

How You're Helping Neighbors Take the Needed Steps Back to Self-Sufficiency

Telling Hunger to Take a Hike – For Good!

After Alex* lost his job, he struggled to make ends meet. The spiraling cost of living left him with limited savings and a tight budget. Getting the healthy food he needed while applying for jobs became challenging.

But thanks to generosity like yours, Alex received the food assistance he needed through the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana. It was the first important step back to his longer-term health and well-being. But many more steps lay ahead.


 Helping neighbors take those many steps is driving a new partnership among the Food Bank and other agencies devoted to restoring people's financial independence.

This Regional collective includes the Food Bank, CoAction, Center of Workforce Innovations (CWI), and the United Way.

For Alex, the seamless collaboration proved invaluable. While receiving meal assistance from the Food Bank, Alex got help from CoAction with rent and utility payments. Through CWI's WorkOne



program, he obtained a welding certification and updated his resume. The United Way's Level Up program then helped Alex gain new skills, receive professional clothing, and learn financial literacy.

Each step was essential to Alex's ability to secure a higher-paying job that could help him avoid food insecurity in the future. Today, Alex is thriving, having saved enough for a down payment on a modest home and accumulated over \$8,000 in savings.

His journey from crisis to stability shows the life-changing power of this kind of partnership.

CWI Director of Marketing & Communications Ami Reese said, "Our team lead is very engaged with the Food Bank. At on-site food distributions, WorkOne staffers are on hand to answer questions, book appointments and provide guidance.

"We cherish our partnership with the Food Bank of NWI because challenges individuals and families face can be complex and layered. Unemployment or underemployment is rarely a standalone issue. Therefore, it makes perfect sense that we partner with a variety of community non-profits, health providers, and social service entities to provide the

Names and photos may have been changed to respect privacy.

 facebook.com/FoodBankofNorthwestIndiana

 twitter.com/foodbanknwi

 instagram.com/foodbanknwi

www.foodbanknwi.org

MEMBER OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**

Continued on page 2

Nourishing the Whole Person

More and more, food banks around the country are helping lead hunger relief efforts in new and innovative ways in their communities. The Food Bank of Northwest Indiana is no exception.

In this issue of “NewsFeed,” we highlight the impact of your generosity on one of these efforts, a multi-agency partnership offering neighbors a step-by-step pathway to self-sufficiency.

Many people who are food insecure face other challenges that jeopardize their stability. Low-wage jobs and homelessness are two examples of these hardships. But there are others: high medical bills that come with chronic illness, living far from the nearest grocery store, advanced age, and lack of education or language barriers.

This partnership leverages the power of the Food Bank plus other major Regional players: CoAction (formerly NWI Communication Action), WorkOne, Center of Workforce Innovations, and the United Way.

While a food bank can feed a person each and every month, nourishing the whole person requires a broader approach to their challenges.

With your continuing help this month, the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana can take our Region’s hunger relief efforts to new heights and help more people break the cycle of hunger for good!

Thank you once more for your commitment to being part of the solution to a stronger Northwest Indiana! Let’s never, ever give up the fight to end food insecurity and feed hope. Together, we can do so in more and better ways than ever before.



Victor A. Garcia
President & CEO

How You’re Helping Neighbors Take the Needed Steps Back to Self-Sufficiency

Continued from page 1

wraparound services that people in our community need to survive. I strongly believe that working together is working better for our Region.”

CoAction’s communications manager, Claudia Peña, agrees. “This collective partnership allows us to address the community’s needs more comprehensively and efficiently than if each organization operated independently. By collaborating, we can offer a seamless continuum of care, ensuring that clients receive holistic support tailored to their unique situations.

“The collective’s impact extends beyond the immediate benefits to individual clients. It represents a shift towards more innovative, inclusive, and sustainable approaches to community support — enhancing the quality and reach of services while fostering a sense of shared responsibility. The importance of this work cannot be overstated. It is about building a stronger, healthier community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.”

The collective partnership with Co-Action, CWI, and the United Way is the latest among the Food Bank’s growing field of innovative hunger relief efforts.

Other programs introduced in the past five years include: home grocery delivery to seniors, order-ahead food lockers strategically placed within the community, and “food as medicine” partnerships that provide nourishment to at-risk populations.

Thank you for your continued support that makes these life-changing programs possible. Together, we are creating a stronger, healthier Northwest Indiana. ♥

**Names and photograph changed for privacy.*



HOORAY — YOU MADE A BIG SPLASH!

