



SUMMER 2022

# HUNGER HERALD

Ending Hunger in West Central Wisconsin



Staff and volunteers help distribute groceries at a Pop-Up Pantry in Eau Claire earlier this spring.

## Soaring Cost of Living is Pushing Up Demand

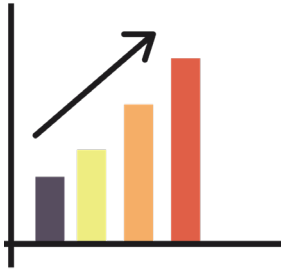
*“It’s just not enough anymore.”*

“The rising costs and non-rising wages have made budgeting more difficult. We have more hard choices to make on spending when heating, gas, and food take up so much of our income. Receiving food from the Pop-Up still allows my family to eat

good and healthy foods and reduces the stress over the dwindling budget,” shared Stacy, a mom in a household of 6. She was one of 167 families who showed up at a Pop-Up Pantry in Eau Claire this April to receive groceries, including meat, dairy, vegetables, fruit, snacks, cereal, and more. For her and all those Feed My People (FMP) served that

*Continued on the next page...*

# Rising Costs



Local Wisconsin families are experiencing high increases in the cost of living. Groceries, fuel, and housing costs have all risen over the past year.



Feed My People Food Bank has also been hit hard by inflation. Delivery costs are up dramatically due to rising fuel costs. Food costs are up at least 10% from a year ago.

...continued from front cover.

day, the Pop-Up is a lifeline during an impossible situation when daily living expenses and income are no longer aligning. An average of 188 households attended one of the Eau Claire Pop-Ups in April, which is an 88% increase from our January, February, and March distributions when roughly 100 families were getting groceries at each event. In April, one out of every five guests had never been to a Pop-Up this year. Similar trends are taking shape at the 15 Pop-Ups we provide monthly or twice monthly in communities including Arcadia, Cadott, Chippewa Falls, Humbird, and Owen-Withee.

Like our guests, we at FMP also feel the effects of record inflation and economic uncertainty. Increasing food, fuel, and utility expenses make it challenging for us to meet the rising demand that we and our partners are seeing.

"The cost of pork is up by \$1.10 per pound from a year ago. Any price increase adds up when you're purchasing thousands of pounds at a time, albeit at wholesale costs. But despite the challenges, I'm grateful for our supply partners continuing to help us source good food. Because of them and the continued generosity of our donors, we're making it work and getting food to those that need it," shared Rick Sorensen, FMP operations manager.

With FoodShare on course to revert to pre-pandemic levels this fall, even more families who are on the edge of needing help will be turning to the food bank and our hunger relief partners for support. FMP began 40 years ago in 1982 to get food into the hands of anyone in need, no matter the internal or external circumstances. Today our mission remains the same, but because inflation is at its highest level in 40 years, more people are at risk of not having enough to eat. We need your help now to make sure our mission stays strong, ensuring that we can continue to distribute the equivalent of at least 15,000 meals daily to our neighbors in need for a fresh start tomorrow. [Donate today at give.fmpfoodbank.org/40More](https://give.fmpfoodbank.org/40More) to help us raise \$40,000 in 40 days in honor of our 40 year anniversary.

# Voices from Our Guests

“

Inflation has made a great impact. We have a large family but have always been ok until now. My husband has what used to be a really good-paying job, but it's just not enough anymore. This is our third time coming here. This food helps offset other expenses so much! Thank you. - Angela, household of 7

“

My bills have increased. Grocery prices have increased. With people paying more for necessities, they tip less, so my income has decreased. Coming to the Pop-Up means I can make bigger meals, bring food to my elderly father, and my kids can pack lunches. - Michelle, household of 4

“

I lost my job and can't afford gas. This Pop-Up helps so much so my gas budget doesn't go all to food. Thank you for doing this!  
- Vince, household of 2

“

We are paying bills first. Feeding ourselves last. We are trying to help our daughter and grandchildren. The extra groceries help immensely. - Cindy, senior



Volunteers at The Community Cupboard in Augusta on its first day of distribution in April.

## A Note From the Director

One of my favorite parts of my job is to get on the road and visit our program partners to see firsthand the impactful work happening throughout the 14 counties that Feed My People (FMP) serves. One of the things I have learned in food banking is that no two food distributions are the same. It's fascinating to see the creative solutions being implemented to serve our communities better. I recently had the pleasure of visiting the community pantry in Osseo, which is located inside a fire station. On that same day, I stopped at the pantry in Jackson County, which serves out of an elementary school and oversees neighborhood distributions throughout Jackson County. Each of our program partners has different challenges, but they remind me that it's not the space that matters but the commitment to hunger relief, and that commitment is never in

question. The buildings and methods may look vastly different, but we all share our collective mission to serve our neighbors who struggle to have enough food to feed themselves and their families. As we celebrate 40 years of hunger relief here at Feed My People, we honor our program partners' work every day to ensure their neighbors have the food they need to live a happy and healthy life.

Thank you,

Nancy Renkes  
Feed My People's  
Executive Director



"We're fortunate to live in a place where people care so much about each other."

- FMP Donor

## Community Perspective



Madison Zweber,  
FMP Marketing Intern,  
UWEC student

**I don't think I truly understood the need there was in the community until I saw the cars lined up before the Pop-Up Pantry started.**

I was handing out bread and bakery items when a mother unexpectedly asked if there was a birthday cake because it was her daughter's fifth birthday that week. Finding a 12-inch birthday cake and seeing her gratitude was

truly impactful. With inflation hitting everyone so hard, balanced groceries can seem like a luxury, which leaves bakery items and treats last on the list.

From the moment I started interning at FMP I've been blown away by the sheer scale and reach they have. I still have trouble understanding that the Pop-Up I attended one Friday in Eau Claire was only one of many pantries they offer. FMP hits the nail on the head with the motto "serving our neighbors" because honestly that's what it feels like being there - a community of neighbors helping one another.



# Feed My People

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## 40 MORE



Due to being a single mother of two kids, inflation has hit me hard. It's very difficult to get needs met for the kids. Getting this extra food really helps get us by.

- Ariana



**Donate at [give.fmpfoodbank.org/40more](http://give.fmpfoodbank.org/40more) to help raise \$40,000 in 40 days.**

Inflation is at its highest level in 40 years, putting more people at risk of not having enough to eat. We need your help today to ensure our mission stays strong. Every day we distribute the equivalent of 15,000 meals to our neighbors in need throughout west central Wisconsin.

**Give a bag of groceries for \$45. Fill a grocery cart for \$150. Feed a family for 1 month for \$475.**

