

Helping Students Come to School Ready to Learn

Faculty and staff at Nathan Hale Elementary in Whiting, Indiana, work hard every day to create a learning environment in which all students can become proficient readers, writers, and thinkers.

But even the most dedicated teacher with the best educational tools will have a hard time making that happen for children who regularly come to school hungry.

The United Way of Porter County reports that more than one in five NWI children is living in poverty (22%), which puts them at greater risk of experiencing hunger and developmental learning delays.

Kids have a harder time paying attention on an empty stomach. They are likelier to struggle academically and socially. They are absent from class more than their peers.

Your generosity to the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana is helping reduce hunger among students in class and learning from home. The Food Bank's **Backpack On the Go** effort, which feeds school-age kids with healthy, shelf-stable proteins and grains, is reaching hundreds of students in need each month.

Principal Julie Pearson is in her 25th year as a teacher and administrator at Nathan Hale. "We are so grateful to be part of the Backpack on the Go program — and for all the work of the volunteers and donors who make it possible. Many of our



Nathan Hale Elementary students gather for story time. The school participates in **Backpack On the Go**. This hunger relief program, available thanks to donations to the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana, provides youth around the Region with nourishing, ready-to-eat meals for weekends and other times when school isn't in session.



students rely on receiving a healthy breakfast and lunch at school. Over weekends and holiday breaks, it's always a concern as to how they will continue to get their daily meals. The Food Bank's bags are filled with nonperishable, kid-friendly items. Students and parents are extremely appreciative for this resource!"

Nathan Hale is one of more than 30 NWI schools served by Backpack On the Go. **To learn more about sponsoring Food Bank programs that serve NWI children directly, contact Chanda Dixon, cdixon@foodbanknwi.org, 219-980-1777, ext. 310.** ♥

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**

40 Years of Nourishing Our Neighbors

In 1981, Gary-area representatives attending a conference in Indy were inspired to learn about how a food bank could improve lives in a community. Bringing that idea back home to our Region, the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana opened in 1982.

From its earliest days, generous neighbors like you made possible its work to provide critical food assistance to children, seniors, families, and other individuals experiencing hardship.

No one could have guessed how critical that assistance would become in the face of a worldwide pandemic that would start 38 years later. As Kelly B. from Griffith told us at a mobile food distribution in January, *"I've been out of work since 2020 and we're down to one income with three daughters to feed. You all have been very helpful for us."*

In fact, from the Food Bank's 72,000-sq.-ft. hunger relief facility in Merrillville, we are serving thousands of people who never imagined they'd be waiting in a food line to get their families the basic nutrition we all need to thrive.

Good people like you are their lifeline to health, help, and hope.

You make possible the Food Bank's annual provision of enough food for more than 4.5 million meals across Lake and Porter counties through 100+ partner agencies, schools, meal programs, and direct distribution sites.

A lot has happened for good in the past 40 years. But as hunger persists at a stubbornly high rate, I hope your resolve to end it does the same! For families like Kelly's, and so many others, **thank you for your spring gift to build healthier families and a stronger Region.**



Victor A. Garcia
President & CEO

Your Generosity in Action

Antioch Missionary Baptist Church in East Chicago bills itself as "The Church that praises God and serves human needs." Celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2022, this vibrant community of worshipers continues to live up to that motto.

The church is one of a dozen sites around East Chicago that hosts a food pantry with the help of the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana. **Every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 11 am – 1 pm, volunteers and friends of Antioch gather at the church on Alexander Avenue to distribute free food to any neighbor who asks.**

Low-income neighbors have been the hardest hit by the pandemic. Across the U.S. in 2020, 80% of COVID-related job losses were among the lowest 25% of wage earners. Cultural minorities and women have suffered the biggest losses. That's a difficult fact to accept given that before the pandemic, one in three East Chicagoans was already living in poverty.

"The outpouring of support in 2020 was absolutely incredible," says Allyson Vaulx, Food Bank Vice President of Development and Communications. "The Food Bank used that money to innovate and expand the ways we're serving. Today, creative new programs that both prevent and reduce hunger are in place. We're doing more than at any time in our history to address the need when and where it happens to keep people self-sufficient.

"We must do more to help thousands of individuals and families who are still fighting their way back. Too many kids and seniors and neighbors living 'on the edge' are falling through the cracks. The Food Bank needs more volunteers and more donors if we're going to realize our vision for a hunger-free Region."

Your spring gift will reach people living in some of Northwest Indiana's most destitute communities. You are the face of hope. Thank you! ♥





APRIL IS NATIONAL
VOLUNTEER MONTH:

We Celebrate
and Thank You
All!

In 2021, more 7,000 people representing hundreds of families, schools, and employee teams generously donated their time to the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana. Every day, amazing volunteers dutifully show up ready to make sure no neighbor goes without the food they need. They sort, package, count, carry, load, drive, and distribute the groceries that are urgently needed in so many communities across Lake and Porter counties. Others work behind the scenes in the office or at special events, and even from home, making phone calls to recognize our supporters!

We are looking for more folks to **JOIN THESE AMAZING CHANGE-MAKERS** in 2022! Learn more by visiting foodbanknwi.org/volunteer. ♥



Did You Know?

Like most food banks and pantries, the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana receives many food donations. However, each year literally "tons" of additional food must be purchased in order to meet the need. That's what makes your gift so important! Your dollars go farther at the Food Bank because we can purchase in volumes at much lower prices.



Mark Your Calendar!

FRIDAY, APRIL 22 | 6 – 9PM
COUNTY LINE ORCHARD, HOBART



40th Year Gala

200 South County Line Road, 46342
Dinner, cash bar, silent auction, live music
by Simply Elton

Admission: \$75 general/ \$150 VIP
Sponsorship opportunities available!

Order your tickets today: foodbanknwi.org/40gala
Or contact Allyson Vaulx, avaulx@foodbanknwi.org,
219-980-1777, ext. 314.

SUNDAY, JUNE 12 | 2 – 5PM | FBNWI
SEE ENCLOSED INSERT FOR MORE!

THE *soirée* WHO DUNNIT?

YES! I'll be a lifeline to health, help, and hope for neighbors experiencing hunger. Use my gift to **build healthier families and a stronger Region:**

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

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 **Three Square Society** 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, ext. 311, 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.



THE *soirée* WHO DUNNIT?

Sunday, June 12 | 2pm – 5pm
Food Bank of Northwest Indiana

Bring your best detective skills and help solve an intriguing **murder mystery** while you enjoy superior fare from our Region's finest chefs, restaurants, breweries, and wineries.

Whether hot on the killer's trail or completely clueless, you'll be part of the most important solution of all: **helping end hunger across Northwest Indiana.**

This unforgettable afternoon includes live musical entertainment, dancing, a silent auction, food and drink vendors, beer and wine bar, and more! 21 and over only admitted.

Upgraded VIP Experience

Exclusive access to our VIP lounge, where you will enjoy high-end wine tasting, early silent auction and mystery bag access, a chef's table presentation, and more!

To register or learn more, reach out to Amy McDunn at 219-980-1777, ext. 313, or amcdunn@foodbanknwi.org. Or visit online **foodbanknwi.org/soiree**.