



Of all of his professional accomplishments, and there are many, **Anthony Rego** is extremely proud of his role in helping build the Food Bank's building. "I still feel great about it," he shared, smiling ear to ear. "I think we're helping more people than we could ever help."

When Ed Worley called upon Anthony to join the Food Bank's Board in 1988, Anthony said, "I'd be honored." He's been with the Food Bank ever since in various, vital roles that have helped shape the Food Bank's work over the last 30 years.

Anthony started working in the food business in fourth grade. "I've been in business for 65 years, but I'm not that old," he said, laughing. "I was the CEO and Chairman of Riser Foods. We had a nice operation called Stop N' Shop. That's about all I ever did." In 1997, Riser Foods sold to Giant Eagle and Anthony stayed with Giant Eagle in various leadership roles, including vice chairman.

Anthony worked alongside some of the Food Bank's founders, like Bill Coquillette and Tom Greiner, and Ed Worley, founding Executive Director throughout the 1990s.

Then, in the early 2000s, Anthony's focus on the Board shifted. The Food Bank was in need of a new building, having outgrown current spaces.



## Greater Cleveland Food Bank

Building a new building isn't cheap, but Anthony didn't back down from the challenge. "Anthony did the work," Kristin Warzocha, the Food Bank's current President & CEO, explained, "He made the calls. He talked to everybody he knew, everybody he'd ever met."

"It was the first time I was ever involved in running a campaign like that," Anthony explained.



Anthony Rego, John Nestor, and Anne Goodman at an Open House during construction of the Food Bank's facility

"But, my ace, Kristin, was with me." Anthony and Kristin have a mutual affinity for each other, never calling each other by their names, but instead, referring to one another as AR and KW.

AR and KW went to many meetings together, including one very important meeting with the Cleveland Foundation. Their hope was to receive a large gift to support the Capital Campaign to build the Food Bank's new building. "It was a great meeting."

Anthony remembers, "They knew the issue and the need. They knew that the need is always going to be there." The Food Bank Team walked away

from that meeting with a gift of \$1 million to support the building of the Food Bank's new building. And over the next 18 months of so, \$9 million more was raised. Anthony also spoke highly of Ray Murphy, a fellow Board member who gave a key gift to help build the Food Bank's facility.

In 2005, when the new facility's doors opened for operation, Anthony felt a sense of pride. Without his work, the building would not have been constructed. "It was a great experience, a great accomplishment," he said.

Thanks to an expanded building, the Food Bank was able to provide significantly more food to address the 2008 recession and an enormous increase in need.

Anthony also had an amazing idea - moving the "Market Under Glass" event to the Food Bank. "I thought, 'let's show them what we have at the Food Bank.' We were able to show off the Food Bank every year," he explained. Now, the "Market at the Food Bank" event is the Food Bank's largest event, and it raises more and more money each year. In 2019, Market at the Food Bank raised \$347,000.



Now retired, Anthony and his wife spend time volunteering and giving back to the community. Anthony is still involved with the Food Bank, because this place has a special place in his heart. “Two things. One, the mission and two, the people. Without those two things, you wouldn’t have a Food Bank,” he explained. “When I say people, it’s those people who lead others. The people who work at the Food Bank are terrific.”

“Being on the Board over 30 years, I’ve seen a lot of things happen,” Anthony explains. And now, as the Food Bank looks forward to the next 40 years, he’s hopeful that someday there won’t be a need for a Food Bank. “In the short run, the Food Bank will run the same as it is today,” he explained. “In the long run, I would hope, as a country, we don’t have a need.”

But, Anthony understands the need in Cleveland. “You’ll see it in the statistics,” he explained, “Cleveland is not in great shape. The need is growing all the time for children, for seniors, and all in between.”

If anyone can help the Food Bank launch into our next 40 years, it’s Anthony Rego. He’s been around for some of the Food Bank’s largest transformations, from grappling with the loss of Ed Worley, to leading the charge on the Capital Campaign to raise \$10 million for the Food Bank’s facility.

“It’s a sad case that the Food Bank is so necessary. But, it’s a great case that we have people taking care of those needs,” Anthony said. “I hope the Food Bank won’t be here in 40 years, but I think it will be.”

