

SPRING 2025



Hunger Herald

Creating Equitable Access to Food for Healthier Communities



A volunteer at our Eau Claire Pop-Up helped pack lettuce and a variety of other grocery items for distribution during an extra cold day.

Stronger Together

The Power of Community at the Food Bank

At Feed My People Food Bank, we see the power of community in action every day. It's in the volunteers who pack boxes with care, the donors who give generously, and the neighbors who show up to support one another. In times of uncertainty, one thing remains clear—we need each other more than ever.

The past few years have tested our resilience. Families who never thought they would need help have found themselves in food pantry lines for the first time. Parents skip meals to make sure their children have enough. Seniors on fixed incomes struggle to afford groceries as costs rise. But through it all, our community has shown up—with open hearts and helping hands.

At a recent pop-up pantry, a woman picked up food for her family and paused to thank a volunteer. "This food helps me feed my

Continued on the next page...



Pictured from left to right: ECCDHS Assistant Director Angela Stokes, FMP Executive Director Padraig Gallagher, FMP Partnership Manager Tami Syverson, FMP Outgoing Executive Director Suzanne Becker, ECCDHS Director Angela Weideman

Friend of Human Services Award

At Feed My People, we believe that collaboration strengthens communities. In March, we were deeply honored to receive the inaugural Friend of Human Services Award from the Eau Claire County Department of Human Services (ECCDHS), a recognition that speaks to the power of partnership in ensuring no one goes without food.

This award acknowledges FMP's steadfast commitment to providing nutritious food and essential resources to individuals and families in Eau Claire County. Our shared mission with ECCDHS has allowed us to reach those facing food insecurity with dignity and compassion, offering a helping hand when it is needed most.

The partnership between FMP and ECCDHS began in 2020, and since then the impact has been profound. By 2024, our collaboration had helped the pantry grow to serve approximately 1,381 members of the community. The Centralized Access Team at ECCDHS has witnessed firsthand the difference this program makes, from an elderly man moved to tears with gratitude to a child's joy upon receiving a small treat. These moments remind us why we do this work—because food is more than sustenance; it is hope, comfort, and connection.

We are humbled by the kind words shared during the award presentation, including one anonymous nomination that stated, "Feed My People is always there to support our citizens." This award belongs to our entire community—our dedicated staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters—who make this mission possible every day.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to ECCDHS for this recognition and for their unwavering dedication to serving those in need. Together, we will continue to build a stronger, healthier community for all.

...continued from front.

children," she said. "Without this, I worry we would be able to eat enough."

Her story is not unique. Life's challenges can come unexpectedly, but the strength of a community lies in how it responds. That's why we work together—because no one should have to face hunger alone.

Whether it's packing food, making a donation, or simply spreading the word, each act of kindness creates a ripple effect of compassion. Together, we ensure that no matter what hardships arise, no one in our community is left behind.

Hungry for more stories? Because food brings us all together, we're entering our second year with our podcast, *The Kitchen Sink*, where we dive into conversations with diverse voices from around our community. Find new episodes twice monthly on our website, Spotify, or EC Hometown Media.

The Heart of Volunteering: Tom and Jan's Story

For Tom and Jan Drehmel, volunteering at Feed My People (FMP) is more than just giving back. It's about connection, community, and making a difference.

Their journey with FMP began in the organization's old building, where Jan packed weekend meals for kids. Since then, they have become "utility players," helping wherever needed, from Pop-Up Pantries to food packing and distributing vouchers. Through their involvement with the Chippewa Falls Mission Coalition, which connects churches and nonprofits, they also help spread the word when extra hands are needed.

For Tom and Jan, volunteering isn't just rewarding, it's fun. "You meet different people, share a few laughs, and see firsthand the impact you're making," Tom said. They especially love pop-up pantries, where a warm greeting or friendly conversation can brighten someone's day. "People are always so appreciative," Jan added.

