

Winter 2016

# Food for Thought

Thank you for  
helping feed  
hungry seniors!

Janet,  
Mentor, OH



Greater Cleveland  
Food Bank

MEMBER OF  
**FEEDING**  
AMERICA



## Greater Cleveland Food Bank

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Kristin Warzocha  
President & CEO

### Dear Friends of the Food Bank,

As we enter a new year, your partnership has never been more important. This year marks the beginning our new strategic plan that will take us through 2018. Over the next three years, the [Food Bank](#) will continue to expand our reach to connect even more of our struggling neighbors with access to nutritious meals.

An area of critical need in our community is senior hunger. Facing issues like limited mobility, fixed incomes and health concerns, older adults must often choose between buying groceries, paying bills and refilling their prescriptions.

Senior hunger hits close to home for many of us. After all, these are our parents and grandparents – those who raised us, taught us invaluable life lessons and worked hard to create the world we live in now. With this in mind, we simply cannot stand by while these men and women go without one of life's basic needs.

Our Help Center has been taking more and more calls from seniors who struggle to fill their cabinets. That's why your support is so crucial – with your help, and the help of our partner organizations, we are planning to expand the number of meals we will provide to seniors each year. The number of seniors in need is growing, and we need your help to keep pace.

In this issue of *Food for Thought*, you'll read about a handful of older adults whose lives have been changed through your gifts – like Gwen, who's staying healthy and active with access to fresh produce at a local Food Bank partner agency.

Thank you for standing with those who have given so much to make our community a better place to live. Your support makes such a difference!

Sincerely,

President & CEO

### OUR MISSION:

Working together to ensure that everyone in our communities has the nutritious food they need every day.

# A Caring Grandmother is Grateful for Your Generosity



After decades of working hard to provide for her family and herself as a single mother, Audrey knows how to get by on a tight budget. But having little money became more of a challenge a few months ago when her daughter's husband was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Their family lost financial footing, and Audrey, who's always one to put others first, opened her home to the couple and their four school-aged children.

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**“I appreciate every bit of help.”**

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Audrey loves being able to spend so much time with her family – it's a joy for her to cook their meals and help raise her grandkids. Things are tight financially, though. Audrey and her daughter's family share bills, but their combined income can't always stretch to afford all their expenses.

Things were easier for Audrey when she was working. But ever since her knee replacement a couple years ago forced her to leave her busy food-service job, she has to make tough

choices between bills and food. Her only income is a small monthly Social Security check. She's grateful to have special winter utility assistance – she says her bill goes up every year.

On the advice of a friend from church, Audrey began visiting Solon Rotary Pantry, her nearby [Greater Cleveland Food Bank](#) partner agency. When her cupboards are bare, she's able to bring home the fresh ingredients she needs to make wholesome, balanced meals for her family.

Audrey isn't alone in her difficulties. Many grandparents in our community have found themselves struggling to provide for family members experiencing financial challenges. The relief you give to our neighbors truly cannot be overstated.

Thanks to your generosity, Audrey and her family don't have to feel anxious about whether or not they'll be able to put food on their table. As she takes home another bag of fruits, veggies and other staples, Audrey is full of gratitude for friends like you.

“Thank you!” she says with a warm smile. “I'm wishing you many blessings. I appreciate every bit of help.”

# Thank You for Standing with Our Neighbors!

## Special Thanks to the Sponsors of Our Holiday Match and Double Your Dollar Day!

Volunteers took over the phones at WKYC Channel 3 for one entire day in December. Viewers were encouraged to call in to make a gift, and their gifts were matched thanks to the following organizations and individuals:

Bank of America, Citizens Bank, Dominion, Dunkin' Donuts, Jennifer and Niklas Gerborg, Dan and Sue Kasinec, Marco's Pizza, Medical Mutual, Nestlé, Julie and Peter Raskind, Charlie and Cheryl Schroer and Walgreens.

## Harvest for Hunger 2016 Kicks Off in February! **HARVEST for HUNGER**

Last year's Harvest for Hunger campaign made possible more than 19 million meals for hungry people in Northeast Ohio. Harvest for Hunger is the collaborative effort of four food banks covering 21 Northeast Ohio counties and runs through the spring. The 2016 drive is critically important, as the need for food in our area continues to increase. We are helping more people now than before the recession. The food and funds raised will provide free, nutritious food to local hot meal programs, pantries and shelters to serve hungry people in Northeast Ohio. This year's co-chairs are Joe DiRocco from Citizens Bank, Ohio and Bernie Moreno from Bernie Moreno Companies. Our kickoff is scheduled for February 23 at 9 a.m. here at the Greater Cleveland Food Bank.

There are several ways you can support the campaign:

### CHECK OUT HUNGER

Shop at participating supermarkets and ask your cashier to scan a \$10, \$5 or \$1 donation coupon as you "Check Out Hunger." It starts February 28 and goes through April 9.

