

HUNGER HERALD

Creating Equitable Access to Food for Healthier Communities



Volunteers packing rice in the clean room at Feed My People during a group organization shift.

2024 Impact Report

More fresh food and growing reach among kids is driving impact across Feed My People's service area.

Feed My People's mission to create equitable access to food for healthier communities continues to drive us forward. This year, we've seen steady progress, all thanks to the unwavering support of our team, volunteers, and community.

As we reflect on the past year, we are inspired by the collective efforts that have made our mission a reality. Your contributions have empowered us to explore innovative solutions to address local hunger. Together with over 250 hunger relief programs

and partners, we have turned ambitious ideas into tangible outcomes, making a lasting impact throughout our 14-county service area.

Key Achievements

People Served

We're on track this year to once again distribute food to over 75,000 children, seniors, and individuals in our mission to ensure no one is left hungry. Our partners and programs have reported an overall 12.9% increase in total visits from January

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There's Still Time to Give

There's still time to make a lasting impact in 2024.

Every donation, big or small, adds up to create meaningful change in the lives of those facing food insecurity in our community.

Consider taking advantage of the remaining days of the year to make a tax-deductible gift to Feed My People. Visit our secure donation page at give.fmpfoodbank.org/donate.



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to October compared to the same period in 2023. This reflects an increased demand and reliance on community pantries, meal sites, backpack programs for kids, and specialized resources for seniors and homeless individuals.

Food Distributed

We're also on our way to distributing over 8 million pounds of food to our neighbors in need this year – a 3.6% increase from the previous year, illustrating our shared mission's growing impact. A growing share of this food, 30% more than last year, is fresh food primarily sourced from our Farm to Food Bank partnerships.

Volunteer Hours Recorded

Volunteers have recorded 19,467 hours as of the third week of November, equivalent to 10 full-time employees. With the giving season still in full swing, we expect this number to climb further before the end of the year. The impact that volunteers make on our mission is enormous – without them, we would be unable to do what we do.

Program Highlights

Project FEED: Our youth hunger program is expanding access equitably to youth in need within our service area, and it is now in its second school year. This fall we introduced ABC Food for elementary-aged kids, a program revising the program formally known as Weekend Kids' Meals. In addition to kid-friendly snack items, students can receive Kwik Trip vouchers for eggs, dairy, and produce that support their whole family. Enrollment in this program has grown 68% from last year. Additional school markets have been installed or created, opening access to more students and families.

Farm to Food Bank: Having concluded our second harvest season with this new program improving access to local, fresh food, its impact on our mission has been immense. Not only does it increase the amount of fresh food available, it improves the quality of what we can provide by expanding our variety and enhancing nutrition since it's now fresher than what we could previously offer.

Pop-Up Pantries: This program continues to make a big impact, providing food in communities with little to no resources. "It makes a huge difference and adds much-needed relief. It's nice to know there is something in the cupboard," shared Linda, a guest receiving food at the Arcadia pop-up. This year, we expanded three pop-ups from seasonal to year-round locations in Granton, Weyerhaeuser, and Radisson.

RCU Recycling Hub: We've added an outdoor recycling hub as part of our FRESH Futures initiative, which aims to practice more sustainable food banking. Our new publicly accessible recycling hub will allow anyone in the community to donate clean, polyethylene plastic waste. The Royal Credit Union funded this new build outside our Hunger Action Center. More detailed plans will be unveiled in the new year.

Thank you for making a bold difference in the lives of our neighbors in need in West Central Wisconsin.
We look forward to 2025 and the work we will continue to accomplish together to ensure healthier futures for all.

GRANT AWARD RECOGNITION

(December 2023 - November 2024)

Pablo Foundation
Royal Credit Union Foundation
Otto Bremer Trust

Andersen Corporate Foundation
Charles M. and Joan R. Taylor Foundation
Chick-fil-A
Community Foundation of Chippewa County
Community Foundation of Dunn County
Chippewa Falls Rotary Club
Dunkin - Joy in Childhood Foundation Inc
Eau Claire Community Foundation

Eau Claire Community Foundation Women's Giving Circle
M3 Foundation
Marshfield Area Community Foundation
Mayo Hometown
Nordson Corporation Foundation
Prevail Bank
Spirit Lutheran Foundation, Inc.
Sonnentag American Foundation, Inc.
State Farm Companies Foundation
Walmart
WE Energies Foundation

Thank You



Humbird: The Impact of One Rural Pop-Up

Twice a month on Tuesdays since September 2020, a driver from Feed My People heads southeast to Humbird, Wisconsin. An unincorporated community with a population of 315 and well off the main highway, it's not on the radar of most. However, the numbers served at each pop-up reflect a huge need in the area. An average of 200 households receive produce, pantry staples, and other food items at every distribution. Guests come from Humbird and drive in from surrounding rural communities.

