

Feeding Hungry Neighbors ... Filling More than Just Plates

The year was 1985, and the leaders at Family Christian Center in Griffith, Indiana had a vision: They wanted to reach more people in need with the help they needed most.

With that inspiration laid on their hearts, the good folks at Family Christian Center quietly began a ministry called "Operation Care" – a food pantry open three days a week to help feed their neighbors struggling with hunger.

Today, 32 years later, Operation Care is still caring! Pantry director Kathy Scurlock says the site has **served close to 600,000 people with nearly 11 million pounds of food**, all right from their original location at 1300 North Broad Street. *That's the equivalent of more than nine million meals.*

It is a story that owes to many hardworking, faithful volunteers, neighbors, and Food Bank of Northwest Indiana donors like you.

Last year alone, gifts from generous friends enabled the Food Bank to distribute more than 4.2 million meals to 100+ partner agencies like Operation Care.

Many of its pantry clients travel from Gary, Highland, Hammond, and other towns where as many as four in ten people are living in poverty.

"We see a lot of senior citizens, and families" says assistant pantry director Tina Adams. "Neighbors might carpool. Some walk or take a bus. People will show up a couple hours early to get a line number. We've come close, but have never run out of food. We know 'God will supply.'"



Thousands of Northwest Indiana elderly neighbors on fixed incomes worry about making ends meet. Visiting local food pantries like Operation Care helps them not only get essential nutrition they need to thrive, but connects them with neighbors and other resources for assistance.

In addition to providing nutritious groceries, Operation Care volunteers offer assistance and referrals with clothing, shelter, and counseling. Many visitors even find much-needed friendship at the pantry, welcoming first-timers and helping them learn the process and feel comfortable.

Food Bank donors are feeding more than just the body, they are feeding the spirit – nourishing neighbors not just with groceries, but with a sense of belonging, of hope, of connectedness.

You'll never know the countless lives you touch in this way. We couldn't do it without you. Thank you!

MEMBER OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**

You can make a difference before Hunger Action Month is over!

From Steve Beekman, Executive Director

Every September, Feeding America's network of member food banks join together to mobilize good friends like you to take action in the fight against hunger.

Nearly 100,000 of our neighbors right here in Lake and Porter Counties face the hardship of hunger. That includes more than 30,000 children – siblings like Austin and Avery, who excitedly await their grandmother's return from a mobile market stocked by your generous giving to the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana.

You share our concern to make sure no one goes without the nutrition they need to live a healthy life.

So even if you've already given in 2017, I ask you to make another special gift to the Food Bank today. **Every dollar you send becomes three meals, feeding a child, adult, or senior facing hunger for an entire day.**

Maybe you're even ready to make a steadier commitment.

More and more donors are giving monthly as members of Three Square Society, making an even BIGGER difference – a little at a time. It's fast and easy. Your gift is made automatically – no more checks. Why not sign up right now at foodbanknwi.org/threesquare?

However you choose to give, you have our thanks for **taking action before September ends!**



Steve Beekman, Executive Director

"You don't realize the impact you have on my family. I cannot thank you enough."



Austin and Avery enjoy lunch on their front porch. They live with their mom at their Grandma Barbara's house. On this morning, Barbara had gotten up at 3 a.m. to be one of the first to get in line for the Mobile Market being held by the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana.

"Without the Food Bank, my family would go hungry," she says. "My daughter has a disability, so she isn't able to support her kids too well," the grandma says. "I cannot thank you enough, because you don't realize the impact you have on my family. Austin and Avery get so excited when I come home ... sometimes I cry when I go to the grocery store because I don't have enough for milk and bread, and I have to pick between them. That makes it very hard. Many people don't realize how much hunger there is, even in their own neighborhoods."

Names and images have been changed to protect this family's privacy.

MISSION To alleviate hunger by acquiring and distributing food to people in need, promoting solutions that advance self-sufficiency and hunger relief, and leading our region in the fight against hunger.