Their advice to future volunteers? "You may come in thinking you're helping others, but you'll often find you're receiving more in return."

Become a Volunteer

We have many opportunities during the week to apply your time and talent to a good cause. You can help pack food, drive trucks, maneuver a pallet, clean, distribute groceries, and much more.

Sign up for a shift online at fmpfoodbank.org or contact Michelle with questions: Michelle Pride, Community Engagement Specialist
michelle@fmpfoodbank.org | (715) 708-2410



Over 50 volunteers came to the food bank in February to pack to the max during our FEED the Love campaign.

A Note From the (New!) Director

It's difficult to express how fortunate I feel to say "Hello! My name is Padraig Gallagher and I am the incoming Executive Director of Feed My People Food Bank." Ten years ago, I helped to deliver food to pantries in all fourteen of the counties Feed My People serves. I met volunteers at the doors to Trinity Lutheran in Eau Claire and the church steps of the pantry in Conrath. I gingerly maneuvered teetering pallets to the lower river side of the pantry in Prairie Farm and unloaded my full semi for the Neillsville Pop-Up Pantry at the Clark County Fairgrounds. From Park Falls to Black River Falls, Minong to Mondovi, I have been humbled by the dedication of the community members volunteering in the pantries that Feed My People partners with.

Ten years on, I have seen the impact that the food bank makes, not only from the side of the operation that builds up callouses driving trucks and delivering pallets, but also from the role of the nonprofit community pantry striving to do this important work.

Pantries in one-fifth of the Wisconsin map rely on Feed My People to keep essential food available for their neighbors. They cannot do it without us and we cannot do it without you. I look forward to working with you to combat food insecurity for the next ten years.

In gratitude,

Padraig Gallagher,
Executive Director



Voices From Our Community

Full Circle: From Receiving to Giving Back

As a child, I hated standing in line at the food pantry. I didn't want to be poor. But now, I understand—it gave me what I needed to get where I am today.

Growing up, summer meant eating oatmeal for every meal. Rent money never stretched far enough, and sometimes, we had to couch surf when it ran out. Poverty felt inescapable. Now, as a parent, I refuse to let my kids go without. If the pantry can help us through tough times, I'll do it for them.

You need grit and determination to keep moving forward. Get help when you need it. Give back when you can.

Last year, I handed out turkeys at an FMP Pop-Up Pantry. Seeing kids' smiles in the back seat reminded me why this work matters. I may still hate that we needed help, but I am grateful.

— Anonymous

Celebrating Earth Week



At FMP, we think Earth Day needs a whole week. That's because environmental sustainability is hardwired into our mission. Did you know that FMP fights food waste daily by redirecting good food to the tables of families that need it? Amplify that impact when you give during Earth Week from April 21-25. **Learn more at give.fmpfoodbank.org/earthweek.**



Feed My People
FOOD BANK
feeding healthy futures

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
EAU CLAIRE WI
PERMIT 2055

2610 ALPINE ROAD • EAU CLAIRE, WI
715.835.9415 • fmpfoodbank.org



EMPTY BOWLS 2025

Thursday, May 15 at Feed My People
11 am-7 pm | 2610 Alpine Rd, Eau Claire

This year is our 25th Empty Bowls party!

Come celebrate this mission-sustaining fundraiser bringing hunger relief to thousands of our West Central Wisconsin neighbors.

Purchase tickets beginning April 1 at
give.fmpfoodbank.org/EmptyBowls or scan the QR code.
\$25 for 1 Bowl & 2 Menu Tickets | \$10 Bowl Only | \$15 for 2 Menu Tickets



THANK YOU TOP SPONSORS



- **Enjoy Food & Soup 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**
- **Plus, Live Music & Festival Games**



Interested in volunteering for this event? Opportunities include stocking the bowl table, guiding parking, and assisting with setup.
Register online at give.fmpfoodbank.org/emptybowls