### HOST A FOOD & FUNDS DRIVE

Join the more than 500 businesses, schools, churches and other organizations conducting a food & funds drive. Visit [HarvestForHunger.org](http://HarvestForHunger.org) for food & funds drive details and to learn how to register your drive.

### VOLUNTEER

Your time and effort at the Food Bank will help us to provide food more efficiently and effectively to those in need.

### MARKET AT THE FOOD BANK

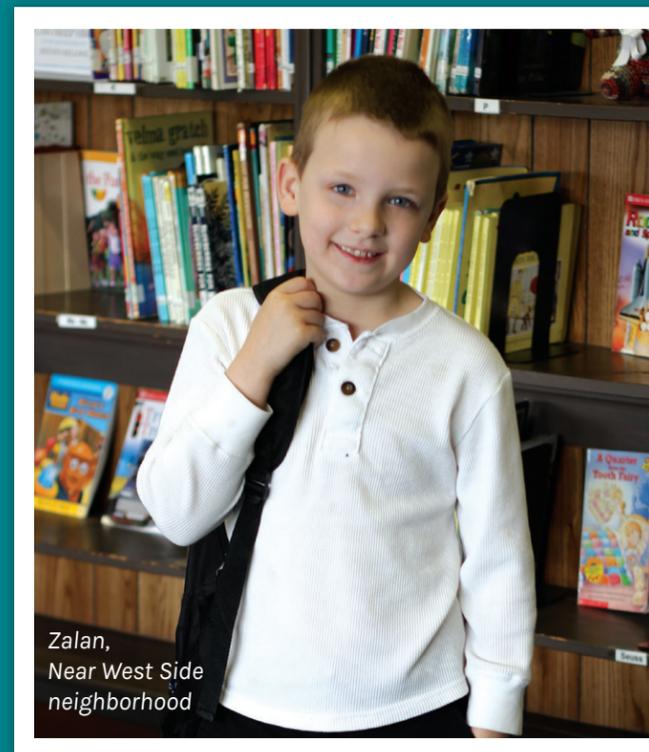
Join us on Sunday, May 1, for the annual Market at the Food Bank. Enjoy signature dishes from over 50 of Cleveland's best restaurants, samples from area beverage purveyors, entertainment, and the chance to bid on exciting one-of-a-kind packages!

### MAKE A DONATION

Visit [HarvestForHunger.org](http://HarvestForHunger.org) to make a donation online or mail your check today.



Rubben,  
Kinsman neighborhood



Zalan,  
Near West Side  
neighborhood



Marilyn and Kiara,  
Puritas-Longmead  
neighborhood



Anita,  
Kinsman  
neighborhood

## Greater Cleveland Food Bank Strategic Initiatives Leading us through to 2018

The Greater Cleveland Food Bank staff and board of directors have been working together to determine the strategic direction for the organization for the next three years. This plan focuses on fulfilling our mission of "Ensuring that everyone in our communities has the nutritious food they need every day".

### Everyone: Who will we serve?

Food-insecure residents who meet income guidelines, in our six-county service area, with a focus on:

- Senior citizens, particularly those who are homebound
- Children
- Those who struggle with food-related illnesses (diabetes, hypertension, etc.)

### Nutritious: What will we serve?

We will continue to distribute both perishable and non-perishable items but focus on increasing the percentage of food that we distribute that is highly nutritious (produce, perishable items, and meals from our kitchen). **By the end of FY2018, 75 percent of all food distributed will be highly nutritious, knowing this will have an impact on community health.**

**By the end of FY2018, our goal is to increase meals made possible in our community by 10 million to 58 million meals.**

**We know that 30 percent of all of the households we serve have someone with diabetes, and 60 percent have someone with hypertension. This fresh, nutritious food will help clients better address these health concerns.**

### Every day: When will we serve?

We will provide more nutritious meals today through our network of partner agencies, program sites and new partners, as well as by enrolling more clients in the SNAP program. The Food Bank will also begin to connect food-insecure clients with community partners who specialize in housing, employment training and medical care (the three biggest drivers of food insecurity), as well as other public benefits to help them become self-sufficient, reducing food insecurity tomorrow.



## Dominion Participates in Poverty Simulation

It's hard to imagine what it's like to live in poverty if you've never had to experience it. As part of our effort to educate the community about hunger, the [Greater Cleveland Food Bank](#) provides half-day poverty simulations to corporations, leadership organizations, social service providers, elected officials and other groups.

A unique, interactive experience, the poverty simulation gives community members a first-hand look at the daily challenges our low-income neighbors face. Over the course of a few hours, participants experience a "month" in poverty, interacting with employers, social service agencies and other entities to try to make ends meet on a limited budget.

"The simulation is a great exercise," says Mary O'Shea, the Food Bank's director of advocacy and public education. "People come away from it so thankful for the insights they've gained, and frankly, thankful for what they have."

As a generous partner of the Food Bank and a corporate advocate for hunger relief, Dominion recently sent several employees to participate in one of the poverty simulations. Dominion Philanthropy Coordinator Ben Kroeck says it's important to him that team members are able to understand some of the problems their customers must solve every day.

