



Northern Illinois Food Bank Announces Julie Yurko’s 15th Anniversary of dedicated leadership in the fight against hunger, 10 years as CEO

Geneva, IL (May 20, 2024) – [Northern Illinois Food Bank](#), the leading charitable food organization in Northern Illinois and member of the Feeding America Network, announces Julie Yurko, president and CEO is marking 15 years of dedication and leadership in the fight against hunger, and 10 years as CEO.

Ms. Yurko has served as president and CEO of Northern Illinois Food Bank since May 2014. She joined the Food Bank in 2009 and previously served as vice president of philanthropy overseeing fundraising, food sourcing, marketing, and volunteers.

She is an accomplished CEO with a sincere passion to solve hunger and demonstrated year-after-year success. Ms. Yurko’s numerous achievements include leading the organization through the challenges of COVID, expanding operations to meet the growing demand for food assistance, launching innovative initiatives to serve neighbors, developing new programs that provide more nutritious food to neighbors with dignity, equity and convenience, and growing the organization. In her 15 years, the team grew from 70 to 170 employees.

Northern Illinois Food Bank has been a leader in the Feeding America network of 200 food banks. “Julie’s leadership is kind, thoughtful, dedicated and mission driven. She is fierce and I appreciate her giving so much to this mission,” said Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, CEO of [Feeding America](#).

When Ms. Yurko became CEO, the Food Bank provided 50 million meals a year to neighbors facing food insecurity. Under her dynamic leadership, meals served grew to 100 million during the pandemic in 2021. Today, the Food Bank’s network of over 900 food pantries, soup kitchens and feeding programs provides more than 80 million meals annually and serves over 560K neighbors a month throughout 13 counties in rural and suburban Northern Illinois.

“When the world shut down during the pandemic, Julie never stopped working and inspiring her team to pivot, adjust and act for neighbors facing hunger,” said Maeven Sipes, Chief Philanthropy Officer at Northern Illinois Food Bank. “She was at countless mobile food distributions reassuring neighbors, conducting media interviews, telling neighbors how to find help, and constantly checking in with her team to keep them informed, serving and safe.”

Over the years, Ms. Yurko successfully completed Strategic Plan 2020, providing equity to access to charitable food in 98% of the communities served by the Food Bank. As part of the current Strategic Plan UNITE, Julie led the Food Bank to reaching more neighbors than ever before and serving them in ways they desire, a concept the Food Bank coined as neighbor-centered practices. Today, neighbors facing hunger in Northern Illinois have equitable and sustainable access to nutritious food in more ways with in-person shopping, drive through pickup, online ordering, delivery and additional Food Bank programs.

“One piece of Julie’s legacy will be the spirit of innovation she has brought to the Food Bank. Under her leadership, she launched Direct Connect, Milk2MyPlate, [Vivory Food Finder Map](#), and [My Pantry Express](#),” said Jennifer Lamplough, Chief Impact Officer at Northern Illinois Food Bank. “She is never afraid to try something new if it means increasing access to nutritious food to our neighbors.”

Ms. Yurko has more than 25 years of experience in the non-profit sector. Prior to joining the Food Bank, she worked for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, The Children’s Memorial Foundation (now Lurie’s Children’s Medical Center) and the Chicago Zoological Society/Brookfield Zoo. Yurko serves on the Boards of the Better Business Bureau of Chicago, Feeding Illinois and Thrivent Member Network Regional Board.

For more information about Northern Illinois Food Bank, visit SolveHungerToday.org

About Northern Illinois Food Bank

For over 40 years, Northern Illinois Food Bank has been dedicated to solving hunger and empowering neighbors. Our vision at [Northern Illinois Food Bank](#) is for everyone in Northern Illinois to have the food they need to thrive. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and proud member of [Feeding America](#), we serve our neighbors in 13 counties with dignity, equity and convenience, providing 250,000 meals a day. We bring together manufacturers, local and corporate grocers, area farmers, corporations, foundations, and individuals who donate food and funding, and each week nearly 1,000 volunteers help us evaluate, repack, and distribute food. We also proudly partner with more than 900 food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and youth and senior feeding programs to provide nutritious food and resources. Our distribution centers are located in Geneva, Lake Forest, Rockford and Joliet. Find out how you can [get help](#), [volunteer](#), [donate](#) or [get involved](#) at SolveHungerToday.org, or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).