



## Bridging the Gap in Times of Crisis, Thanks to You

Virginia knows how it feels to struggle.

She and her husband at the time were living in Miami with their two young children when Hurricane Andrew blew through in 1992. “We had some friends, but no close family. With everything destroyed, when we heard they were giving away food, my husband was hesitant. But I was grateful to be able to accept the help that was offered, for our kids’ sake.”

Fast forward to 2020.

Virginia, now residing in Northwest Indiana and working as a surgical/SPD tech at Northwest Regional Surgery Center in Merrillville, was experiencing the effects of the shutdown of area stores due to COVID-19, and things got a little chaotic. Through a friend, Virginia discovered that the Food Bank was hosting a milk distribution, which helped her greatly for her seven-year-old

grandson. “They not only offered me one gallon,” Virginia recalled, “but several.”

It was the tremendous outpouring of community support that made the Food Bank’s emergency outreach possible in 2020. Today, as demand for food soars with the current inflation crisis, only generous response from donors like you will enable us once again to meet the spiraling need.

The assistance she received meant a lot to Virginia, who for years has gone out of her way to help others in need. In fact, less than a year after she received help from the Food Bank, she was in charge of a “cereal drive” at her job. Virginia and her coworkers decided to donate it all to the Food Bank.

“Dropping off that cereal, I was in awe to learn about all the things the Food Bank is doing. I didn’t realize how big it was and how much they are doing out in our community! I felt good that I chose the Food Bank for our cereal donation.”

It is her Christian faith that has always moved Virginia to do for others. “Maybe it’s my purpose. Scripture tells us God will be with us in our need. I know at any given moment my life could change, so I will step out on faith to receive what I need. And when I’m blessed to give back, I’ll be the first in line to show how grateful I am to pave the way back.” ♥

*Names and photos may have been changed to respect privacy.*

 [facebook.com/FoodBankofNorthwestIndiana](https://facebook.com/FoodBankofNorthwestIndiana)

 [twitter.com/foodbanknwi](https://twitter.com/foodbanknwi)

 [instagram.com/foodbanknwi](https://instagram.com/foodbanknwi)

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

MEMBER OF  
**FEEDING  
AMERICA**

## Out-of-Control Inflation Means New Crisis for Thousands of NWI Neighbors

Before COVID, the Food Bank was distributing about six million pounds of food annually. In 2020, that nearly doubled to 11 million. Last year, distributions totaled nine million pounds. It seemed to many that “the worst was over” for the rise in hunger due to the pandemic.

But just as one emergency came under control, another took its place.

Soaring food, fuel, and housing prices are hitting families hard, with consumer prices up nearly 10% in the U.S. in March 2022 from a year earlier. Those same prices are hitting us hard, too. Gasoline hikes are just one of the many ways inflation is challenging us to be able to expand our Mobile Market distributions for the growing number of neighbors in need of food right now. Supply chain problems are hindering our access to many corporate food donations.

---

At the same time, the number of people accessing our emergency food programs, particularly Mobile Markets, has more than doubled recently. From January to April, the increase is 67% — a challenging increase, to say the least!

---

To keep the Food Bank responsive to the need will take an outpouring of generous support from you and every friend of the Food Bank. Simply put, donor gifts mean as much right now as they did during the height of COVID.

I thank you for the sacrifices you make to ensure that our neighbors can know from where their next meal will come. We are all in this together, and that’s how we’ll get through it — again.



Victor A. Garcia  
President & CEO

## We Love Our Volunteers!

(EVIDENTLY THE FEELING IS MUTUAL)

The Food Bank of Northwest Indiana was recently voted into the top three of our Region’s “Best Place to Volunteer” as reported by *The Times of Northwest Indiana*.



We are honored to provide 4,000+ individuals, families, and student/corporate groups with meaningful opportunities to help relieve hunger each year across Lake and Porter Counties. We work to ensure that volunteers’ experiences are unique and fulfilling as they learn about the tremendous difference they are making for neighbors they’re serving.

It’s easy and rewarding to join us! Start the signup process by visiting [foodbanknwi.org/volunteer/](https://foodbanknwi.org/volunteer/).

