



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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16th ANNUAL PROM BENEFIT RAISES MORE THAN 381,000 MEALS FOR EASTERN ILLINOIS FOODBANK

Champaign, Illinois – The 16th annual Prom Benefit for Eastern Illinois Foodbank, presented by Martinelli’s Market, was held on Saturday, March 1 at I Hotel & Conference Center, and raised more than 381,000 meals for food-insecure individuals and families in the Foodbank’s 18-county service territory. At any given time, more than 100,000 people in eastern Illinois do not have access to enough nutritious food to support a healthy lifestyle. In the past year, pantries in the Foodbank’s network saw a 90% increase in the number of neighbors being served since 2022.

The two top fundraisers, Katie Harlan (The McDonald Group – Powered by Realty Select One) and Vilma Howard (HowardHold Insurance Group), were crowned Prom Queen & King. This year’s Harrington Law Prom Court raised more than \$45,000 and also included: Tommy Bickham (Illini Media Group/MIX 94.5 FM), Ryan Brown (Busey Bank), Tasia Nellum (Heartland Bank & Trust Company), Travis Odendaal (Trautman Real Estate Agency & Appraisal), Emily Ramey (WCIA), Liz Sullard (SYNERGY HomeCare), and Kelsie Woelfle (I Hotel & Conference Center).

The Prom Benefit was founded in 2008 by local community member Lorianne Bauer as a fundraiser for Eastern Illinois Foodbank and is managed by the Foodbank and a committee of community members committed to alleviating local hunger. Every year, fun-loving folks come together to relive Prom night or experience it for the first time, all while helping fight hunger. This year’s Mardi Gras theme provided a night full of beads and New Orleans fun, and gave guests the opportunity to “laissez les bon temps rouler” for a good cause. The event featured an auction and raffle prizes, drinks and heavy hors d'oeuvres, desserts, dancing, photo opportunities, and crowning the Prom King & Queen.

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Eastern Illinois Foodbank (EIF) works to alleviate hunger in eastern Illinois as the primary food source to a network of 160 food pantries, agencies, and other programs throughout our 18-county service area. Through these agencies, the Foodbank provides meals to more than 1 million people each year. Since 1983, EIF has led the fight against hunger and strengthened communities by providing food access, emergency relief, education, and advocacy to families in east-central Illinois. EIF is a member of Feeding America, Feeding Illinois, the United Way of Coles County, and the United Way of Champaign County. For more information, visit eifoodbank.org.