

INSIDE SCOOP



Eastern Illinois
Foodbank



FIGHTING HUNGER, DRIVING HOPE

When scheduling a donation drop off, facility tour or check presentation, we often receive a curious look when we mention our operating hours. Why do we close at 4:30 pm Monday through Thursday and at 12:30 pm on Fridays? The answer? Logistics.

Our drivers arrive to work around 6 am or earlier to ensure enough driving time to their farthest destination, which can be up to two hours away, efficiently load & inspect their trucks to correspond with their route and ensure that they'll have space for pickups on their way back. Six of our 26 staff members hold Commercial Driver's Licenses (CDL) and traveled over 138,000 miles last fiscal year — that's a 53% increase in mileage since FY15. This increase is due to the addition of McLean, Livingston & DeWitt counties to our service territory in July 2015, expanding our reach from 14 to 17 counties and increasing the number of food insecure individuals by 35%.

In an effort to increase access to fresh produce, meat and dairy product and decrease edible food waste, Eastern Illinois Foodbank implemented our Retailers Against Hunger Program in August 2015. Food received from retailers is often highly nutritious and generally the most expensive for the Foodbank to obtain. Recurring pickups are scheduled with dozens of local retailers. In other instances, we link member agencies with nearby retailers to conduct store pick-ups. This ensures food doesn't go to waste and is distributed as quickly as possible. Currently, 42 retailers are active in our Retailers Against Hunger program.

How does this program impact our agencies and community in need?

Salvation Army Food Pantry in Champaign has fully embraced the Retailers Against Hunger Program. The pantry is open five days per week and serves approximately 1,000 households each month. Since the beginning of this year, the pantry has received an average of 1,500 pounds of produce and 400 pounds of bakery product, daily. The pantry picks up groceries directly from Target and receives a regular delivery of retail product from the Foodbank, from stores such as SAM's Club and Schnucks. Product is distributed within days and their clients couldn't be happier with the selection. Due to the increase in product available,

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"The quality has been so great. With the Retailer distribution we're getting fresh product and it continues to be fresh when the clients come and pick it up."

— Robin Mathis,
Salvation Army
of Champaign County

OUR FLEET



+ 

+ 138k miles

+  6 days per week

- Delivering orders to EIF member agencies
- Receiving donations from food distributors
- Distributing food thru our Foodmobile Program



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CONTACT US

Eastern Illinois Foodbank
2405 North Shore Drive
Urbana, IL 61802-7221
(217) 328-3663

www.eifoodbank.org



DIRECTOR'S LETTER



Dear friends and supporters,

So often, I'm reminded of the incredible power of our community in the fight against hunger. I heard it in the eager voices of 80 children labeling carrots in our warehouse at Operation Orange this September. I saw it in the smiling faces of enthusiastic volunteers at our neighborhood park parties this summer, dancing with the DJ and distributing healthy groceries to families. Every day, our community makes an impact on the lives of our hungry neighbors.

"Every day, our community makes an impact on the lives of our hungry neighbors."

As I look ahead into FY18, it's clear that we continue to face a high level of need. We are serving nearly 120,000 people across 17 counties – that's one in seven. The poverty level right here in Champaign County is over 20%, **4th highest in the state of Illinois**. And, 1 in 5 children in our area don't know from where their next meal will come. That's unacceptable.

However, what's also clear is that our community's support is incredibly mighty. In this newsletter, you'll read of our supporters – retailers, corporations, volunteers and donors who all are finding a unique way to join in the fight against hunger. I'm humbled by the fact that despite the challenges we face, that support – and its impact – endures.

A sincere thank you for your ongoing commitment to our mission of alleviating hunger.


Jim Hires
President & CEO

FIGHTING HUNGER, DRIVING HOPE *continued from page 1*

the pantry has adopted a "take what you need" approach to food distribution, meaning clients have a choice in the type and quantity of product they take home. Providing clients the ability to choose the food they receive to feed their families or themselves instills dignity and hope – something many who aren't struggling with hunger take for granted.

