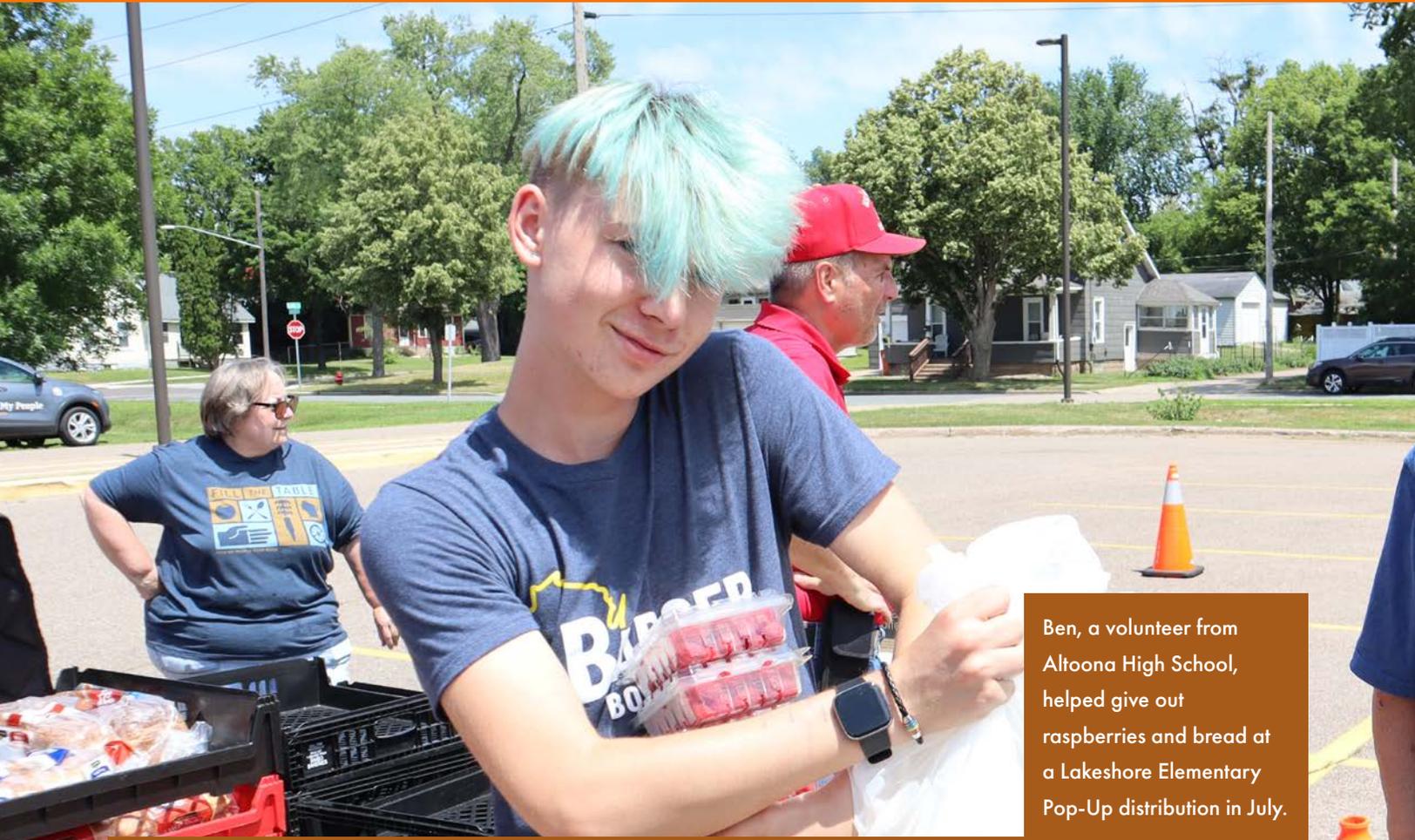




FALL 2022

# HUNGER HERALD

Working to End Hunger in West Central Wisconsin



Ben, a volunteer from Altoona High School, helped give out raspberries and bread at a Lakeshore Elementary Pop-Up distribution in July.

## Food is the Number One School Supply

Feeding kids is our priority.

When kids go back to school, Feed My People Food Bank (FMP) does too. While we're already serving thousands of kids annually, too many are still underserved, especially in rural communities where food resources and programs are more scarce. That's why we're continuing to strengthen

and expand our existing school pantries, Weekend Kids' Meals, and Pop-Up programs in as many west central Wisconsin school districts as possible. Children are our most vulnerable population with a high risk of struggling academically, physically, and emotionally when they don't receive the nutrition

*Continued on the next page...*

# Stories of Hope



At an Owen-Withee Pop-Up this summer, a woman on her work break walked up to a volunteer to ask what the process was to receive groceries for her and a co-worker.

She shared that she had never needed help with groceries before, but things were so hard right now.

We quickly hatched a plan. During her lunch break she returned to pick up a box of groceries we assembled just for them, ran home to put away the perishable items, and then returned to work before break was over. She was so appreciative of the help and flexibility to make it work for her and her family. Her smile said it all.

82% of Feed My People's agency partners and programs reported increased numbers of guests in need. -FMP survey summer 2022

...continued from front cover.

they need daily. Without consistent access to meals, learning suffers.

