

## Doing More for Hungry Neighbors

According to official estimates, more than 13,000 children, women, and men are living in poverty across Porter County. Nearly 5,400 are in Portage.

With poverty so often leading to food insecurity, it's critical for the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana to continue to expand its service to pantry locations and feeding sites across these communities.

Thanks to your generosity, one site we've served for years is the Iglesia Evangelica De Cristo MI



Church Food Pantry in Portage. There, Pastor Rev. Israel Santiago and his wife Almarys, along with volunteers from their own congregation and other area churches, welcome families in need during their monthly food distribution out of the their church Hall.

"We are a small church. We don't get any outside donations. We have no sponsors or other resources. We thank God for the donations that come within our Church. The Food Bank of Northwest Indiana supplies most of our food. We used to buy all nonperishable foods on our own, and that got too expensive as more people came. Asking grocery



stores and bakeries for donations was a lot of legwork, so we became a partner of the Food Bank. We try to purchase all of our nonperishable and perishable items through them. When we started 15 years ago, we started helping approximately 10 families. Now we serve over 100."

**Pastor Israel's church is one among more than a dozen Porter County pantries and feeding sites served by your gifts to the Food Bank.**

"When people think about hunger and poverty in the Region, they might more naturally picture communities in Gary and East Chicago, which rank #1 and #2 in impoverished towns in Indiana," says Food Bank Executive Director Steve Beekman. "But families all over are struggling, and it's our job to provide good, nutritious food to everyone who needs it."

Pastor Israel sees it first hand. "People start lining up at 6 am. It doesn't matter that they wait four hours. I couldn't do it ... when it's cold I try to open up the church so they can come inside. We don't turn anyone away, and when large families come in, I try to give them a little extra if there's enough."

# Food Bank Exceeds All Previous Years' Number of Meals Served

From Steve Beekman, Executive Director

Thanks to the increasing generosity of so many kind neighbors and renewing donors, 2017 saw more meals delivered out of the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana's small barn warehouse and headquarters than in any previous year since its founding in 1982.

But the **record-breaking 4.5 million meals served** (approximately 5,434,000 pounds of food) was a bittersweet accomplishment.

Hunger breaks our heart. I know it breaks yours, too.

But what choice do we have? Picture the child sitting in school right now with an empty stomach ... watching the clock tick closer to lunchtime so she can have her first meal of the day, and already worrying whether there will be any food at home for supper. It's hard to pay attention to anything else when you're hungry.

It's for her, and the more than 100,000 people going hungry across the Region, that we must keep going, together. We must do more to feed the children, families, and individuals struggling to get by, while also working in more ways to address and eliminate the many complex causes of hunger in our Region.

As 2018 continues, we'll be sharing some ways that the Food Bank will be expanding its efforts to do just that. I thank you again for joining hands and hearts with us **to deliver more food, hope, and the help people need to thrive.**



Steve Beekman, Executive Director

## Donor Generosity Empowers Food Bank to Serve Valparaiso Soup Kitchen



Poverty and food insecurity exist in nearly every community across the U.S. In Valparaiso, nearly 5,000 residents live below the poverty line. This spring, the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana welcomes Café Manna to its growing list of sites served. Café Manna is an outreach ministry of St. Teresa of Avila's Catholic Student Center at Valparaiso University. Run by student volunteers and other community members, the soup kitchen serves a nutritious dinner each week to neighbors in need. Opened in 2001, Café Manna today welcomes around 350 guests every Thursday.



**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.





# How your gift helps deliver more fresh foods to kids and families

People are used to donating canned goods and boxed foods to help their neighbors in need, but where do all the fresh, perishable items come from? A portion are donated by grocers. But most essential dairy items like milk, along with fresh fruits, vegetables, and meats, must be purchased by the Food Bank. And because these foods make up the most important parts of a healthy diet, financial donations to the Food Bank are critically important to being able to provide them to individuals in need — especially families with children and senior citizens struggling to keep up their nutrition.

**Many parents don't buy enough fresh foods in order to stretch their food budget, relying instead on cheaper, unhealthy foods. This can lead to children's malnourishment and developmental problems.**

Thank you for your generosity, which will keep the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana on the move to be able to deliver even more fresh milk, dairy, produce and protein in 2018!

## *Continued from page 1*

For the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana, expanding to serve more people and distribute to more sites is a blessing and a huge challenge.

"It's pretty incredible that last year, Food Bank donors enabled our small facility to serve a record-breaking 4.5 million meals across both Lake and Porter Counties — more than double what this facility was originally projected to be able to handle," Beekman says. "We're very proud of what so many generous friends are helping us accomplish. And of course, we are also grateful to our partners on the front

lines like Pastor Israel and Almarys Santiago. It is the compassion and commitment of so many churches, schools, and other food sites that enable us to turn donor gifts into life-changing hope and help in the ongoing fight against hunger."

*For more information about Pastor Israel's church and pantry, call (219) 734-6651. For a complete list of Lake and Porter County sites served by the Food Bank, visit [foodbanknwi.org/GetHelp](http://foodbanknwi.org/GetHelp).*

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# Three Square Society Welcoming More and More Members



Many friends of the Food Bank have found that joining the Three Square Society monthly giving club is an easy way to make a bigger difference in fighting hunger and feeding hope. That's because they can make a larger annual gift a little bit at a time — committing a monthly amount by credit card.

THANK YOU to these loyal donors!

***In 2017, more than 100 members of Three Square Society contributed a total of over \$43,000 to our mission.***

That provided enough nutritious meals for about 170,000 people!

Are you ready to join the honored members of this very special Society?

As a Three Square Society member, you'll receive a quarterly communication on the difference your support is making. And, it's easy to increase, decrease, or stop your regular donations at any time.

For questions, or to join or change your membership level, call Traci at (219) 293-8307 ext. 319.

**THANK YOU to loyal donors who have said **YES** to providing steady hunger relief through automatic monthly or quarterly gifts!**

JOIN US!  
THE *soirée*  
AN EVENT TO FIGHT HUNGER  
SUNDAY, JUNE 10, 2018 FROM 3:30 UNTIL 7:00PM  
THE GARY AQUATORIUM IN MARQUETTE PARK  
[foodbanknwi.org](http://foodbanknwi.org)

We're showcasing some of the best tastes, sights, and sounds from around the Region, all while raising money to feed individuals and families struggling with hunger in our community. It includes dinner by the bite, drinks, entertainment, a silent auction and other fundraising raffles.

Proceeds from the event will support hunger-relief programs and services for individuals and families in need across Lake and Porter counties.

**YES! I want to help feed more children, seniors, and families struggling with food insecurity this spring.** Please accept my tax-deductible gift to provide food for my neighbors in need.

☐ \$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](http://www.foodbanknwi.org) to make a gift online.

Your gift is tax-deductible as allowed by law.