



## How Your Giving Reaches Kids in Need

# When There's ~~Not~~ Enough to Share

Ten-year-old Brianna peers into her Backpack and pulls out a little pouch of cartoon-shaped raspberry chews. "Do you like fruit snacks?" she smiles, eagerly opening the candy to offer a piece to Food Bank of Northwest Indiana communications manager Emily Cutka. "I like to share! 'Cuz sometimes at home when my friends come over, I'm not allowed to," she adds matter-of-factly. "My mom says we don't have enough."

Even with the family's food stamps, the fifth grader is one of more than 130 needy students in the Portage Township School District whose parents struggle to make ends meet. Each week, Brianna receives a

**"Thank you for the hard work to give other people food,"**  
Brianna and her sister Chloe\* want to tell the generous donors and volunteers of the Food Bank.

grocery sack filled with nutritious food provided by the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana. The Backpack program is one of the Food Bank's foremost initiatives, feeding hungry children across Lake and Porter Counties. Over 500 students in grades K-6 participate every Friday, receiving what is often the lion's share of their weekend nutrition.

Brianna's younger sister, Chloe, also receives a Backpack and the girls like to swap with each other for favorite drinks and snacks. "She's only eight, so it's my job to help her and take care of her," Brianna explains happily as she looks over the variety of snacks, juices, and canned microwavable meals. "And on the weekends when we go to my grandma and grandpa's house, I always share with my

grandpa. I like to see his face 'cuz he always looks so happy to have some food."

With more than 55,000 Northwest Indiana children qualifying for free or reduced-price school meals, the



stark reality of unaddressed weekend hunger is evident. "For the families most in need, like Brianna and Chloe's, the Backpacks are bridging a critical gap," Cutka notes.

When asked what she might say to the people whose donations helped provide her Friday Backpack, Brianna doesn't hesitate. "It's so nice to help other people. I want them to know how happy it makes people who don't have enough. And say thank you for the food!" Grateful words from a big-hearted little girl who loves having enough to share.



\*We've changed the girls' names and photo to respect their privacy.

## From the Executive Director

Arleen Peterson



## Why We're Here

Growing up in East Chicago, I'll never forget the life lessons my grandfather taught me. "I don't care who you are or what position you hold," he'd stress. "You are here to take care of your family and your neighbors and the community you live in." And he lived what he preached.

Our Food Bank donors have a lot in common with my grandfather. They believe we're all in this together. And it's true. We could not begin to serve **4.5 million meals annually** without our good friends and supporters.

One day someone walked through our front door hungry, asking for help. Since we are a warehouse only (not a pantry open to the public), we are unfortunately ill-equipped to easily provide food assistance "on the spot." I went to speak with our guest about this and, upon turning the corner, our eyes met and I was stunned to greet an old high school acquaintance. Amid the surprise smiles, hugs, and a few tears, I said, "Don't you worry. I'm glad you came. We are here to help you get over this hump."

Isn't that what it's all about?

Tens of thousands of people in our community are struggling to get over that hump and to a place where they can provide for themselves and their families. We're in a position to give them the help they need.

**You can change another life right now.** For every dollar you send, we'll serve up to three nutritious meals to a hungry child or adult living right here in the Region.

My grandfather ... he would be proud of you. So am I.

Arleen Peterson, Executive Director

# How far did your generosity go last year?

Gifts from donors and friends of the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana went a long way in 2015 to stave off hunger right here in the Region.

## 2015 highlights, program by program:

### Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP):



**5,372** Senior Food Boxes



**143,300** Meals



**778** Seniors Served

### Backpack Program:



**500** Students Served



**16** Schools



**34,095** Meals

### Pantry on the Go:



**8,097** Individuals Served



**377,055** Meals

# "The Bread Ladies"

## Volunteers Who Rise to the Top

It started six years ago when several ladies from the First Baptist Church of Griffith were looking to undertake a project for their Women's Missionary Union group. What began as a once-a-month



Dodie Price and Sue McCarthy are two of the dedicated "Bread Ladies" who volunteer each Wednesday at the Food Bank.

volunteer commitment at the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana has turned into a weekly gathering of the "Bread Ladies."

"We really enjoyed helping out; we felt we were giving something back to the community," recalls Sue McCarthy, of Merrillville. "In fact, after a while, Jean Wilburn and I decided to come every week. Every Wednesday. And we've been coming ever since!"

