



John and Janet Mitchell spend so much time volunteering at the Food Bank, they are like part of the staff. On Monday and Wednesday mornings, they can be found hard at work in the Food Bank's repack area, sorting donated food to be distributed to the Food Bank's network of nearly 1,000 partners.

John & Janet have been married nearly 51 years and have been residents of Old Brooklyn for 45 years. Now retired, they enjoy spending time with the friends they've made at the Food Bank. "I couldn't wait to retire so we can get involved here. There's a lot of good causes out there, but this one spoke to me," explained John, "I'm happy to be retired. It's a good life - and we spend time at the Food Bank!"

When John started working part time a few years before retirement, he immediately started volunteering as well. "When I went from working full time to part time, I took a week off, I started working Wednesday-Thursday-Friday, and the next week I started volunteering at the Food Bank," John explains with a grin.

But even before then, John and Janet have been making an impact. "We started contributing money to Harvest for Hunger in the 1990s," John said. And they're still giving - both their time and treasure, "It comes under the same heading. Feeding people. We've been given a lot, so we're giving something back," he says.



Greater Cleveland Food Bank

“This is a basic need because no one should have to go hungry,” explains Janet. For her, volunteering and supporting the Food Bank is a great fit, “It’s well-run and we make a lot of friends,” she says with a smile. “Not to brag, but we call ourselves the A-team,” she laughs, talking about the regular group of volunteers they’re involved with.

“It’s nice because our family has shrunk. It’s nice to come a couple times a week to see these people,” John says. It’s nice for everyone at the Food Bank to see John and Janet, too. Their presence week after week over the last five years since they retired has made the Food Bank a better place.

Both Janet and John have giving spirits. They both feel a need to give back to their community – we’re grateful they’ve chosen to do so through the Food Bank.

“I give for a lot of reasons,” explains John, “I’m a cancer survivor and I’m still here. We were able to retire comfortably. I have this thing in me that I want to do something.”



“I feel part of something that’s super important,” said Janet. “It’s very comfortable and it’s always organized at the Food Bank. It’s fun and we’re doing something for someone else. And the people that work here – they’re all very nice. We’ve become friends.”

Beyond working the repack room, John volunteers during the Food Bank’s monthly on-site produce distributions, spending hours on his feet making sure our produce boxes are packed for the more than 1,000 people served within a two-hour period. “People need food,” he says. “It’s just sad. At least we’re doing the best we can.”

But still, he does this work with a smile and in his Harvest for Hunger t-shirt. In fact, he wears Food Bank shirts as often as he can to help spread the message.

Janet helps spread the message, too. “Nobody needs to go to bed hungry in this world. If I can do what I can do and I tell other people about it, maybe something’s going to click in their head,” she explains, “There’s just so much need, so no matter how we do it, we want to help where we can.”

And help they do - from volunteering to donating, John and Janet have truly had an incredible impact in the fight against hunger in Northeast Ohio. Without their work, many more meals would be missed, many more seniors wouldn’t be receiving proper nutrition, and many students would be going hungry.

Week after week, John and Janet make the trip from their home to the Food Bank to work in our warehouse, packing food, moving pallets, and sharing smiles. All the while, they’re helping to fulfill the Greater Cleveland Food Bank’s mission to ensure everyone in our communities has the nutritious food they need every day.

