 24 Pop-Up Markets every month. These drive-through distributions enable neighbors experiencing food insecurity—from Zion to Rockford to Joliet—to safely pick up prepacked boxes of nutritious food.

At one of these Pop-Up Markets, I met a young mom and her three kids. I was chatting with the little ones when I noticed how distracted mom looked. It turns out things were really tough at home, and this was the first time her family had ever faced hunger.

I thought she was so brave to ask for help and reassured her, "We're so glad you're here!"

I look forward to welcoming many more of our neighbors in need this holiday season and, with your help, giving them food for a special meal...and hope for a better tomorrow.

Happy holidays to you and yours,

Julie Yurko, President and CEO

Continued from cover



## The solution began with YOU

but it's not enough to feed her family, either.

Like many of our neighbors these days, Angel faces hurdles everywhere she turns.

### A ray of hope

When Angel learned about the food pantry at Two Rivers Head Start, she knew she had found a lifeline. A Northern Illinois Food Bank member agency, Angel's local pantry is stocked with healthy groceries thanks to the support of friends like you.

"I like coming here with my daughter to pick up vegetables, chicken noodle soup and dairy items," Angel says.

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**"I can stay hungry all day, but the kids can't."** —ANGEL

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Every time you give, you help more moms like Angel. You make sure parents don't have to sacrifice their own health to put food on their children's plates. You reassure neighbors who feel overwhelmed by troubles that they're not going through life alone.

"Thank you for supporting the Food Bank," Angel says gratefully. "Your donations matter."

This holiday season, we're expecting to serve more neighbors than ever. Families like Angel's, that were already struggling when the pandemic hit, and families that have never faced hunger before.

**Please use the enclosed form to help provide the food they urgently need! Or give online at [SolveHungerToday.org](https://SolveHungerToday.org).**

# Thank you for helping me feed my family!

Hi! I'm Amanda, and I want to tell about you how you're helping me and my family.

I live with two kinds of epilepsy, so I'm out of work completely. And my 11-year-old daughter has a severe autoimmune disease. Most of our daily routine is focused on protecting her health.

Before the pandemic, my older kids and I volunteered at the Winnebago Community Market as "stock and shoppers," which means we had first choice of some items—like fresh vegetables—on the days we volunteered. The food was really helpful because we come up short most months.

COVID-19 has changed our lives. My husband is the only one who

leaves the house every day. On Saturdays, I'll set up a stand in the front yard and sell homemade masks to bring in a little extra money.

Through all this, our food pantry has been great. They know we have to stay in to keep my daughter safe, so they bring a box of food right to our front porch every week!

We all have to look out for our neighbors right now, and I'm just so grateful that's what the food pantry is doing, too. We can't wait to get back to volunteering—

the kids really like helping elderly folks push their shopping carts.

**Thank you for looking out for neighbors like Amanda. Please give again to help keep their plates full for the holidays!**

**"We all have to watch out for our neighbors right now."**

—AMANDA



## Member Spotlight

# Pantry responds nimbly—thanks to friends like you

Juanita Martinez is the Director of General Assistance at the Wayne Township Food Pantry, a member agency that recently underwent a major expansion.

"Our new building is bigger than we ever dreamed," Juanita says. "There's tons of shelving and refrigerated space, which lets us offer more fresh produce."

One unique thing about the 4,000-square-foot space is that it's endlessly flexible. All of the shelving sits on wheels, so areas can be cleared for other events. In fact, Juanita says, they had just started offering yoga classes for pantry guests—when the pandemic began.

"It's been exciting and frightening. We quickly learned that we always have to be prepared to modify what we're doing so that we can help as much as we want to."



**"We're here to offer families relief and peace of mind."**

—JUANITA MARTINEZ

Juanita and her team want to help **a lot**. Here's how they're providing more help:

- Switching to a drive-through model, they now distribute food weekly instead of twice a month.
- Removing service boundaries, they now help neighbors who are facing food insecurity from as far away as Northbrook.
- Doubling their impact, they now serve 240 households.

"We're here to offer families the relief and peace of mind that their kids will be taken care of," Juanita says. She also brings groceries to a local senior who can't safely leave home. Once, she included a dozen roses from some donated bouquets. Juanita's senior friend couldn't hide her tears.

**"It's all about taking advantage of the opportunity in front of you," Juanita says. "That's how we'll get through this!"**

# Help families enjoy a celebration— Give a Holiday Meal Box

In these uncertain times, being able to enjoy a holiday meal with loved ones is so important. Good food gives us hope and the strength to persevere. You can share the comfort of the holiday season with our hungry neighbors by giving a Holiday Meal Box.

## What's in a Holiday Meal Box?

Each box contains a turkey or ham and all the traditional trimmings—enough festive food for a family of eight! And because we are good stewards of your donations, **just \$30 will fill one box.**

## Who receives a Holiday Meal Box?

We distribute Holiday Meal Boxes to neighbors facing hunger all across our 13-county service area. This year, we'll reach people who have been struggling with unemployment for months... seniors who have had to get by on their own for too long...and children who desperately need the comfort of a full tummy.

## How many Holiday Meal Boxes are needed?

With hunger on the rise in our area this year, we're planning to distribute 35,000 Holiday Meal Boxes. **Will you help? Just use the enclosed reply form to give a special holiday gift today.**

**It's easy to fill a Holiday Meal Box with delicious food—and hope for the year ahead. Thank you for helping to ensure our neighbors in need can enjoy a holiday celebration!**



## More ways to make an impact

As the end of the year approaches, we'd like to remind you of some of the convenient ways you can impact the lives of our neighbors in need:

- **Monthly Giving:** Serving Hope monthly donors have several convenient options to automate their giving, including direct deposit, credit card and monthly envelopes. Visit [SolveHungerToday/monthly](https://www.solvehunger.org/monthly).
- **IRA, Donor-Advised Funds and Stock:** If you are age 70½ or older and you are required to make charitable contributions from your IRA account, or if you prefer to give through your donor-advised fund, consider making the Food Bank your charity of choice. Additionally, we can easily accept gifts of appreciated stock directly through our brokerage account. Contact Gina Gramarosso at [ggramarosso@northernillfoodbank.org](mailto:ggramarosso@northernillfoodbank.org).
- **Legacy Gifts:** Whether you remember the Food Bank in your will or trust, life insurance or other estate plan, your impact will continue for years or even generations. Visit [SolveHungerToday/legacy](https://www.solvehunger.org/legacy).
- **Matching Gifts:** Did you know that many employers will match your gifts to the Food Bank—doubling or even tripling your impact? Check our website to see if your company is listed: [SolveHungerToday/match](https://www.solvehunger.org/match).



## Volunteers needed

We could not do what we do without our volunteers! Whether it's sorting and packing food, helping at a mobile pantry, stocking shelves or helping distribute orders at My Pantry Express pickups—**we need you!** We have safety measures in place to protect the health of everyone who joins our team.

Visit [SolveHungerToday.org/volunteer-opportunities](https://www.solvehunger.org/volunteer-opportunities) to volunteer today.

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