Visit [foodbanknwi.org/volunteer](http://foodbanknwi.org/volunteer) or email [volunteers@foodbanknwi.org](mailto:volunteers@foodbanknwi.org) to get involved and sign up to volunteer today.

Over the years the group has grown and changed. Today the seven-or-so women, some of whom are in their 80s, arrive at 10 am every Wednesday to volunteer. A couple of men have even joined in and, together, they sort, package, and weigh bread for delivery to the Food Bank's 100+ distribution sites across the Region.

Volunteers like the Bread Ladies play a critical role at the Food Bank. In 2015, more than 1,400 individuals contributed over 6,000 hours of service in the fight against hunger.

"We rely on volunteers to help fulfill our mission," Executive Director Arleen Peterson said. "These ladies have been committed for so many years, and we look forward to seeing them every week. Their continued service truly makes a difference in the lives of our neighbors in need."

"The Food Bank does an excellent job of getting food out to hungry people," said Sue. "I feel like I'm doing something for somebody who really needs it ... and it's just a very enjoyable time."

**SAVE THE DATE:**

**SUNDAY, MAY 22**

*The Soiree*  
**GARY AQUATORIUM**  
at Marquette Park

A fundraiser to benefit the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana and the Northwest Indiana Food Council

Featuring some of the Region's best food, drinks, and entertainment

Visit [foodbanknwi.org/events](http://foodbanknwi.org/events) for more details



[www.foodbanknwi.org](http://www.foodbanknwi.org)



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# Did you know?

Food insecure senior citizens are at increased risk for chronic health conditions. They are:

**60%** more likely to experience depression

**53%** more likely to report a heart attack

**52%** more likely to develop asthma

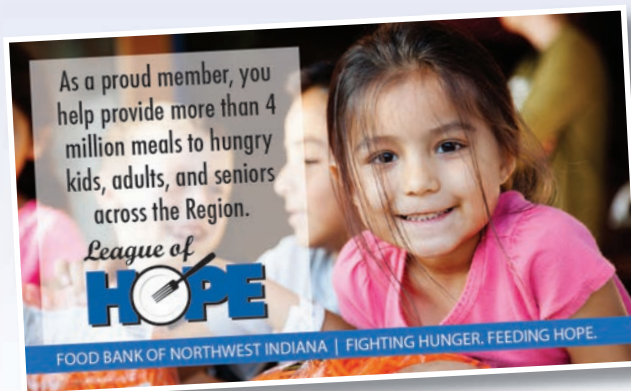


This year, thousands of food insecure elderly neighbors across Lake and Porter counties will visit an area food pantry served by the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana. Another 778 elderly neighbors will benefit from the Commodity Supplemental Food Program distributions. Please keep The Food Bank of Northwest Indiana among your charitable priorities this month and help us feed more hungry Hoosiers!

*(Statistics: Feeding America Senior Hunger Fact Sheet)*

## How you can help us reach thousands more in need.

The League of Hope Giving Society recognizes the Food Bank's most generous donors. Membership is open to contributors whose calendar-year annual giving reaches \$1,000 or more—that's just \$83.34 per month. League of Hope members are among our Region's leaders in the fight against hunger, expanding the Food Bank's capacity to feed our neediest neighbors.



## Your Donation Makes a Difference!

- All \$ stays local
- 94% of every dollar goes directly to hunger relief programs and services
- \$1 = 3 meals



**For Brianna and Chloe ... and thousands of hungry Hoosiers like them, I have enough to share! Please use my gift to provide more urgently-needed meals this spring:**

\$500    \$250    \$100    \$50    \$35

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ ST \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

I would like more information about:

- Volunteering    Donating food or hosting a food drive  
 Giving a gift to Food Bank of Northwest Indiana through my will  
 Receiving occasional email updates

My email is \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to pledge a monthly gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
My first gift is enclosed.

Charge my gift to:  VISA    MC    Discover    AMEX

CARD NO. \_\_\_\_\_

EXP. DATE \_\_\_\_\_ 3-DIGIT CVV# \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to:  
Food Bank of Northwest Indiana  
2248 West 35th Ave., Gary, IN 46408

Please call 219.980.1777, ext. 302, to charge your gift by phone, or visit [www.foodbanknwi.org](http://www.foodbanknwi.org) to make a gift online.

Your gift is tax-deductible as allowed by law.