

WINTER 2021



HUNGER HERALD

Ending Hunger in West Central Wisconsin



A student at Locust Lane Elementary School helping to deliver Weekend Kids' Meal bags this fall.

Thank You for your Essential Support

A Note from the Director

Daily, we at Feed My People (FMP) receive messages of gratitude from our guests for all our work to ensure food is available for anyone in need. Our response to those guests is that we could not possibly do the work we do without the help of our community. Today is an example of a typical day here at FMP as our volunteers are:

- Picking orders for our partner agencies
- Driving our trucks to deliver orders to our partners
- Packing emergency bags to be distributed throughout our service area
- Working at our front desk managing our front office

I know that all of you reading this have contributed to our work in some way (or multiple ways) this past year. On behalf of our team,

board of directors, and myself please know how grateful we are for all you have done.

2022 is the 40th anniversary of FMP, and I look forward to sharing more information with you in an upcoming *Hunger Herald* newsletter about how we will celebrate and honor our four decades of feeding hungry people. I also will share some exciting new strategies that we are beginning to not only feed everyone in the line but also to shorten that line.

Thank you,



Nancy Renkes | Feed My People's Executive Director

More Ways to Get Involved & Make an Impact

Financial support enables us to keep our trucks on the road and get more food to more people.

Host a Fund Drive

Connect your family, co-workers, or clients to the mission of ending hunger in their communities. Every new donor generated through your network means more lives are impacted for change. Feed My People can customize your very own web page, which will collect and track the total amount your group raises online for hunger relief. Contact us at amanda@fmpfoodbank.org to get started.

Share the Love

Chilson Subaru in Eau Claire is once again partnering with us to address hunger in our community. Through the start of January, \$50 will be donated to Feed My People Food Bank for every new Subaru vehicle sold or leased, plus \$250 to your charity of choice.

Become an Empty Bowls Sponsor

Last year, our signature fundraising event, Empty Bowls, raised over \$125,000 for those struggling with hunger. Event sponsorships account for over 70% of these funds. Consider becoming a sponsor today to make a lasting impact in the lives of our neighbors in need.

Learn more at give.fmpfoodbank.org/ebponsors.

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Thank you for the support you have given us through these difficult times.”

- Guest at Abbotsford Pantry



Healthy Food Matters

Feed My People is utilizing more resources, tools, and the power of community to tackle the urgent need for healthy food access.

Feed My People is utilizing more resources, tools, and the power of community to tackle the urgent need for healthy food access. Our approach to hunger relief is multi-faceted but is centered on solving two problems. First, connecting people in need to immediate food resources is our driving force. It requires a fast response because hunger waits for no one. Removing barriers and multiplying efforts to food access is imperative as a first step. However, a second focus emerges at the crossroad between today's crisis and tomorrow's outcome.

Our goal has historically been to improve the amount of fresh, healthy food in our inventory, but we're not satisfied yet. We're working harder than ever to source even more fresh fruits, vegetables, heart-friendly options, and other healthy food so that those we serve today have access to the best nutrition possible for a healthier mind and body tomorrow.

Over the next two years, FMP is working together with Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA), a national organization dedicated to accelerating the work of food banks by prioritizing nutritional goals. As a Healthy Hunger Relief partner, we will receive support from PHA to implement a comprehensive nutrition ranking system developed by experts at Healthy Eating Research. In addition, PHA will provide technical assistance to help us understand the nutritional quality of our inventory and make strategic decisions within and across food categories as we strive to enhance food equity.

Through our partnership, we'll work together to reduce low nutrition food from our inventory and replace it with healthier options. While we understand the critical importance of integrating more nutritious items, working with PHA will provide the practical support we need to create a realistic plan to improve access to healthy food for those we serve long term.

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Food is Medicine

A man wearing battery packs and a heart monitor was in line waiting for food. The doctors here told him there was nothing more they could do, but they knew someone who could. He was referred to a doctor in the Twin Cities and had a heart pump installed. He was feeling well for the first time in a long time, but the cost of gas to get to his medical appointments was overwhelming his budget. He was grateful to be able to get extra groceries.

- Volunteer at a Humbird Pop-Up Pantry this fall



Feed My People is now a member of Partnership for a Healthier America to drive change for better nutrition.