Current openings include time slots for **Mobile Market setup and distribution, packing and sorting**, and **senior grocery delivery drivers**. ♥

## FOOD BANK THURSDAYS at Deep River Waterpark

**NOW THROUGH AUGUST 11!** Save money on your ticket and help lessen food insecurity in the Region!

Each guest in your party who donates two cans of nonperishable food on Thursdays will receive a DISCOUNTED admission price\* — \$5.00 OFF regular admission (10am – 6pm or 2pm – 6pm) or \$3.00 OFF for guests under 46" tall. Learn more at [deepriverwaterpark.com/discount-offers](https://deepriverwaterpark.com/discount-offers) or call 219-947-7850. ♥

**Deep River Waterpark is located at 9001 East Lincoln Highway, Crown Point, IN 46307**

\*Offer does not apply to already discounted admission, group rates, or hotel packages.





# Food Bank Provides Area High Schoolers with Work-Study Opportunity

Thanks to a new partnership between the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana and Merrillville High School, students honed their knowledge and employment skills while onsite at the Food Bank this past academic year.

As part of their graduation requirements, juniors and seniors worked at the Food Bank to gain experience in areas of logistics, leadership, communication, and problem solving.

MHS educator and creator of the program Cheryl Austin said, “This is a great fit for students who are passionate about helping others and serving our community.” Austin is grateful for workplaces like the Food Bank “whose mission is focused on serving people.” The Food Bank and the Dean and Barbara White Community Center are the first two employers in the program.

The partnership is an example of the Food Bank’s community-focused initiatives. Plans are underway to maximize its impact during



**MHS Interns invest academic time to build professional experience and support their community through various initiatives ranging from donor mailing preparations to Pantry Partner Surveys.**

next academic year to both raise awareness about food insecurity among a new generation of students and motivate tomorrow’s leaders to be part of the solution. ♥

*Thank You!*

## Jewel-Osco Hosts Ongoing Food Drive for Customers

Jewel-Osco grocers across Lake and Porter counties are providing shoppers with an easy way to help feed their neighbors in need.

At every Jewel-Osco in these two counties, customers can use the large boxes near the checkout aisle to donate purchased groceries to the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana. This ongoing food drive will help raise awareness about the need for hunger relief while collecting critically needed donations throughout the year. Many shoppers appreciate the convenience of donating straight from their grocery cart, versus making a separate trip to the Food Bank with groceries from their pantry.



Drawing customers’ attention to the opportunity to donate, one clerk at the Crown Point Jewel-Osco recently raised over 200 cans during her shift!

Given the current challenges of securing enough food for children and adults in need, retail food drives are an essential source of in-kind donations. **THANK YOU, Jewel-Osco and shoppers!** ♥

# Mark Your Calendar!

## PLAN NOW TO TAKE PART IN HUNGER ACTION MONTH!

September is dedicated to increasing people's awareness of food insecurity while inspiring them to make a difference. There are many ways you can be part of the solution to hunger:

♥ **Volunteer and/or donate** to the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana  
[foodbanknwi.org/volunteer](http://foodbanknwi.org/volunteer) & [foodbanknwi.org/give](http://foodbanknwi.org/give)

♥ **Host a fundraiser or food drive**  
[foodbanknwi.org/drive](http://foodbanknwi.org/drive)

♥ **Educate yourself** about the problem and advocate for those in need, and more.

Also, mark your calendar and take part in these extra special opportunities:

**SAT, SEPT 3 | 9AM - NOON | FBNWI**

## RIDE THE REGION

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

**\$25 fee per rider**

includes T-shirt & rally celebration.

**Questions?**

Contact Amy McDunn at **219.980.1777, ext 313.**

[foodbanknwi.org/events/ride-the-region](http://foodbanknwi.org/events/ride-the-region)

**SAT, SEPT 17 | 9AM - NOON  
LAKE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS**

**JOIN AND/OR SPONSOR**

## HUNGERHIKE<sup>2022</sup>

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

Raise \$250 or more to be designated a Hunger Hero and receive special recognition throughout the event.

**Questions?**

Contact Amy McDunn at **219.980.1777, ext 313,**  
or [amcdunn@foodbanknwi.org](mailto:amcdunn@foodbanknwi.org).

[foodbanknwi.org/events/the-hunger-hike](http://foodbanknwi.org/events/the-hunger-hike)



**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](http://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](http://foodbanknwi.org/give) to make a gift online.

Your gift is tax-deductible as allowed by law.



228