

Summer 2022

FOOD — for — THOUGHT



Greater Cleveland
Food Bank

Special Summer Edition

Change can be difficult.
Especially this time of year.



Summer Shift

Helping working mothers care for their kids.

When we met Aeisha at one of our mobile pantry produce distribution sites, the single mother of four children was concerned about the summer season ahead.

"In the summertime, my kids are home all day," said Aeisha. "That's a lot of bellies. They are hungry all the time, and all the food goes fast during the summer."

"I work, but I'm a single mother and we don't qualify for public assistance, and it's hard to make ends meet," Aeisha explained. "Every little bit of this donated food helps to stretch things out for us. Thank you."

During her visit, Aeisha was low on produce. So, she gathered much-needed fruits and vegetables like sweet potatoes, carrots, and cucumbers for her family.

"These can be used as side dishes or snacks," Aeisha told us. "For dinner, or after dinner — it's very helpful."

Referring to friends like you who supplied the donated food items, Aeisha shared, "Thank you very much for being considerate, and for thinking of others before yourself. Thank you so much for caring. This is very much appreciated."

You're making it possible for people to enjoy delicious meals that they wouldn't have otherwise. Thank you for caring."

- Aeisha

Food For Thought

Kristin Warzocha, President & CEO

Change can be challenging. Especially when you feel like you're fighting adversity alone.

This summer, some public pandemic-related food benefits will cease — leaving **local seniors and families** to seek other avenues of relief. This comes on top of inflation and rising food and fuel costs.

Meanwhile, local schools are out. **Children and families** who relied on the benefits of school breakfasts and lunches will now have to find other means to access nutritious meals.

For many neighbors who were already struggling to make ends meet, these changes can be challenging. Please contribute in whatever way you can today to help us meet the increased needs of the season.

Change can also be positive and transformational.

In addition to distributing food, the Greater Cleveland Food Bank is helping tens of thousands of people annually apply for public benefits, connect to other non-profits, employment agencies, jobs, and more.

We're even preparing to open a new facility. In order to meet the increased needs of our community, we need more space. So while our current building will be transformed into a fully-functioning community resource center for clients, much of our staff and operations will be moving to a new, larger distribution center with increased capacity.



This summer is poised to be full of not only obstacles and trials but hope and celebrations too.

Only together can we fully face and meet the challenging moments ahead.

Thank you for continuing to provide long-term solutions to hunger that create lasting change and new joy. Your community thanks you.

With gratitude,

Kristin Warzocha
President & CEO



donated

=



3 meals

Think of
the impact
your gift can
make in the
lives of your
neighbors!

Though we've continued to face unprecedented challenges, you stepped up time and again to lend a hand throughout this time of crisis. None of our work would be possible without YOU! Thank you.

Love. Expanded.

Generous partners help us to open a new community food distribution center and more.

Capacity is a key component of the Food Bank's vision and commitment to creating food security for today and beyond.

Through early support of our expansion plans from foundations, members of the business community, and individual philanthropic leaders — our new **Coit Road Partner Food Distribution Center** is slated to open this summer.

The plan is to begin our move-in process in August, taking us one step closer to opening the new community food distribution center for agency pickups, expanded kitchen meals, volunteer activities, and more.

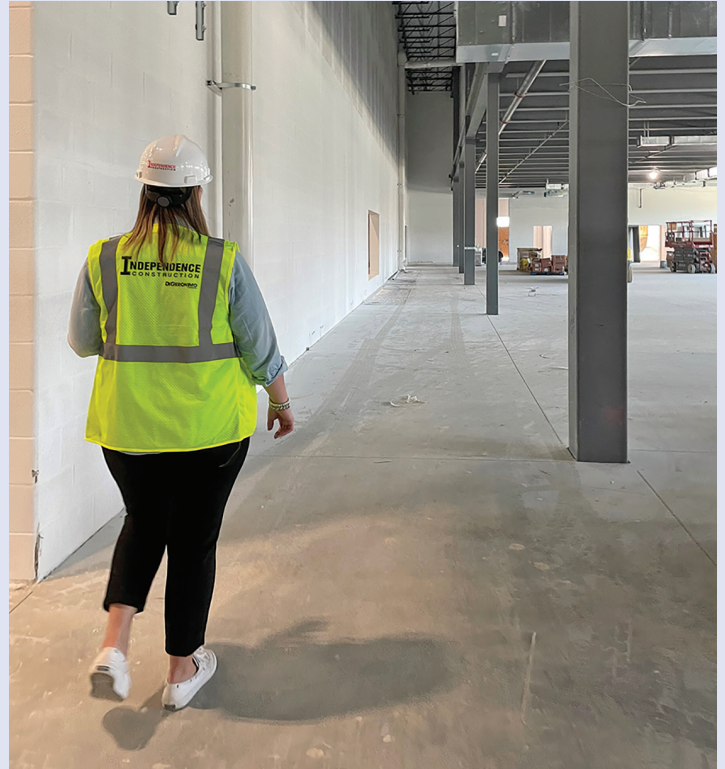
Following that exciting move, the next phase of our expansion plan centers around the **South Waterloo Road Client Resource Center**. Our reimagined current site will be a place where clients can get vital services all in one place — a one-stop-shop for community resources. Stay tuned for more details.

