



## "Thank You for Giving Me This Amazing Opportunity"

Julie Anderson left home at age 18 and worked her way up to becoming the youngest female manager of a diesel garage, in charge of coordinating its fleet of 150 trucks. "After my shift, I would sleep in my car before working the night shift at a mental health clinic, to put myself through college," Julie recalls.

At age 29, Julie married and began a family. But after 16 years, the marriage broke down. Julie became a single mom of four.

"I was at rock bottom, having to find a way to support my family completely alone," she remembers. "Through a federal program, I qualified to enroll in a job training program. One of my first opportunities was with the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana. I felt very beat down and honestly exhausted, but I needed a job. The Food Bank took a chance on me."

**At the time, Julie didn't admit that she herself was food insecure.** "Here I was, working around food all day, while being extremely hungry myself. No one knew. I had too much pride to ask for food. As any parent would do, I gave my children all the food we had while going hungry myself."

One day, a fellow employee asked Julie if she'd like to share her lunch. "It was such a kind gesture! I realized that the people at the Food Bank practice what they preach. What does the face of hunger look like? Just a short time ago it looked like me."

Following the job training program, Julie was offered a full-time position at the Food Bank.

"Having been mentored daily from the top down," she says, "I'm trusted to do a good job. I have been treated with dignity and respect. I'm off food stamps for the first time in 16 years, and now get to help others do the same. The Food Bank helped me become self-sufficient and I would like to thank our amazing family for giving me this opportunity to serve our community." ♥

*Julie Anderson serves as the Food Bank's SNAP (food stamps) Support Specialist and has recently been asked to head up the new Order Ahead Program.*

*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)

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## Speaking Up for Our Hungry Neighbors

The word “advocate” is both a noun and a verb.

The word comes from the Latin “advocare,” meaning “to add a voice.” An advocate speaks or represents the interests of another or works toward a course of action within a particular cause. To advocate is to plead in favor of a person, group, or idea.

The Food Bank of Northwest Indiana provides food assistance to neighbors in need and advocates for meaningful change to combat food insecurity, too. How do we do this? By engaging with organizations and officials working to end food insecurity through empowerment measures like education and public policy.

One example of the Food Bank’s growing commitment to advocacy was a special spring event held on “**National Agriculture Day**,” **March 21**. On that day, we brought together 40 community leaders committed to positive progress in the fight against food insecurity to learn how to be more effective advocates for our neighbors in need.

The “**Advocacy 101 Training**” was led by Bread for the World, an advocacy organization urging U.S. decision makers to do all they can to pursue a world without hunger.

Participants included passionate faith leaders, school representatives, pantry partners, social services colleagues, and veteran case workers — uniting in the fight to end hunger. They learned about identifying the reality of hunger, the systems impacting that reality, and how to spark needed change. This insightful educational session ended with participants taking action together by writing our elected officials.

Every time you give to the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana, your contribution purchases food for today. But it also supports advocacy that can help change lives tomorrow!

*Thank you for your continuing support.*



Victor A. Garcia  
President & CEO

## Serving Neighbors Experiencing Homelessness

The Food Bank of Northwest Indiana is a leading partner in the City of Gary’s homeless street outreach. A federal grant is fueling the “Re-imagine Gary” initiative, which is delivering healthy foods and other essentials directly to neighbors experiencing homelessness.

### RECIPIENTS HAVE SHARED THEIR APPRECIATION, INCLUDING THESE NEIGHBORS:

#### 17-YEAR-OLD “JOHN” HAS BEEN IN FOSTER CARE AND PLACEMENTS HIS WHOLE LIFE.

He said he’d rather die before going back into “the system” or with families by whom he was abused. He lives in an abandoned building and is grateful for the lunches which have helped him out a lot.

#### “MS. DOE,” A PAST CLIENT, CAME TO SAY “THANK YOU.”

She let us know that using the resources we provided, she sought treatment for substance addiction. Being 45 days “clean,” she was staying with a family member and had begun a new job. She said the food assistance she received helped her put her life back on track.

#### “JANE” IS A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, HAVING NEARLY LOST HER LIFE TO AN ATTACK BY AN EX-BOYFRIEND.

