

FALL 2023



Feed My People
FOOD BANK
feeding healthy futures

HUNGER HERALD

Working to End Hunger in West Central Wisconsin



Feed My People staff members unload a fresh produce donation from local farms in Withee, including cantaloupe, yellow squash, and lettuce.

Farm to Food Bank is Accelerating Access

Feed My People's (FMP) new program connects fresh food from local farms to our low-income neighbors.

There are many steps involved in getting a food item into the hands of a guest at our food bank or a partner pantry. But broadly speaking, food comes to the food bank from two different streams: donations and purchases. Like many other food banks across the nation, the last few years have shaken up our traditional sources due to the higher food cost and supply chain issues. Where once we could depend on over 50% donated food, that

number has dropped to around 30%. Because we now need to purchase more food than ever before, maintaining costs while securing good nutrition and a steady supply is essential.

Led by FMP's new Food Resource Developer, Scott Sacrey, significant progress is being made in securing more fresh produce for our agency partners and the individuals we serve while

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FMP purchased 16,104 ears of sweet corn from Connell's Family Orchard in Chippewa Falls. Later this season they will donate apples.

...continued from front.

stewarding relationships with local and regional growers.

Farm to Food Bank is a full circle program that benefits local growers by coordinating with their growing seasons. When sweet corn is abundant in July, prices are sky-high, but by mid-August, prices have fallen, and farmers benefit when they can sell or donate the remainder of their crop instead of seeing it go to waste. Not only does this help the local economy, but it also promotes environmental sustainability and, most significantly, leverages local resources to get good produce into the hands of families in need.

When fresh produce comes into the food bank, it is almost immediately distributed at our Pop-Up grocery distribution events and shipped to our hunger-relief agency partners across the region.

Strengthening regional and local partnerships means a greater variety of produce can be possible because it diminishes the time and transportation required to get it here. Produce sourced from outside the region is more expensive and less fresh.

The Farm to Food Bank program is just beginning but has already made significant gains. When we received a \$20,000 grant for produce from Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield, we were able to secure agreements with three local vendors: Bushel and a Peck (apples), Connell's Family Orchard (corn and apples), and Nuto Farms (potatoes). This will result in over 150,000 pounds of fresh produce this fall! Other efforts include working with Amish and Hmong farmers in the Withee area through an auction warehouse. We need to do more, however. In the near future, we are seeking to make more connections with local meat and dairy vendors.

When asked what it meant to get fresh produce for her and her family, Meagan, a mother in a household of six at a recent pop-up distribution in Eau Claire, replied, "My kids get excited when there is fruit. We don't buy it often - it's so expensive!"

Good food shouldn't be a luxury. Our goal and hope with the Farm to Food Bank program is to make consistent access to fresh food a reality for more families like Meagan's.

**Help fuel healthy
produce for all.**

Consider becoming a
monthly donor as an
Apple Ally!
[give.fmpfoodbank.org/
givemonthly](https://give.fmpfoodbank.org/givemonthly)



THANK YOU PARTNERS

Because of our 250+ hunger relief partners across our 14-county service area, families in need are receiving food from their local communities.

A Note From the Director


Just yesterday (and not for the first time) I told my husband that we were going to eat healthier including more fruits and vegetables. Most of us know that food is one of the most important determinants of health, and yet nutritious food is often out-of-reach for low-income families with limited food budgets. As kids get ready to go back to school, we must make sure they have the tools needed to learn and grow and that includes healthy food. I am encouraged by the support we are receiving for Farm to Food Bank and Project FEED – two initiatives working toward healthier futures for all, but we have much more to do! More funding and volunteers are needed to sustain and grow these programs. Please join us. **Together we are stronger!**

In gratitude,

Suzanne Becker

Suzanne Becker, Feed My People's Executive Director





"My dad visits the pantry and everyone is so kind, considerate, and generous, and I believe it's become one of the highlights of his life. I'm so grateful for this Food Bank and all that it represents and provides to so many people.

— ANONYMOUS



Upcoming Events

SEPT 8

Go Orange Day

Orange is the color of Hunger Action Month, and we think it looks good on you! Wear orange, take a selfie, and share it using #GoOrange23.

SEPT 14

Hunger Action Month Pack-a-Thon

Join registered volunteers at FMP to help us pack food for the school year. We need over 70 volunteers throughout the day. Sign up to volunteer online at fmpfoodbank.org or scan the QR code.



Dine to Donate Fundraiser

SEPT 3-9 @ Acoustic Cafe (505 S Barstow St, Eau Claire) 10% of sales donated to FMP

SEPT 10-16 @ Silly Serrano (2006 Cameron St, Eau Claire) 10% of sales donated to FMP

SEPT 17-23 @ French Press (2823 London Rd, Eau Claire) 5% of sales donated to FMP



Food is the #1 School Supply

Back-to-school time means thousands of kids in our service area are starting a fresh school year, ready to learn and grow. Food is essential to that equation, and too many local kids don't have enough.

Project FEED is our youth hunger initiative launched at the beginning of 2023. Already it has funded new school pantries in rural school districts, sustained special distributions over school breaks and backpack library programs, and expanded our family food boxes distributed to families enrolled at Head Start sites.

As the new school year begins, fresh outreach to locate and mitigate gaps in food resources in school districts and communities throughout our service area will continue. No kid should experience hunger. To learn more about Project FEED and ways you can help, visit fmpfoodbank.org.



The following organizations provided grants to help fund and sustain Project FEED, our youth hunger initiative.

THANK YOU

Eau Claire Community Foundation
Mayo Clinic Health System
Nordson Corporation Foundation



Feed My People
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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.

fmpfoodbank.org

