Orlando Baking Company started in Cleveland in 1904. Since then, they’ve been generously doing their part to give back to the community that supports them. Today, Nick Orlando is proud to be continuing this important family tradition.

Nick has been involved with the Food Bank since he started working at the family business in the mid-1980s. Whether he’s working with our food resource staff to donate bread and other goods to the Food Bank or providing important guidance as a member of the Operations Committee in the Boardroom, Nick has been a valued asset to the Food Bank’s operations for three decades.

“Our family bakery is located on the near east side, so we began by donating bread to the local churches in the neighborhood,” Nick explained. “We’re incredibly proud of our roots in this community, and it’s always been important for us to give back.”

In 1979, Ann Marotta, a family friend of the Orlando’s and a founder of the Food Bank, called the family. “After seeing the impact of these local church deliveries, Ann proposed a new idea — sending bread to a central Food Bank location,” Nick said. “This idea not only made
everything more efficient, but it also expanded the reach of our efforts beyond what my father and uncles, at the time, thought was possible.” And, for the last 40 years, Orlando Baking Company has been giving to the community, helping provide food to hundreds of partner agencies and the hundreds of thousands of people served by the Food Bank.

In 1979, Nick was in college, but remembers hearing about the Food Bank, and Ann Marotta, from his father and uncles when he was home working on breaks. After college, Nick decided to try something other than the family business. He moved to Washington DC where he worked for about four years. “But, the whole time I was in DC,” Nick says, laughing, “I’m in grocery stores looking at the bread.”

Nick returned to Cleveland and has been working for Orlando Baking Company since the mid-1980s as Vice President of Sales and Marketing, helping to grow the family business from a neighborhood bakery to a national baking production. And, working hard to support the Food Bank. “Food is so central and core to our family experience,” he explained. “We’re in the food business. But we’re also Italian. We like to see people eat!”

Beyond donating food, Orlando has been a great supporter of the Greater Cleveland Food Bank’s special events Market at the Food Bank and Taste of the Browns. “From day one, we saw these events as a way to get more of the community involved with the cause,” Nick explained. “We were there for the very first Market Under Glass in the 1990s and the very first Taste event in 1999. Seeing so many new faces in the room was inspiring.” Up until just a few years ago, the annual Harvest for Hunger event was held at the Galleria. In 2012, the event moved to the Food Bank.

In 2007, Nick joined the Food Bank’s Board of Directors, after serving on the Board of the Hunger Network of Greater Cleveland for a number of years. “I didn’t even hesitate when Anthony Rego first contacted me about the position,” he explained. “I was so honored to accept the invitation, and get the opportunity to work with Anthony, Anne Goodman, Doug Bannerman, and the rest of the team.”

As a Board member, Nick worked tirelessly to help improve the operations of the Food Bank, including moving towards distributing more nutritious food and providing more wrap-around services. “In the beginning,” Nick explained, “the Food Bank was about getting whatever food possible. Over the years, the increasing support for this organization has allowed us to now focus on quality, healthy food. The ability to give those in need something more than what’s expected is really what makes the Food Bank stand out.”
In 2015, Nick rolled off of the Food Bank’s Board, but he still remains connected to the Food Bank in many ways, including as a member of the Operations Committee. “Whether you’re on the board or a committee, you want to be involved with the Food Bank,” he said with a smile.

The Food Bank is as fond of Nick and his family as they are of us! In 2018, Nick and his family were honored before the signature Market at the Food Bank event, celebrating their incredible commitment to the Food Bank over its lifetime.

Looking ahead, Nick is glad to see the Food Bank doing more to prepare the clients we serve for the future. “The Food Bank has become more of a complete community resource,” he explained. “They’re helping to feed people, but now they’re also helping connect people to healthcare, housing, education, employment, and transportation. The Food Bank is feeding the whole person — with what matters most.”

In the future, he hopes that the Food Bank will continue to provide vital services that address the root causes of hunger. “When you are experiencing a troubled time in your life, the last thing you should have to worry about is putting food on the table,” Nick said. “Food distribution will always be the backbone of the Food Bank because solving this problem first gives our neighbors in need the ability to focus on everything else.”

The Orlando family’s service to the Food Bank cannot be overstated. From our beginning, they have been by our side in the fight against hunger, working to ensure people who live in community they love so much are fed. Beyond donating food, Nick and his family have provided guidance and leadership and helped move the Food Bank forward, helping us prepare for the next 40 years of fighting hunger. We are immensely humbled and grateful for their support.