Living at a shelter, Jane heard about the Food Bank’s program and received food and clothing. “Thank you for helping less fortunate individuals,” Jane said. She cried the whole time while sharing her story — ensuring us they were tears of joy because she was able to escape.

*Names and photos have been changed to protect client privacy.*





## Congressman Mrvan Honored



On May 8, the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana recognized **U.S. Congressman Frank J. Mrvan** for his dedicated advocacy benefiting neighbors facing hunger.

The honor came during **The Soirée**, the Food Bank's signature annual event to build awareness of food insecurity and raise funds to ease hunger across Northwest Indiana.

"The Congressman's leadership in Washington has had a direct impact on the neighbors we serve in Lake and Porter counties," said Victor Garcia, Food Bank President and CEO. "With federal funding and



support this past year, the Food Bank was able to serve 6,200 additional meals, provide 1,700 seniors with monthly nutrition assistance, and help 1,400+ families apply for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance

Program — over and above the 50,000 individuals we reach with monthly food aid through our partner agencies and Mobile Market distributions."

Contributions from generous corporate sponsors, local restaurants and breweries, entertainers, volunteers, Food Bank staff, and over 300 guests combined to raise nearly \$85,000. ♥

### "Why I'm Here"

Guests of **The Soirée** shared their reasons for supporting the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana ...

"... to help seniors in the city of Gary ... Older Hoosiers should have all the resources they need to age with dignity."

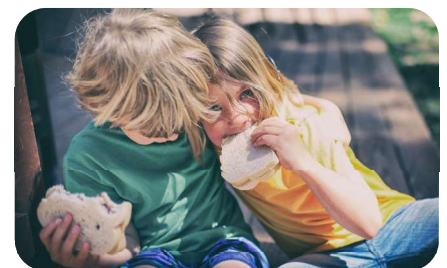
"The Food Bank provides a vital role in the NWI community ..."

"... you help students in need at Purdue University Northwest ... thank you a thousand times over!"

"I want to be part of the community making a difference. It means a lot to know you're involved in something bigger than yourself ..."

## 24,700 Food Insecure Children Live Across Northwest Indiana...

... according to Feeding America. That's nearly 1 in 6 kids in our Region. Your gift to the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana feeds the need across Lake and Porter counties through a network of 100+ partnering food pantries and meal sites, as well as mobile food distributions in rural communities. In 2022, the Food Bank distributed more than 7 million pounds of healthy groceries, fresh meat, dairy, and produce. **Every \$1 you give serves 3 nutritious meals and supports empowerment of long-term food security** through education, outreach, and advocacy. ♥



# Join Us During September: Hunger Action Month

THURS, SEPT 7  
9AM – 11AM OR 1PM – 3PM | FBNWI



Volunteer with coworkers to sort and pack food for neighbors in need

For more information or to sign up,  
call Charlie Cole at 219.980.1777 x314 or go to  
[foodbanknwi.org/pack](http://foodbanknwi.org/pack)

SAT, SEPT 23 | 9AM – NOON  
LAKE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

## JOIN AND/OR SPONSOR HUNGERHIKE 2023

Team up with family, friends, and coworkers to walk, run, or bike and raise awareness / funds to provide meals for individuals experiencing food insecurity.

**Be a Hunger Hero – raise \$1,000!**

For more information or to sign up,  
call Amy McDunn at 219.980.1777 x313 or go to  
[foodbanknwi.org/hike](http://foodbanknwi.org/hike)

## MAY WE REACH YOU BY EMAIL?

The Food Bank of Northwest Indiana invites you to stay up to date with its latest news and efforts affecting hunger relief across the Region! Returning your email address on the enclosed reply slip will enable us to reach you with more timely reports and updates happening between newsletters. (You have our word: We won't "flood your inbox" and we'll never share your email address with anyone!)

Thank you again for all you do to fight hunger and feed hope.

MY DONATION



I support the Food Bank's leading hunger relief efforts across our Region. Here's my gift to provide more nourishing meals in July and August and support ongoing advocacy for neighbors in need:

☐ \$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.

