

How You Help Our East Chicago Neighbors Living in Poverty

One in three of East Chicago's 27,800 residents lives below the poverty line. That's about 9,000 people, half of whom are under 18 or over 65.

Poverty and hunger are closely connected, which is why we're especially grateful for your generosity that enables the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana to strengthen its deeply rooted commitment to food insecure kids and seniors living in East Chicago.

Thanks to increasing financial support from the Foundations of East Chicago and generous friends like you, the Food Bank's expanding **Mobile Markets, Backpack On The Go** and **Senior Pantry Packs** are reaching more people in need than ever before.

Brenda T. is grateful for the help. Recently, she got custody of her two grandchildren. The family

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Brenda's grandchildren won't have to go without the food they need to thrive.

has had a hard year, but "we're thankful," she says. "We have something to eat. We have a roof over our head." Her daughter lost work in the pandemic and isn't able to send as much money to provide for Jaziyrah and Brayden (ages 4 and 3). Relying on community food assistance like NWI's neighborhood programs helps them make ends meet and utilities and food. "Things are very tight, so just being able to know that I can come here and get something extra to tie us over for the month is a blessing," she said.

This summer, the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana is serving East Chicago youth and their families with Mobile Market drive-thrus at EC Central High School, Washington Elementary, EC's Ivy Tech campus, and other sites.

Thank you for all you do to help feed East Chicago's estimated 4,500 children and seniors at risk for hunger in August! ♥

Names and photos have been changed to respect our clients' privacy.

 facebook.com/FoodBankofNorthwestIndiana

 twitter.com/FoodBankNWI

 instagram.com/foodbanknwi

www.foodbanknwi.org

MEMBER OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**

Madison's Fundraiser



“Helping Fight Hunger Is So Important to Me”

Becoming a “bat mitzvah” is a milestone occasion for Jewish girls reaching their teen years. A bat mitzvah observance recognizes the individual as responsible for their actions and able to observe the commandments. Earlier this summer, Madison Duda celebrated hers by working to ease hunger in her own community.

“I love the Hunger Games books,” she wrote on her fundraising page, “but I would never want any of us to experience a fight for food like they do...I am organizing a drive to help raise money, food and awareness for the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana.”

By its conclusion, Madison’s friends and family had donated nearly \$900, far exceeding her \$500 goal!

“We are so proud of Madison’s gesture,” said Madison’s mom, Laura. “She was able to recognize a real-life problem in a book and come up with a way to help people in her actual community. This mitzvah project also helped her practice important values of Judaism such as repairing the world and compassion for others.”

Doing More Than “Just” Feeding People in Need

The Food Bank of Northwest Indiana couldn’t be prouder of how generosity from friends like you has fueled our record-breaking outreach since the start of the pandemic.

At the same time, a growing part of our mission is to educate people about other available resources to help them through their time of need. Many neighbors visiting our partner agencies for food don’t know about federal aid programs or are confused about the rules.

One man, for example, recently told a food pantry volunteer that he thought having a job meant he wouldn’t be eligible for “food stamps”—as the main assistance program used to be called. *But that’s not true.*

The **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** assists many people who work but don’t earn enough to make ends meet for the number of people they’re supporting. Those enrolled in SNAP receive a monthly, prepaid card which can be used to buy food products from most food retailers.

The Food Bank has a SNAP outreach specialist. Krystle Simmons has helped hundreds of neighbors overcome confusion and other obstacles that keep them from receiving aid for which they qualify.



She guides people through every step of the application process, including helping track down or get new copies of documents required to certify their need.

To find out if you or someone you know is eligible for this help, you can take a short survey at our website. Go to the SNAP tab under “FOOD ASSISTANCE” on our foodbanknwi.org home page. Or, reach out to Krystle at ksimmons@foodbanknwi.org or (219) 980-1777 x306.

Thank you again for all you do to help end hunger around our Region!