A BIG SHOUT OUT OF APPRECIATION TO DEEP RIVER WATERPARK IN CROWN POINT AND GENEROUS PATRONS who created a wave of *hunger relief* during this summer’s canned good drive! The successful “Food Bank Thursdays” brought in more than 2,222 pounds of food – about 1,850 nourishing meals. Thanks for diving in to help NWI neighbors in need!



Partnership Puts Family on Road to Stability

Recently, “David” and “Amanda” visited one of the Food Bank’s distribution sites. The young couple with small children had recently lost their jobs — and their home. They were forced to move in with a family member, but were determined to do whatever it took to regain their stability.

Thanks to its close partnership with the Center of Workforce Innovations, the Food Bank steered the couple to CWI’s WorkOne program, where they received the information and support services they desperately needed to move forward. The father was accepted into commercial driving training. The mother met with a career advisor, updated her resume, and



attended a job fair that resulted in an offer. “I am so glad that we decided to go to the Food Bank that day,” the young father said. “I don’t know what we would have done if we didn’t find out about WorkOne.” ♥



Working Smarter to Get Kids the Food They Need



A 2023 report published by Hunger Free America found that between 2021 and 2023, the number of Indiana residents facing food insecurity rose by 36%. Of the more than 90,000 neighbors living in Lake and Porter counties experiencing food insecurity, one in three are kids under 18.

Ensuring that no one goes without the nourishment they need to thrive is the growing challenge of private charities and their generous supporters — including you and fellow donors to the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana.

One goal for the Food Bank is increasing its reach by helping establish more school-based pantries. Schools are uniquely positioned to help children get not only the education to help their brains develop, but also food that helps brains and bodies grow. When kids have access to healthy meals every day, they feel better, do better in school, and have fewer behavior problems.

Ann Heiligstedt is the Food Bank’s agency network coordinator. “Helping area schools and colleges create on-site, sustainable food pantries is an effective way to feed more students in need when school meals aren’t available,” she says. **“The Food Bank’s purchasing power can enable a partnering school to get many times the amount of food compared with acquiring it on their own.”**

Additionally, the capacity of the Food Bank allows for large scale food donations to be secured and distributed to partner agencies.

Compared with traditional food pantries, school-based pantries can also be far more accessible to families, often opening right after dismissal when parents are already on site to pick up their children.

For more information about opening an in-school pantry, call Ann Heiligstedt at 219-980-1777 ext. 312 or email aheiligstedt@foodbanknwi.org ♥

**LAST DAY TO "PACK TO GIVE BACK"
IS ON GIVING TUESDAY,
DECEMBER 3, 2024!**

**9AM - 11AM OR 1PM - 3PM
FOOD BANK OF NORTHWEST INDIANA**

While making a significant impact in the community, you can also promote team building among your colleagues. **Learn more or sign up by contacting Charnita Jones, cjones@foodbanknwi.org, or 219-980-1777 ext. 313.**

*Volunteering Isn't Just for
the Holidays!*

WE NEED YOU - ALL YEAR LONG!

Without year-round donors & volunteers, programs like Mobile Markets and senior grocery deliveries come to a halt.

Thank you for remembering the Food Bank of NWI in every season. **Sign up to volunteer at foodbanknwi.org/volunteer.** **Learn more by phoning 219-980-1777 ext. 316 or email volunteers@foodbanknwi.org**

ADVOCACY:

Food Bank Uses New Technology to Assist More Hungry Neighbors



Making sure NWI children and adults have healthy food within their reach is a priority for the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana. So, in addition to running emergency distributions and stocking shelves at partner agencies and pantries, the Food Bank assists people with the application process for food aid from the federal government.

SNAP is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, previously known as food stamps. SNAP currently provides 1 in 7 Americans with help affording the nutritious groceries essential to health and well-being.

The Food Bank has provided outreach and application assistance for SNAP for more than four years.

Using technology-based tools helps us reach new levels of service through Feeding America's interactive website, which invites people in need

to learn more about SNAP from their local food bank. Currently, 15-20 inquiries a day are being received through the GSNAP online platform led by the GSNAP tool, in addition to other local referral sources and partnerships.

Many individuals calling in have no internet access. Others are unfamiliar with how to navigate online. The Food Bank helps them complete and submit their application. This aid can make or break whether they receive the food benefits for which they qualify.

Neighbors we've assisted often share their deep appreciation for the SNAP assistance available through the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana.

To learn more or find out if you or someone you know qualifies for SNAP benefits, email snap@foodbanknwi.org or call 219-980-1777 ext. 306. ♥



YES, Victor! I want to help more people have the food they need to thrive. Use my fall gift to take the Food Bank's hunger relief programs to new heights:

\$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.



245

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.

MY DONATION