One gentleman comes all the way from Willard, another small town in Clark County a half hour away. He picks up vital food for his elderly neighbors who can no longer drive. Because he has a four-wheel drive pick-up, weather is never an issue, and "he is a real blessing to folks," according to one of the Humbird volunteers.

The Humbird volunteers are a tight-knit, strong group who have endured all the seasonal weather Wisconsin has to throw at them. Many of them are there through the American Legion Auxiliary.

Because of the longstanding endurance of the Humbird pop-up, getting to know the guests has resulted in some heartwarming results. There was a couple that the volunteers all got to know who regularly came for food. Several years ago, it became obvious they were living in their vehicle because their sleeping bags and limited

belongings were visibly stored in it. That all changed when one day at a recent pop-up event, the man jumped out of the car and gave the volunteers all hugs. He said he now has three jobs and a place to live. Having a consistent source of food from the pop-up was instrumental in their journey to better stability.

The pop-up pantry is a powerful program enabling folks to have access to fresh food and other groceries when other resources may be unavailable or prohibitive due to cost and transportation. The program grew substantially at Feed My People post-COVID to reach those in underserved, especially rural areas who would otherwise go without. In addition to Humbird, events occur in Eau Claire, Fall Creek, Independence, Arcadia, Weyerhauser, Cadott, Granton, Spooner, and Radisson.

Another story that volunteers recently witnessed involved a woman who didn't have a car and came late after most everything had been packed up. When asked if there was anything left, the Humbird volunteer team leaped into action gathering food for her. She left with a smile on her face and enough groceries to help her get through. That's the power of pop-ups and community. When we come together, we are stronger as we lift up all our neighbors in need.

"The Humbird distribution, really all of the rural pop-ups, provides such an important service to the community. Many in these communities are struggling to pay bills and put food on the table. Being able to offset some of their food costs with our distribution twice a month really makes a difference."

- Heidi Atkins (pictured top right in orange), lead Humbird volunteer

A Note From the Director

As I write this, we've just finished our Thanksgiving pop-up distribution, serving food to 228 households. I know I've said this before, but seeing the line of cars winding around the corner always takes my breath away. My feet are sore, but I'm grateful to be able to greet folks while our crew fills up their trunk with fresh produce, dairy, and dry items. It humbles me to see the hard work and dedication of our staff and volunteers while we hear "thank you" over and over again.

Before I came to FMP, collaboration was not a word I used often as part of normal conversations. Now, it's something I witness every day. Not just at FMP but also with other nonprofits, families, churches, businesses, and our community at large. The smallest example of collaboration can produce impactful results. Working together and having each other's back is powerful and makes a difference. It puts food on tables, roofs overhead, keeps parents working, kids learning, and promotes healthy, thriving lives.

Despite this collaboration, we are seeing an alarming trend with higher numbers of folks needing help in all areas of our programming. Our pantry partners share that 3+ years of high costs are catching up to families and those on a fixed budget, translating into more people needing food. This fall, enrollment in youth food programs in schools across our service area continues to rise long after it normally plateaus. In Eau Claire and Chippewa

Falls, there has been a 68% increase in students enrolled as compared to last spring, and our blizzard pack for seniors doubled in November.

Through this, we stand strong in our commitment to never turning anyone away, but we need you to help us meet this head-on. Please join us in having the backs of children, seniors, and families facing food insecurity. You are making a difference for so many who are at risk of struggling to have enough food for their tables. Together, we make our community stronger for all.

In gratitude,

Suzanne Becker, Feed My People's Executive Director



2024 Volunteers of the Year

Each year, Feed My People staff and board nominate and select volunteers to honor. It isn't easy to choose - we are privileged to work with many outstanding people who make our work together possible. Thank you to all for being generous supporters of the food bank with your time and effort.



Barb and Terry McDougall

Barb and Terry have been dedicated volunteers for over a decade, bringing their time, energy, and passion to every task they take on. In addition to their regular shifts managing pop-ups, they are always reliable when it comes to special events like Stamp Out Hunger, FEED the Love, and many others. Their long-term commitment and willingness to step up whenever needed make them invaluable members of our volunteer team.

10+ Year Volunteer Inductees: Dan Perkins, Barb Wise, Karl Wise



Mark Leuthe

Mark is a dedicated and dependable driver who consistently volunteers for routes that others may find less desirable. His commitment and positive attitude make him a standout member of our volunteer team. Mark's willingness to go the extra mile, both literally and figuratively, ensures that even the most challenging deliveries are handled with care.