Generosity like yours has also allowed us to successfully continue our weekly **Muni Lot food distributions** while opening a **satellite food pantry in Euclid**. We're also exploring the idea of opening an additional pantry on the west or south side of **Cuyahoga County**.

This **transformation** is possible because of your generous support.

As you know, hunger continues to be a widespread, complex challenge in our area. Your gifts allow the Food Bank to help ease the burden of hunger for neighbors in the here-and-now, while providing them with invaluable hope and new possibilities for the future.

Thank you for your generosity. You are truly changing lives.



Direct Drop Program Allows Clients and Agencies a Larger Variety of Food Items

Did you know that the Greater Cleveland Food Bank rescued over 16.3 million pounds of prepared and perishable food from local grocery stores, vendors, and other establishments last fiscal year?

One of the ways we do this is through our Retail Donation Program, where the Food Bank works to link agency partners with local grocery stores in their neighborhoods.

Traditionally, agencies have always picked up donated product — meat, fresh produce, bakery items, and other shelf-stable foods — directly from those retailers. But not all of our agency partners are located near a Retail Donation Program retailer, able to coordinate regular pick-up, or have the capacity to accept all of the donated product.

That's why, last year, we piloted a new "Direct Drop" program where the Food Bank's own truck drivers pick up product from retailers and then deliver it directly to the agency partner along with their regular Food Bank order.

"My favorite thing about this program is seeing our agencies and their clients happy," says Margalit Berusch, Food Bank Retail Account Manager and one of the staff members in charge of the program. "Clients are able to have a more normal shopping experience by having an assortment of items to choose from, rather than the standard selection of canned goods and boxed items that pantries often offer."

Participating agencies have been thrilled to receive a larger variety of food items through the Direct Drop program, and in turn provide their clients with access to even more healthy food. Non-food items are also often donated, which is always a pleasant surprise for both agencies and the clients receiving them.

What's next for Direct Drop? While identifying enough partner agencies with storage and distribution capacity to grow



the program has been a challenge, the Food Bank hopes to get more retail donations into under-served areas where residents don't have access to the same standard and variety of product.

"We're looking forward to growing this program that benefits our environment — rescuing food from ending up in landfills, and creating delivery routes that are more efficient in reducing mileage and gas use."

**— Margalit Berusch,
Food Bank Retail Account Manager**

Direct Drop Program Saves Time, Food, and the Environment

Product from local retailers is picked up by the Food Bank and delivered directly to an agency partner.



Currently

- 14 programs participating (13 Pantries and 1 Mobile Pantry).
- 121,524 pounds have been delivered to agencies from retailers as of May 2022.



Pilot Success

- Participants: 6 Pantries and 2 Mobile Pantries.
- 27,464 pounds delivered through program pilot.
- Highest donation categories were meat and produce.



Positive Agency Feedback

"I love the Direct Drop program. It has been so helpful providing frozen meats, bread/bakery and miscellaneous dry goods that our clients really need. We've never had so many snacks, juices and bottled waters before - which are the items that can add up quickly at the grocery store. The meat especially has been appreciated because of the high price tags. Overall I am so glad we participated in the direct drop program and that we are able to provide our clients with such a great variety of products."

— Natalie Guzzo, City of Berea



Successes

- Food items are donated by retailers instead of ending up in a landfill.
- More Food Bank agency partners can participate in Retail Food Donation program.
- Clients have access to a greater variety of food when they visit our partner agencies.

Meet Jeffrey English, Euclid Pantry Coordinator!

Jeffrey is now working at our Euclid Neighborhood Pantry, which opened its doors in December to serve neighbors in the Euclid area five days a week. He has several years of local advocacy experience as well as a vast knowledge of valuable resource connections for our neighbors in the community. We are so thrilled to have him join the Food Bank family!