Our school pantry program has grown significantly since 2020 and provides a familiar space for students to pick out groceries for themselves and their families. Every middle and high school in Eau Claire (EC) and Chippewa Falls (CF) has one. Many elementary schools do as well. We aim to continue expanding this vital program into even more school districts, especially in rural communities.

Weekend Kids' Meals, our direct backpack food program in EC and CF, is another form of access that allows students to take home a pre-packed bag of food to eat over the weekend. We partner with 42 additional backpack programs across the region. Whether it's a school pantry, backpack program, or a combination of both, schools with these programs report overwhelmingly positive feedback from students and families who are so thankful for the extra help.

These programs are working because they're meeting families and students

Thank you **Compeer Financial** for your support of FMP rural hunger relief programming in west central Wisconsin.

where they are at. However, because the economic situation is keeping numbers high, it is more crucial than ever to keep forming new partnerships to serve every child possible. Thanks to targeted funding, we're currently reaching out to school districts in west central Wisconsin without food programming designed for low-income students. Additionally, we participate annually in back-to-school events in the EC, CF, and Altoona school systems to distribute groceries and help kids begin the school year strong.

We are grateful to every donor, volunteer, and partner who is helping us reach more kids with more food. Visit our website to find out if a backpack or school pantry program is in your school district and learn what it takes to support or start one.

Help feed one child for one school year.

Donate \$200 to FMP as a one-time gift or consider a 10-month commitment of \$20. Include "child sponsor" in the memo.

## Community Perspective



Brooke (L) at the event along with other Marawood volunteers at an Eau Claire Pop-Up that served over 160 families earlier this summer.

Early this summer, I had the opportunity to volunteer for the first time at a Pop-Up.

I wasn't sure what to expect, but when I arrived shortly before 8 am to around 50 cars already lined up, many feels started flowing. My biggest takeaways were:

1. Wow, is our community fortunate to have an organization like Feed My People.
2. Never take anything for granted. I am fortunate to be able to buy what I want/need from the grocery store without thinking twice. My life was definitely put into perspective from being reminded that one life altering event could change everything in an instant.
3. You may think you know "the type of people" who utilize a Pop-Up, but you really have no idea.

If you have the opportunity to volunteer for this incredible organization, I'd highly recommend it! Giving can come in many forms: monetary, time, or simply learning more about an organization and sharing with others the good they provide to our communities.

- Brooke Petska, Business Development/Marketing Director for Marawood Construction Services

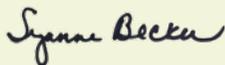
## A Note From the Director

A few months ago, a woman ran out of gas at one of our Pop-Up distributions. Without any money, the desperation on her face said it all. What was she to do, and how would the guests and volunteers react as she halted the line? She needn't have worried. Guests offered encouragement while a volunteer quickly re-routed the line. Another volunteer went to the gas station a few blocks away to fill a gas can. When the volunteer offered to pay, the manager said not to worry—they wanted to help.

What resonates with me in this story is community—so many sprung into action to help a stranger. I'd like to think that woman left that day not only with groceries and a little gas, but also with a feeling of optimism and gratitude. As I step into the big, big shoes of FMP leaders who have come before me, I am filled with optimism and gratitude for our staff, volunteers, partners, donors, and more. I am thankful for community.

Join me this Hunger Action Month to help ensure food is on the table for all.

In gratitude,



Suzanne Becker, Feed My People's Executive Director



## Golden Fork Awarded to Outstanding Partners

FMP's Golden Fork Award honors partner agencies that have demonstrated substantial engagement with the issue of food insecurity in their communities and in doing so have made a difference in the lives of many.



Elaine Bailey (R) received the Golden Fork Award from Sarah Aerts (L), FMP Partner Agency Manager, this summer.

**Elaine Bailey and her husband, Bill Bailey** (in memoriam), of Helping Hands Backpack were recognized for their exceptional contribution to feeding kids in the Minong School District since 2016. "The elementary kids are so excited to get the backpacks. They like doing their part in helping their families," shared Elaine.

**Blaire Shydrowski** of Harvest of Friends in Winter also received the Golden Fork for her longstanding commitment to addressing rural and childhood hunger. The pantry began in 2003 and they started the first rural backpack program in FMP's service area soon after.

“

Receiving food from the Pop-Up allows my family to eat good and healthy foods and reduces the stress over the dwindling budget. It means my kids can still be involved in activities they enjoy.

- STACY, EAU CLAIRE

Help make more moments like this possible. Get involved this Hunger Action Month.

[give.fmpfoodbank.org/HungerAction](http://give.fmpfoodbank.org/HungerAction)



Commit to monthly giving and join the Apple Ally community at Feed My People. We depend on consistent giving to plan and sustain programming to reach our neighbors in need. [give.fmpfoodbank.org/givemonthly](http://give.fmpfoodbank.org/givemonthly)



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# STAND AGAINST LOCAL HUNGER

All across the country this September, food banks are turning orange to turn up hunger action in their communities.

**SHARE.**   **GIVE.**   **VOLUNTEER.**

## TAKE THE STAND TODAY.

Go orange to support Hunger Action Month.  
Every action makes a difference.

[give.fmpfoodbank.org/HungerAction](http://give.fmpfoodbank.org/HungerAction)