Victor A. Garcia
President & CEO

**September Is
Almost Here!**

Fun, Family-friendly Ways You Can Be Part of **Hunger Action Month**

This national observance starts in a few short weeks. Hunger Action Month is dedicated to increasing awareness of food insecurity while inspiring everyone to do their part to make a difference.

Folks across the Region can take part in limitless ways...volunteer at/donate to the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana, host a fundraiser or food drive, educate yourself about the problem of hunger, and more. Here are a few extra special opportunities to help heal the hurt of hunger for our neighbors in need:

RIDE THE REGION



RIDE THE REGION

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4 | 9AM-12PM | FOOD BANK OF NORTHWEST INDIANA
FOODBANKNWI.ORG/RIDE

Join motorcycle riders from all over the Region for an 80-mile trek raising awareness and funds for kids and adults facing hunger. Registration and ride begin at 6490 Broadway in Merrillville.

\$25 fee per rider includes T-shirt and rally celebration.
Questions? Contact Allyson Vaultx at (219) 980-1777 x314 or
avaultx@foodbanknwi.org.

HUNGERHIKE 2021



HUNGER HIKE

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 | 9AM-12PM | LAKE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS
FOODBANKNWI.ORG/HIKE

Walk, run or bike with family, friends and coworkers to assist our hunger-fighting mission!

Kids under 12 can also enjoy Kidz Climb, scaling our fun, inflatable wall.

Questions? Contact Amy McDunn at (219) 980-1777 x313 or
amcdunn@foodbanknwi.org.

HUNGER ACTION MATCH

NOW THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30
FOODBANKNWI.ORG/MATCH

Double your impact in the fight against hunger! Our generous challenge donor, Strack & Van Til, will match all gifts made up to a total of \$25,000.

That means every \$1 you give will serve 6 nourishing meals!



Belstra Milling Strengthens Commitment to Feed Hungry NWI Neighbors

Nick DeKryger is carrying on an important family tradition. Belstra Milling Company was founded in DeMotte, Indiana, by Albert “Bud” Belstra in 1954. In the decades since, Belstra has provided farmers with world-class feeds, recently expanding into raising pigs “to help feed the world.”

Its founder’s vision was built on a culture of “faith and family” that included charitable service to communities in need.

Nick’s dad Malcolm joined Belstra in 1991. In the early 2000s, Malcolm began looking for ways to increase Belstra’s impact on reducing hunger around the Region. He started donating livestock to be processed into fresh ground pork and distributed to area food banks, including the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana.

“My dad saw a need we could address,” says Nick, who’s in his ninth year with Belstra. “We had been donating three pigs a week. During 2020, when COVID hit, we decided to double that. For next year, it is our goal to be able to donate as many as 9 pigs a week. That’s about 15,000 pounds of pork for the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana, plus 30,000 pounds to other food banks.”



The biggest cost of donating livestock lies in the processing of the meat. Between transportation, safety and health requirements, needed inspections, grinding, refrigeration, and other concerns, “it’s a very involved process,” Nick says. Belstra must rely on contributions to its own charity, the LEAP Foundation (educationaboutpigs.com), in order to complete the costlier portions of processing.

“We know from pantry volunteers how much their clients appreciate having the fresh meats. The lean protein is essential for good nutrition, so the ground pork is especially important for neighbors relying on food banks to get the healthy foods they need to thrive.”

Nick is excited about taking Belstra’s pig donations to the next level. “A lot of people wonder why we are so committed to this. It stems from the values and legacy of our founders. Their passion runs very deep and passes from one generation to the next. It’s what we’re called to do. It’s who we are.” ❤️

 **I CARE! Here’s my summer gift to help feed the thousands of NWI children and families struggling with hunger this month!**

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MY DONATION

\$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 \$_____

Please direct \$_____ of the above gift to the *Fighting Hunger, Building Hope* campaign.

For more information about donating, visit foodbanknwi.org

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
6490 Broadway, Merrillville, IN 46410

Please call (219) 980-1777, x311, to charge your gift by phone, or visit foodbanknwi.org/give to make a gift online.

Your gift is tax-deductible as allowed by law.