The Class of Lifetime Achievers

A group of nine volunteers here at the food bank are literally in a class of their own. They've surpassed 15 years of service with us and are continuing as strong as ever. They are our "dependable regulars" - our constant friends.

The food bank wouldn't be the same without them. Please join us in thanking them for their lifetime worth of achievement. We're so grateful for every hour they've given, and even more so, their passion, commitment, and overall mission embodiment of all we do to feed our neighbors in need.

Heidi Atkins

Jennifer Beckermann

Barb Dukerschein

Terry Fellenz

Dan Flaten

Debbie Gough

Mark Lindeen

Randy Lundblad

Pete Ritter

"Feed My People has ... grown from serving just our community to addressing hunger in the 14-county area of West Central Wisconsin. That's just a miracle! FMP staff (and volunteers) often hear these heartfelt thanks from recipients: 'We were hungry and you gave us food for our family.' Please join me in supporting FMP, a strong community asset which meets the basic need - FOOD - for all of us. Giving while you're living is a joy."

- Jan Etnier (original organizer and long-time friend of Feed My People)

Inspired to Volunteer?

Volunteers allow us to direct more dollars toward purchasing food for our partners and programs, and their voices help us elevate the issue of food insecurity among our neighbors in West Central Wisconsin. To join the cause, sign up online for an open shift with a group or as an individual. Opportunities range from truck driving (no CDL required) to packing food and so much more.

Learn more and sign up at fmpfoodbank.org or call 715-835-9415 Mon-Fri 8 am-4 pm.



Pictured from left to right: Jennifer B. and Terry F., Barb D., Debbie G., Dan F., Heidi A., Mark L., Randy L. and Pete R.

2024 Organizations of the Year

Since 2004, Feed My People (FMP) and its board of directors have selected a standout organization or two that have contributed substantially to the mission of FMP. This year, two higher education institutions were chosen for their invaluable contribution. Each went above and beyond to engage their faculty and staff and bring greater awareness and resources to our community.



Chippewa Valley Technical College

CVTC has been a valued partner since 2015, playing a vital role in our hunger relief efforts in the Chippewa Valley. They have recently agreed to join the statewide hunger coalition led by Feeding Wisconsin and have assisted with local deliveries through their transportation training program. In addition, they generously hosted our July board meeting and participated in a podcast to help amplify the conversation around food insecurity. Their ongoing collaboration continues to strengthen our impact on the community.

"We are deeply honored to be recognized by our partners at Feed My People Food Bank," shared Dr. Sunem Beaton-Garcia. "This acknowledgment reflects the commitment of our students and employees to making a tangible difference in our community. At CVTC we believe that partnerships like this not only support those in

Top photo: CVTC staff and students, including CVTC president Dr. Sunem Beaton-Garcia (fourth from left) gathered to receive recognition as a 2024 Organization of the Year recipient from Feed My People. Bottom photo: Chancellor James Schmidt (center) and Gregg Heinselmann (left), who oversees the Campus Food Pantry, Campus Harvest, receive FMP's recognition on behalf of UW-Eau Claire from Suzanne Becker (right), FMP executive director.

need but also teach our students the value of compassion, service, and collaboration. Together, we are serving with love."

"Working in the food pantry for the last three semesters has been a great experience seeing the positive impact it has on our students. I have seen students come back after their first visit and express how thankful they are for our food pantry. Students have come back in later weeks bringing along new people who expand our food pantry community." - Braelynn Johnson, CVTC graphic design student and student employee in the CVTC Food Pantry



University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

UW-Eau Claire (UWEC) has a strong history of community engagement and has had a tremendous impact on Feed My People. Numerous campus groups, such as the men's basketball team and various student organizations, have generously dedicated their time and efforts to volunteering. Beyond volunteer work, UWEC has woven its commitment to our mission into its academic fabric. Our organization has been featured in student projects and collaborations with several academic departments, including the Sustainability Lab, the Social Work Department, and the Journalism program. These partnerships have deepened the university's engagement and provided valuable real-world learning experiences for their students, fostering a mutual relationship of growth and support. UWEC recently celebrated the tenth year of its Campus Harvest food pantry, one of our valued community hunger relief partners.