"Thank you, food bank donors, from the bottom of my heart."

It was one of the hardest things she's ever done, but Kimberly knew she needed to ensure the best possible future for her children. A few years ago, this loving mom took the three little ones and moved in with her mother, away from a relationship in which she and her children no longer felt safe.

They started over – with little more than the clothes on their back.



When Kimberly's mom got sick and lost her job, Kimberly's sister welcomed them in. "There are eight of us here," she says. "When we each contribute a little, we can get by ... but I'm not sure we could make it work without the help of the food pantry."

Kimberly calls everyone "amazing" and "big-hearted," never making her or the kids feel ashamed for having to ask for help. "It has been a godsend

... the pantry has helped us put food on the table. There are still times when I skip meals if what we have may not be enough. But I'm glad I never have to worry about my children going hungry."

Kimberly says she's proud of her family, and that despite the hardships, her kids are happy and healthy.

"This year my youngest starts kindergarten, so I can start working full time. There are better days ahead. In the meantime, I want to say thank you, from the bottom of my heart ... for helping us get there."

Kimberly and her kids are a real family. This is their real story. Out of respect for their privacy, the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana is not naming the food pantry they visit.

More than she asked for ...

Many pantry partners benefiting by your gifts go above and beyond providing just groceries and meals. They create a sense of community, offering people more than what they came for. Food is the beginning, but not the end, of what a client in need receives.

"Someone donated used toys to us right before Christmas. We had them in a box, people could just take them. A mom coming for food, she found a doll ... it was worn and missing clothing, but she was so thrilled, just so happy to have this for her daughter. I've been here 30 years, and that was really a special moment."

- Griffith's Operation Care
food pantry director
Kathy Scurlock



There's Still Time to Register!

Join in the Food Bank's 2017 Hunger Hike

*Bring your family, friends, or coworkers together to **do good and feel great!***

Join hundreds of Food Bank of Northwest Indiana friends and neighbors raising awareness and funds to fight hunger in the Region.

Saturday, October 7, at 10 am
Oak Ridge Prairie, Griffith

Registration is only \$10, and each individual who raises an additional \$40 will receive a limited edition Hunger Hike 2017 t-shirt!

Funds raised from the Hunger Hike will be used to stock the shelves of local Food Bank partner agencies.

More than 800 people came together to raise over \$70,000 last year. Operation Care, a food bank partner pantry in Griffith, was among the top fundraising teams of 2016.

"Our pastor allows us to collect for several weekends leading up to each year's walk," says Kathy Scurlock, who has helped organize the congregation's participation and fundraising for 15 years. "We ask people to just give a dollar, if they can. A dollar turns into three meals. If they want to give more, great. Then we usually have around 15-20 walkers join in."

The dollars raised by each partner agency come right back to their own hunger relief efforts, and are used to keep good, nutritious food on the shelves. "That helps a lot," Kathy says. "And every year, the Food Bank has been doing a really great job of seeing how they can make it more convenient and accessible. I encourage anybody and everybody to join in this year's Hunger Hike."

To register online, visit foodbanknwi.org/hungerhike, or just come on over the day of the event and join in!

SEPTEMBER IS
**HUNGER
ACTION MONTH.**

It's not too late to join thousands of Northwest Indiana neighbors supporting September's Hunger Action Month!

Return your gift with the reply coupon below OR give at foodbanknwi.org/fighthunger. Thank you!



Count me in during Hunger Action Month!

Here's my gift to expand our reach to hungry children and families across Lake and Porter Counties.

☐ \$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 _____

SIGNATURE _____

Please make your check payable to:

Food Bank of Northwest Indiana
2248 West 35th Ave., Gary, IN 46408

Please call 219.980.1777, ext. 311, to charge your gift by phone, or visit www.foodbanknwi.org to make a gift online.

Your gift is tax-deductible as allowed by law.