The Marshfield Clinic Health System Food Pharmacy pilot program is partnering with Feed My People to reduce the burden that diabetes places on an individual by offering appropriate, nutritional food items.

“Diabetes is a costly diagnosis for anyone to manage, “ shared JoAnna Bernklau, Community Benefits Coordinator with the Marshfield’s Center for Community Health Advancement. “Through this pilot program, we seek to support those who are low income and have uncontrolled diabetes by offering meal kits to help supplement food needs. In addition, we offer free health coaching to help support their medical needs and provide the tools to monitor their weight and blood pressure. Our goal is to reduce the burden that diabetes places on an individual by helping to support other needs, so individuals can better focus on their health.”

Other partner programs are simply adding more healthy food to their existing meals. For example, Agnes’ Table in Chippewa Falls is making sure every to-go bag has a fresh fruit waiting inside, along with a hot meal. Thursday’s Table in Menomonie is always packing in as much nutrition as possible, like offering steamed veggies on the side, mixing them into the main dish, and incorporating fruit into the dessert.

We’re ensuring that our community can prioritize good health even when times are hard. Together, we are shifting expectations so that food insecurity doesn’t have to mean sacrificing one’s health.



Food and Hope Go Together

The kids who are participating in our high school pantry program come in regularly on Thursdays and Fridays to prepare for the weekend. They know there won’t be a lot of food available at home. Their eyes light up when they see what they get to bring home that week, like popcorn and easy, microwaveable meals. Towards the end of the month, when the family budget is at its tightest, we usually see more kids come through to pack their bags.

One of our 11th graders and her mom often come in near the end of the month. They have run out of funds by then, and they count on the food pantry to help them make it. They’re so thankful every time for the food.

- Kimberly Winkelmann, Partnership Coordinator for Memorial High School

Notes from Eau Claire Memorial High School



Volunteers Needed

We are always looking for passionate individuals who share our mission. Our most needed volunteer positions include picking food orders in the warehouse and driving our trucks to distribute them to hunger relief partners. No CDL is required. Contact Warehouse Manger Rick at rick@fmpfoodbank.org or (715) 835-9415 ext. 102 if you are interested in signing up for a truck route. Use our online scheduler tool to sign up for a picking shift at fmpfoodbank.org/get_involved/volunteer.phtml.

Thank You

The Women’s Giving Circle Fund of the Eau Claire Community Foundation and the Nordson Corporation Foundation help support FMP’s school pantry program.

2021 Volunteers of the Year



Debbie Gough

Debbie is valuable beyond words. She not only gets the food on the shelves at St. John's resident pantry, but she is also constantly working to provide a more welcoming space for the many residents who count on these groceries to supplement their diet. Debbie has also managed the food pantry at Park Towers Apartments, volunteered at Pop-Up Pantries and the Good Neighbor Project, and served on the FMP board.



Tom Weyenberg

Tom drives one of our truck routes three times a week, ensuring that food arrives at our agency partners in time for their distributions. In addition, he often calls in the afternoon to see if we have the routes for the next day covered. He prefers the long hauls up to our northern counties, saving us valuable staff time in the warehouse. His dedication is making a huge difference.

"Being in charge of the St. John's food pantry brings joy every week. Last week a woman exclaimed with delight that we had black beans—saying she had prayed for them! When you live on a fixed income, getting snacks to give to your grandchildren can be a big deal. If you ever feel underappreciated in your life—volunteer at a food pantry!" - Debbie Gough

2021 Organization of the Year

STOKES | HERZOG Marketing + Consulting

The Stokes Herzog team has provided marketing and communication support to FMP for several years. They have created professional videos for us, including one for the Weekend Kids' Meal program, the capital campaign, and an organization overview video earlier this year to support our fundraising efforts. In addition to their video work, they have been an invaluable resource over the years for marketing and communication advice to advance the mission of Feed My People.





Feed My People
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Filling the Table

Holidays bring families together around the dinner table to celebrate and make lasting memories. Imagine how stressful this season is without enough food. Your support today for Feed My People is helping local families.

Thank you.



Mark Your Calendar: Empty Bowls Week is March 1-3, 2022

You won't want to miss Feed My People's largest annual fundraiser. Visit give.fmpfoodbank.org/EmptyBowls to learn more.