- **Favorite Food:** Buffalo Wings
- **Favorite Saying:** "Never chase the money, find your love and passion for something, the money will always find you!"
- **Favorite Restaurant:** J. Alexander's
- **Coffee or Tea:** Neither, I prefer hot chocolate.
- **Fun Fact:** Huge Cleveland sports fan (Cavs, Browns and Guardians)

Mobile Pantry Spotlight:

Journey Life Church

Journey Life Church wanted to help those in need by showing their love and compassion through the distribution of food. So, they began a mobile food pantry in 2013.

Because of the generosity of people like you, and the dedication of staff like Makala Weaver, (now the site coordinator), the pantry has been going strong ever since.

"This pantry helps community members in need because it helps supply them with fresh foods that can be rather expensive for them to purchase on their own," Makala shared. "Providing them with healthy food choices is very beneficial."

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Journey Life Church transformed into strictly drive-thru distributions, a successful format they still implement today.

"The community is so appreciative of the food," says Makala. "They are always thanking us and letting us know how much it has helped them. Seeing how grateful everyone can be is so rewarding."

"Plus, our volunteers always have a lot of fun. We have such a great crew."

The Mobile Pantry at Journey Life Church takes place year-round in Richland County on the second Saturday of each month, from 10am-12pm. This is one of 23 partner programs that the Food Bank partners with in Richland County.





Akilah Ashraf, Outreach Coordinator,
welcoming clients at the Euclid
Neighborhood Pantry



Carolyn Foster, Root Cause Coordinator,
& Kimani Hobson, Client Experience
Committee Member

Knowing Our Neighbors

Welcoming the Client Experience Committee to the Table



Here at the Food Bank, we are committed to having neighbors at the table when forming programs that help increase overall food security.

The Food Bank's new **Client Experience Committee** is comprised of 10-15 community residents who participate in listening sessions, ongoing dialogue, and a safe space where individuals can share their experiences, so that we can learn, and grow. All members have benefited from emergency food services at some point, making their input particularly valuable!

These virtual, over-the-phone, and in-person sessions will help shed light on the following areas:

- ➔ Experiences when receiving Greater Cleveland Food Bank services, including food quality and customer service when obtaining food from our network, and the use of our Help Center.
- ➔ Individual experiences with accessing public benefits, such as SNAP, Medicaid, and other public assistance from Jobs and Family Services.
- ➔ Barriers when attempting to access local resources and other benefits, such as employment, housing, and healthcare services.

- ➔ Insight as it relates to our expansion project and on-site community wraparound services.
- ➔ Advocacy efforts to better inform local, state, and federal issues.
- ➔ Story-gathering efforts, including the participation of media.
- ➔ Increasing individuals' social networks and building relationships with other community residents.
- ➔ Other topics that the committee deems as relevant to be discussed.

Thank you for supporting important initiatives like the Client Experience Committee. Through your support, the Food Bank focuses on creating highly personal and intentional strategies, approaches, and services that aim to transform lives throughout Northeast Ohio, addressing hunger in the short and long term.

Together, the more we know, the more we grow.



Summer Nutrition Tips

2 Seasonal Salads to Try This Summer

Did you know that eating a variety of fruits and vegetables of different colors provides us with the vitamins and minerals that our bodies require each day? Salads are a great way to mix it up with different ingredients. Try adding nuts and seeds for a tasty crunch or fresh and dried fruits for added sweetness!

Kale, Strawberry & Avocado Salad

(Serves 4)

Ingredients for Salad:

4 cups chopped kale, stems removed
1 cup sliced strawberries
1 avocado, chopped
1/3 cup sliced almonds (optional)
1/4 cup feta cheese

Ingredients for Dressing:

2 Tbsp olive oil
2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
1 tsp honey
1/8 tsp poppy seeds
1/8 tsp salt
1/8 tsp ground black pepper

Directions:

1. Place kale in a large bowl and sprinkle a pinch of salt – massage kale with your hands until dark and tender.
2. Add strawberries, avocado, almonds (optional), and feta cheese. Toss gently.
3. In a small jar, combine dressing ingredients and shake until mixed well. Pour over salad and toss to coat.



Blueberry Corn Salad

(Serves 6-8)

Ingredients:

6 ears sweet corn, husked (or canned sweet corn)
1 cup fresh blueberries
1 cucumber, sliced
2 Tbsp lime juice
2 Tbsp olive oil
1 Tbsp honey
1/2 tsp ground cumin
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp black pepper

Directions:

1. Cook sweet corn for 5 minutes in boiling water, or until tender. Corn can also be grilled for a smokier flavor! Once cool enough to handle, cut corn from cobs and discard cobs.
2. In a large serving bowl, combine all ingredients and cover. Refrigerate until ready to serve.



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