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LETTERS FROM OUR PRESIDENT & CEO & OUR VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

We have just wrapped up the 2017-18 fiscal year. With the help of our partner agencies, we have set another new record for meal distribution, more than 13.7 million meals. This is up 86% from just three years ago. We are closer to ending hunger in eastern Iowa and western Illinois than ever before.

This is only happening because so many of you are getting involved. For this reason, we have designated 2018-19 as the “Year of the Volunteer.” Beginning with this newsletter, we are highlighting and celebrating your good work. We are creating even more avenues for you to become involved in meaningful ways. Please meet Belinda Mielenhausen, our amazing Volunteer Coordinator, who will tell you more below.

My sincere thanks to each and every one of you. Together we can solve hunger.™

Michael P. Miller
President & CEO

I am thrilled that this upcoming year will be the “Year of the Volunteer.” This campaign is composed of several different elements. We will be celebrating the volunteers who are already dedicated to our mission: those who pack backpacks, sort food, and help at our Mobile Food Pantries, just to name a few. We will also be expanding our volunteer program.

We invite you to lead some of our volunteer events, take on new projects, and help us with various tasks in the warehouse and office. We will also be recruiting new volunteers to join us as we need all of you to help us end hunger! We challenge you: spread the word to your family members, friends and colleagues — tell them what you do with us and invite them to join you! We look forward to a fun year!

Many thanks for all you do.

Belinda Mielenhausen
Volunteer Coordinator

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DENIS & LINDA PRIOR

After Denis retired in 2015, he and his wife, Linda (who retired in 2010), looked into various volunteer opportunities in the Quad Cities. Feeling welcomed and appreciated after volunteering at River Bend Foodbank, the Priors knew they would be coming back to volunteer more. Since then, the Priors have volunteered at monthly food drops, neighborhood pantries, backpacks, and monthly distributions at the Foodbank. Denis and Linda have not been personally affected by food insecurity; however, they have known several individuals who received food from the Foodbank in the past and now volunteer with the Foodbank to give back. “The Foodbank staff is passionate about their work, and their enthusiasm is contagious,” said Denis. “At the end of each volunteer opportunity, we are tired but come home feeling like our small contribution has made a difference in our community!”

MONIQUE MCNESBY

Monique learned about River Bend Foodbank when searching for volunteer opportunities for the participants at the Handicapped Development Center, where she works. “I was motivated to have them [the participants] help because I thought it would be a great experience for the participants to learn and feel what it is like to give back to the community and feel that humbling greatness.” Monique has seen firsthand the benefits the Foodbank provides as she has needed help with food on occasion after paying her bills. “It’s quite scary not knowing when you’re going to eat next. Food is a necessity just like air, you need it to live, to survive, and no matter what the food, you’re happy and smiling because you have it,” said Monique. The connection between participants and staff at the Handicapped Development Center and those at the River Bend Foodbank is a special one that we hope continues for years to come.

DEAN WENDT

Dean Wendt has served as a volunteer for the River Bend Foodbank since September of 2015, when he retired and decided to spend much of his time helping his community. Dean remembered his kids participating in the Student Hunger Drive, which led him to go on the Foodbank website and sign up to volunteer. Donating time to the Foodbank is rewarding. “They are so appreciative and thankful for what they receive. It just gives you a warm feeling.” From sorting canned goods to frozen food, packing backpacks, and volunteering at Mobile Food Pantries and Foodbank distributions, Dean has donated countless hours to the Foodbank. “After working for 39 years and raising a family with my wife, it’s nice to have the time and ability to give back and help others in several ways,” Dean said. “I’m glad to include River Bend Foodbank as one of those ways and hope to be able to volunteer there for a long time.”
KIM CHANT

Two years ago, Kim Chant was part of a group of key stakeholders at UnityPoint Health-Trinity, facilitating planning for better community engagement, and was introduced to the volunteer opportunities at the River Bend Foodbank. This was not Kim’s first time witnessing food insecurity; she experienced poverty in Mexico during her high school years and in Guatemala with United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM). “I witnessed living conditions and poverty in every town we traveled to,” said Kim. “This impacted my life in ways that I now have a heart for missions... It changed me.” Kim provides volunteer opportunities to her Clinical Ladder Program (CAP) nurses. Kim coordinates and participates in food distributions at the Foodbank, where she says she loves to help. In addition to her time spent volunteering for the Foodbank, Kim is a very active member of St. John’s Methodist Church in Davenport, where she financially supports The Center Food Pantry. “I try to serve humanity through the education and blessings I have been given, because that is why God has given them to me,” said Kim.

STEVE MIELENHAUSEN

Steve Mielenhausen learned about the River Bend Foodbank from his wife, Belinda, who is now the Volunteer Coordinator at River Bend, and has been involved with the organization ever since. While working in two schools with high numbers of low socioeconomic status families, Steve has seen the work the Foodbank does come to life and change lives. As the current principal of Madison Elementary School, Steve has made it a school-wide goal “to help our families meet their basic needs so their children’s education can be a priority in their lives.” Steve said that the work Madison Elementary does as a Full-Service Community School helps families and stabilizes lives. “The empathy and kindness River Bend staff and volunteers show the patrons and the willingness to help feed those in need in the community is truly remarkable,” said Steve. “I am fortunate to be part of this amazing organization.”

INTERESTED?

If you are interested in learning more about our volunteer opportunities and to sign up, go to riverbendfoodbank.org/donate-time.

Even if you cannot volunteer, consider making a financial contribution by visiting riverbendfoodbank.org/donate-money or mailing in the remit slip found in this envelope.