

SPRING 2024



Feed My People
FOOD BANK

HUNGER HERALD

Creating Equitable Access to Food for Healthier Communities

Bushel and a Peck, a local orchard in Chippewa County, donated 66,000 pounds of apples over three weeks this past February.

From Waste to Worth: Sustainability is at Our Core

By integrating more eco-friendly practices at the food bank, we reduce waste and nourish communities.

One of the most common comments at the food bank from those who have never toured it before is, "I had no idea you were so big and did so much." When you enter our distribution center, you are greeted by aisles and aisles of food packed on pallets, interspersed by four giant coolers and freezer areas. The floor space could easily

hold the equivalent of 126 city buses. Volunteers are loading pallet jacks with food to be trucked out later in the week, while others are busy sorting fresh pallets of apples into family-friendly boxes. Forklifts reach up high, pallet wrappers spin orders, and trucks enter and leave the shipping and receiving docks at opposite ends of the building. In any given

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Volunteering is a Work of Heart

We love our volunteers and can only continue the work we do with every one of them. They are the difference makers! Sign up to volunteer as an individual or with your group - we have a place for you. Learn more at fmpfoodbank.org or email ken@fmpfoodbank.org.

FMP staff member Ashley Olson (L) and long-time volunteer Randy Lundblad can be regularly seen at our Eau Claire Pop-Up. This grocery distribution program currently serves seven communities including Arcadia, Cadott, and Spooner.

Stories of Hope

"This (Pop-Up) drive has and continues to help so many. I can't tell you everything it's done for me. Food, especially the produce, contributes so much to mental, physical, and financial health. It just makes life a little bit better.

Thank you."

- Lauren

...continued from front.

week, a lot of waste can be generated if steps aren't taken to mitigate it. We have a great responsibility to help ensure as much food as possible gets to where it needs to go by reducing waste from the products received and the packaging it comes in.

Food rescue is one of the leading practices we encourage among all our hunger-relief partners. Together, we work with grocery stores, gas stations, and other retailers to take in food that no longer has floor space at their original destination for various reasons. It's especially vital for our partners in rural communities to pick up directly from their local retailers. It means instead of good food going to the landfill, it's redirected to families that can use it, which is a big win when 38% of food in the USA goes unsold or uneaten, according to Feeding America.

FMP launched Farm to Food Bank last summer to intentionally generate partnerships with local food harvesters and suppliers. So far, 24 have officially committed their product to us, which will help reduce carbon emissions from transportation, improve the quality of fresh food, and strengthen local economic ties with vendors who support our mission.

We are also continually working to improve sustainability practices within the distribution center, such as installing automatic lights that shut off after inactivity, re-using "banana" boxes to support food packing projects, and improving recycling efforts. We will soon have a baler that will allow us to process polyethylene plastics for recycling offsite, and we hope to convert our cardboard materials to this method as well.

Sometimes, however, no intervention can prevent food from going bad - whether we received it in poor condition or so close to its expiration that we could not distribute it in time. This "no chance food" still gets used by places such as pig farmers, who can integrate it into their farming needs.

The bottom line is that we are dedicated to minimizing food waste and ensuring that good food reaches those in need. Together, we can significantly alleviate the impact of food insecurity and build a more resilient food system for our communities.



THANK YOU

The Pablo Foundation has committed \$250,000 to Feed My People to support greater access to local, fresh food.



The Kitchen Sink
Podcast by Feed My People Food Bank

FMP has a new podcast! Because food is something that brings us all together, we're gathering stories from around our community about what brings us all to the messy kitchen sink after a good meal for the real conversation. **Find new episodes on Eau Claire Hometown Media, Spotify, or iHeart.**

Unveiling Feed My People's Updated Strategic Plan

Mission

Creating Equitable Access to Food for Healthier Communities

Vision

Ending Hunger in West Central Wisconsin

Values

COLLABORATION

Embracing teamwork to strategically address food insecurity through collective efforts.

INCLUSION

Cultivating a welcoming environment that honors all individuals and families.

INTEGRITY

Championing honest and transparent operations to build trust and accountability.

KINDNESS

Demonstrating compassion and empathy towards those in need.

SUSTAINABILITY

Committing to environmentally conscious practices and resource management.

A Note From the Director

Recently, I had lunch at Bonnie's Diner in Phillips, Wisconsin with several of our pantry partners in that area. The goal was to listen. Listen to their challenges and successes, their stories and their plans. To hear how we can best direct our resources to walk side by side with them to make a difference in the lives of our neighbors facing food insecurity. I marveled all the way home about how resilient and committed our partners are and how crucial they are to our mission.

Conversations like these are part of FMP's new strategic plan, which our board of directors just approved in February after a months-long process to develop it. Our goal is to be a "forward-thinking" leader in our community with a targeted plan that encourages innovation and new ideas while keeping us focused on our mission of creating equitable access to food for healthier communities. After listening to the voices of our partners, guests, volunteers, donors, and other community members, we have created specific objectives and strategies built on our values of collaboration, inclusion, integrity, kindness, and sustainability with an overarching goal of increased, sustainable impact. Visit our website at fmpfoodbank.org for more details on the plan.

We are energized and inspired to continue this important work. Thank you for being a part of our team!

"This new strategic plan is timely and essential. The past few years have reinforced the necessity of Feed My People's role as a leader in the community. We need them to be strong so our community can remain strong through anything."

- Paul Kohler, FMP Board Member

In gratitude,

Suzanne Becker

Suzanne Becker, Feed My People's Executive Director





Feed My People
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feeding healthy futures

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EMPTY BOWLS 2024

Thursday, May 16 at Feed My People
11 am-7 pm | 2610 Alpine Rd, Eau Claire

Empty Bowls is Feed My People's largest annual fundraiser and gathering to support hunger relief work in West Central Wisconsin.



Purchase your tickets beginning April 16 at
give.fmpfoodbank.org/EmptyBowls or scan the QR code.
\$25 for One Bowl & Two Menu Tickets | \$10 Bowl Only | \$15 Two Menu Tickets



THANK YOU TOP SPONSORS



Keith & Debby Brunett



- **Enjoy Your Meal From a Variety of Food Trucks**
- **Select & Take Home a Handcrafted Bowl**, donated and made by local artists and students.
- **Browse an Online and In-Person Silent Auction**, featuring artwork, experience packages & more
- **Take a Tour of the Food Bank**

Interested in volunteering for this event? Opportunities include stocking the bowl table, guiding parking, and assisting with setup. Visit give.fmpfoodbank.org/emptybowls to get started.