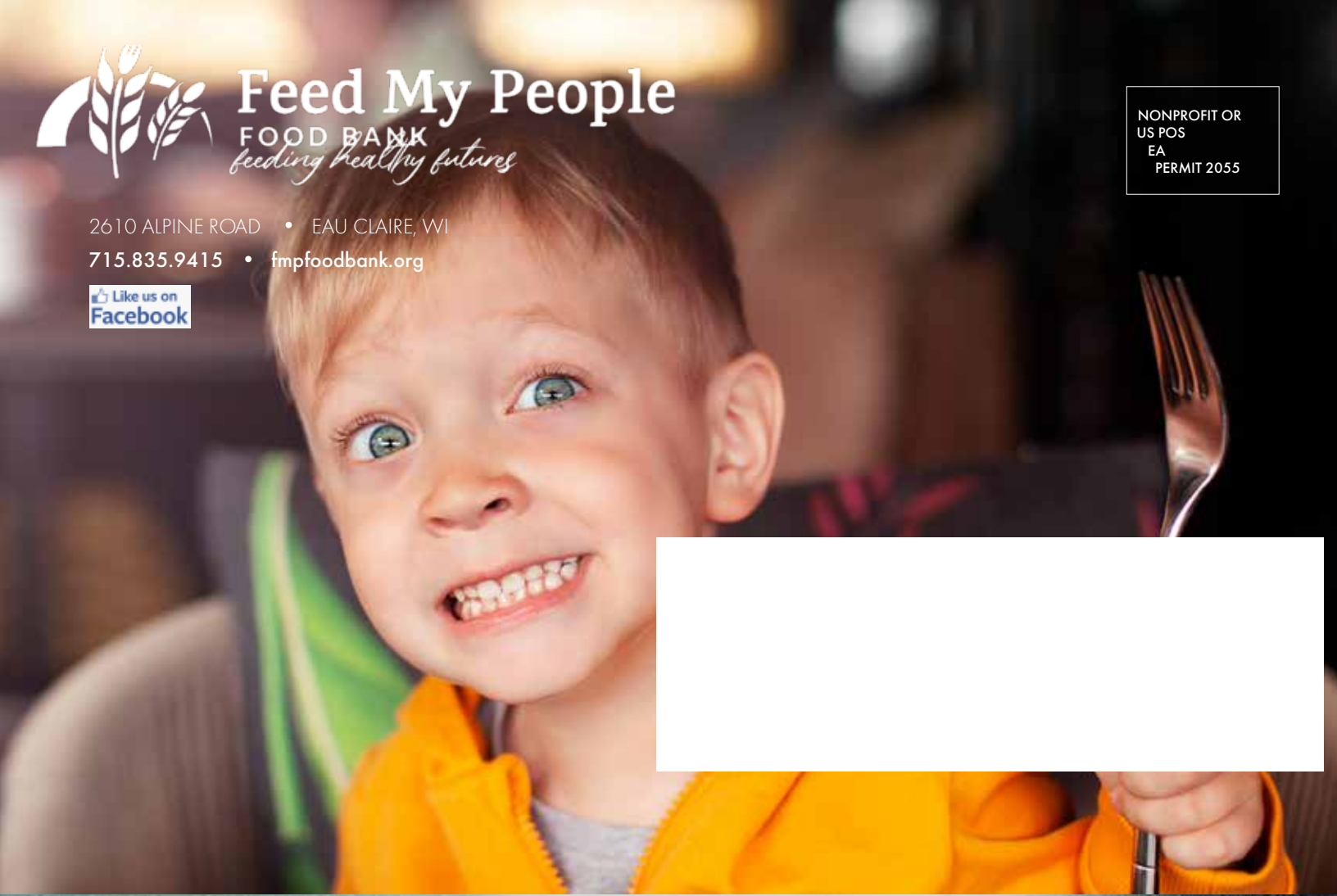
"UW-Eau Claire is committed to public service and being a community leader, which is why I am so grateful that Feed My People chose to honor our team," Chancellor James Schmidt said. "UW-Eau Claire has a long history of community engagement and excellence, and to be named the Organization of the Year is another example of the power of collaboration and the value our students, faculty and staff bring to our community."



Feed My People
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feeding healthy futures

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2025

Save the Date!

Upcoming Signature Events



Campaign Feb 7-14 • Donor Event Feb 14 • Pack-a-Thon Feb 14

FEED the Love

Matching Campaign | Volunteer Pack-a-Thon | Exclusive Donor Experience
 Strengthening programs for children and teenagers, including school markets, backpack food resources, and special distributions during school breaks.



Thursday, May 15 • 11 am—7 pm

25th Annual Empty Bowls

Food Trucks | Locally Crafted Ceramic & Wooden Bowls | Silent Auction | Tours
 Bringing together the community for an all-day mission-sustaining event at the food bank to support our neighbors facing food insecurity across West Central Wisconsin.

Sponsor Opportunities! Learn more at give.fmpfoodbank.org/ebsponsors