Why do retailers donate?

Most retailers donate to remove overage from their inventory and decrease the amount of spoilage in their trash. Food is received fresh by the Foodbank and agencies and is distributed quickly, generally within 48 hours, allowing the recipient a few days to consume.

Retail managers are also aware of the struggles many families face to make ends meet each month. One Meijer Team Leader (Meijer's version of managers) has a family member who currently receives food stamps to help feed her family and thinks of her whenever she preps the day's donation to EIF. It's a reminder that many are one accident, medical diagnosis or unexpected life change away from needing help.

Due to the nature of their work, retailers are aware of the abundance of food available that's not always able to be obtained by our food insecure population. Households struggling with hunger often have to sacrifice quality for quantity in order to make sure everyone at the dinner table gets fed. In fact, **79% of client households report purchasing the cheapest food available**, even if they knew it wasn't the healthiest option. Many are also forced to make tough decisions. **69% of households had to choose between purchasing food and paying for utilities.**

Last fiscal year, 2.2 million meals were donated by retailers throughout our service area and provided hope to single parents, seniors, veterans, students and children facing hunger.



PARTNERS OF THE YEAR

Business Partner of the Year:



Yahoo Employee Foundation

Last year alone, the Yahoo Employee Foundation donated \$397,000 –that’s over two million meals for hungry children, families, seniors and veterans in our community. A \$75,000 grant was awarded to EIF to launch the Pop-Up Food Pantry for Veterans Program. To date, over 2,000 veterans and their families struggling with hunger have been fed through the program.

EIF was also one of three local recipients to be awarded a legacy gift of \$320,000 from the Yahoo Employee Foundation. EIF looks forward to working with the Yahoo! team to determine how this incredible gift will best serve the Foodbank and our community for many years to come.

Community Partner of the Year:



Print | Radio | Digital

The radio group has been a true partner of the Foodbank for the last several years, helping EIF raise awareness about the issues of hunger and food insecurity. Our partnership reached new heights in 2015 when a strategic marketing plan was created and implemented.

In conjunction with their media support, WDWS/WHMS has also offered their parking lot on South Neil Street as a host for our live, Day of Giving event in late November. In the last two years, Day of Giving has raised \$286,000 — or 1.4 million meals — for our community in need.

By giving Eastern Illinois Foodbank a literal voice to reach new audiences, WDWS/WHMS radio stations empowered listeners to donate. More importantly, they partnered with EIF to educate the community about our mission to alleviate hunger.

Food Donor of the Year:



Savings Made Simple

Last year, SAM's stores in Champaign and Normal donated nearly half a million pounds of product to Eastern Illinois Foodbank - that's a 56% increase over the year before! Also important, 25% of that product — about 125,000 lbs. — was fresh produce, something they hadn't donated in the past.

Perhaps more importantly, mindsets at the local stores toward donating and giving back to the community, have improved. These positive attitudes have resulted in in-store Foodbank advocates where associates are sharing the importance of store donations with one another and with customers.

Through their efforts, SAM's Club provided enough food for 370,438 meals to those in our community, last year alone.

MISSION IMPACT AWARDS

Niemann Foods, Chambanamoms.com and Rowan & Quinn Fisher were awarded Mission Impact Awards for their contribution to the Foodbank's mission of alleviating hunger and nourishing stronger communities.

Niemann Foods allowed EIF use of their former County Market building on Kirby in Champaign for Mobile Markets. In an effort to increase access to fresh produce, EIF held weekly Mobile Markets from February thru April and in just three months, 44,000 pounds of fresh produce and grocery product was delivered into the hands of 4,700 individuals struggling with hunger.

Chambanamoms.com was an early sponsor of the first Operation Orange in 2014, promoting the event where kids and adults volunteer to repack food for 12 straight hours, and have promoted this family volunteering opportunity ever since. Chambanamoms.com has been our 'word of mouth' partner, helping us spread the

word about the great things we do right here in our community and encouraging folks to get involved.