"[The poverty simulation] opened my eyes to the needs in our community," Ben says. "At the end of the month they have to ask questions like, 'do I pay my utility bill, or do I pay for my mother's medicine?'"

All year long — but especially during the winter — members of Dominion's Customer Solution team speak with thousands of people struggling to pay their utility bills. Ben says the company is proactive about enrolling customers in savings programs and offers assistance through Energy Share. He appreciates the invaluable experience employees received through spending some time in their fellow Northeast Ohioans' shoes, and the Food Bank is excited to provide this opportunity to partners like Dominion.

Not only is Dominion helping educate its employees about hunger and poverty, but the company also provides generous financial support to the Greater Cleveland Food Bank through our annual holiday matching gift challenge. We are deeply grateful to Dominion and its employees for their ongoing commitment to making Northeast Ohio a better place to call home.

For more information about registering a group or an individual for a poverty simulation class at the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, please call Mary O'Shea at 216-738-2135.

### Join Tomorrow's Harvest

Tomorrow's Harvest is a society that recognizes individuals who have included the Greater Cleveland Food Bank in their estate plans through a will, trust, annuity, life insurance gift or other legacy gift. Through these special gifts, our supporters are able to make a significant difference in our community, even beyond their lifetimes. Because, as long as there are hungry people in Northeast Ohio, the Greater Cleveland Food Bank will be here to feed them.

To learn more about how your generosity could make an impact for generations to come, please contact Stacey McKinley, Senior Manager of Strategic Gifts, at 216-738-2056 or [smckinley@ClevelandFoodBank.org](mailto:smckinley@ClevelandFoodBank.org).

Earmon,  
Garfield Heights, OH

# Working Seniors Have Help, Thanks to You



Although they're past retirement age, Earmon and his wife are both still working – he has a job installing carpet for a local real estate company, and she's a full-time home healthcare aide. They also try to synchronize their schedules to ensure there's someone at home to care for their adult daughter, who has severe cerebral palsy and usually needs help with everyday tasks.

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**“You bring smiles to  
so many faces.”**

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With two incomes and the small amount of disability assistance their daughter receives, Earmon says his family can typically get by. But there are times when things are especially tight, like when he doesn't get enough hours at work, or seasonal bills claim a large chunk of their budget.

To help ease the pressure on their finances, Earmon applied for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) a few years ago, but learned his family's income just exceeded the acceptable limit. Like many families in Northeast Ohio,

they fall in the middle ground where they work hard but sometimes struggle to make ends meet. Still in need of help, Earmon spoke with his neighbor, who referred him to The Rock Community Church, a [Greater Cleveland Food Bank](#) partner agency in Garfield Heights.

At the pantry, Earmon picks up plenty of whole grains, vegetables and lean meats. With these ingredients, his wife makes healthy and filling meals that the whole family can enjoy together. He can't thank you enough for helping fill his kitchen with nutrient-rich produce, which is too expensive for him to buy at the store.

“Thank you very much,” he says, gratefully. “You bring smiles to so many faces.”

After many years of working hard and contributing to our community, neighbors like Earmon deserve better than the worry of an empty cupboard. Although they aren't able to retire yet, Earmon and his wife can take comfort knowing they can rely on the generosity of people like you. Thank you for providing hope in the form of nutritious food!



Gwen,  
North Olmsted, OH

**“You have helped so many senior citizens who couldn’t make it without you.”**

# Your Gifts Help Older Adults Stay Healthy

Gwen, 70, is a true survivor. As the fourth child of nine, she learned how to take care of herself from an early age. She raised three children and endured the devastation of her husband’s death. Now in her golden years, she’s struggling with some serious health problems.

For years, Gwen worked as a bus tour guide where she helped visitors explore her community. It was the perfect job for her – which is why she was absolutely heartbroken when injuries from a traffic accident left her with little choice but to resign.

“I loved it,” she says. “I figured I’d work there until I died, but it didn’t work out that way.”

Gwen still needs two more surgeries, but she just doesn’t have the money. To make matters worse, her kidney function has started to decline. Fortunately, she’s been able to avoid dialysis thanks to a healthy diet full of fresh fruits and vegetables. But with very little income right now, it’s become increasingly difficult to purchase these nutritious items at the store.

Because you choose to give, Gwen can continue to eat healthy with help from Oxcart Pantry, her local [Greater Cleveland Food Bank](#) partner in North Olmsted. She says that at the pantry, she receives plenty of fresh produce to help keep her kidneys strong.

Gwen knows she’d be in a tight spot without your help. With few people to count on in these difficult times, your generosity brightens her day – so much that she hopes to be able to give back when her financial situation improves. In the mean time, she’ll continue to be thankful for generous neighbors like you.

“Thank you very much,” Gwen says. “You have helped so many senior citizens who couldn’t make it without you.”



Greater Cleveland  
Food Bank



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local coordinator of  
**HARVEST**  
for HUNGER