Rowan and Quinn Fisher are the youngest Mission Impact Award winners to date. In December 2015, Rowan and his mom, Leighann, visited the Foodbank to make a donation of food and funds. They came back again the next fall to volunteer at Operation Orange, our 12-hour food repack during Hunger Action Month. This time Rowan's sister, Quinn, joined them. Since then, they've all been back to repack three more times. They've also been making steady donations to us. Quinn visited back in May with a portion of her first paycheck that she wanted to donate to the Foodbank and Rowan gave us a gift on his birthday last spring — \$10 for his 10th birthday. They have truly made an impression on EIF and are great examples that it doesn't matter how young you are, everyone has something to give.



WALMART HELPS EIF AGENCIES **DISTRIBUTE PERISHABLE PRODUCT**

This past May, the Foodbank received a \$50,000 infrastructure grant from the Walmart Foundation to increase our agency's capacity to accept and distribute more perishable food product. The grant supported investments in the equipment necessary to handle perishable products, such as coolers and freezers for transporting, storing and distributing food; thermometers and temperature calibration devices; shelving units, carts and more. Thanks to grantors like the Walmart Foundation, our agencies are strengthened and supported in delivering product like fresh produce, meat and dairy in to the hands of those that need it most.

These EIF agencies were awarded freezer or refrigeration units thanks to the Walmart grant:

Arcola Food Pantry in Arcola, IL
Friends of Champaign County in Champaign, IL
Hands of Christ in Paxton, IL
HOPE Food Pantry in Hidalgo, IL
Salvation Army Danville Corps in Danville, IL
Sheldon Area Food Pantry in Sheldon, IL
St Vincent DePaul in Bloomington, IL
St. Vincent DePaul in Pontiac, IL
Standing Stone/Carpenter's Table in Charleston, IL
Sullivan New Life in Sullivan, IL



Mick Bales, EIF Supply Chain Coordinator and Deb Thompson Johansen, Walmart Receiving

"We like to give back to our community and ensure that those who don't have a hot meal can get one. Everyone deserves a hot meal."

- Deb Thompson Johansen
Savoy Walmart Receiving

EVENTS & PROMOTIONS

DAY of GIVING

& 25 DAYS OF GIVING:

Tuesday, **November 28, 2017**, marks EIF's **Day of Giving!** Last year, 730,000 meals were donated by schools, businesses and community groups throughout our service area. This year, we're asking our community to come together to raise 800,000 meals for families in need this holiday season. Our community can participate in **Day of Giving** by holding a food or funds drive and local businesses can participate in our **25 Days of Giving**, offering a way for their patrons to donate to EIF.

Day of Giving is a great opportunity for students, co-workers and colleagues to get involved in giving back to our community.

New this year! Businesses can sponsor a giving tree in their entryway, allowing their customers to purchase a heart ornament to write their name on and fill the tree. Proceeds from the tree will benefit EIF and help alleviate hunger in eastern Illinois.

Visit www.eifoodbank.org and click on "**Day of Giving**" for more information and sign-up to participate.

POLAR EXPRESS FAMILY REPACK

Save the date for our next Family Repack. Wear your jammies and join us for cookies, milk and repacking in our warehouse for our Polar Express Repack on December 10. Two shifts available from 3-6 pm.

PROM BENEFIT 2018

Calling all secret agents, mystery women and international spies, save the date for Prom Benefit 2018! Join us on Saturday, March 10, 2018 from 7-11 pm at the Hilton Garden Inn. Celebrate 10 years of giving back to our community and help us raise 500,000 meals for our neighbors in need. Don't miss a night of dancing, donating and crowning the Prom King & Queen — all for a good cause!

"Like" the Prom Benefit Facebook page for updates and the latest information at www.facebook.com/prombenefit.



PROM BENEFIT

CASINO ROYALE
ANNIVERSARY

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Visit www.eifoodbank.org to stay up-to-date on our upcoming events.

Contact the Development Office at (217) 328-3663 ext. 217 for more information on specific events.