

# FOOD *for* THOUGHT

*Celebrating Our Past. Embracing Our Future.*

JUNE 2022 NEWSLETTER

RIVERBENDFOODBANK.ORG

**40<sup>TH</sup>**



**ST. STEPHEN'S**

A Branch of River Bend Food Bank



## CELEBRATING OUR ST. STEPHEN'S BRANCH

St. Stephen's Food Bank was founded the same year (1982) as River Bend Food Bank. For over 35 years, the two locations worked in tandem to support children and adults experiencing hunger in Dubuque and Jackson counties. In 2019, St. Stephen's joined River Bend Food Bank as an official branch of our organization.

In this newsletter, we reflect on St. Stephen's rich history and the passionate people who made sure those in need could count on St. Stephen's in times of crisis throughout the years. We celebrate St. Stephen's 40th anniversary, and we look to the future with hope and perseverance that the work we continue to do together will make lasting changes in the communities we serve. We're all in this work together, and we thank you for being part of building a hunger-free community.



**EDUCATE.  
ADVOCATE.  
VOLUNTEER.**

In 2021, River Bend Food Bank expanded efforts to use our voice to champion policies which complement our efforts to fight hunger:

- With grants from Feeding America, we trained partner agencies on basic advocacy tactics, using social media, and the importance of remaining nonpartisan.
- We developed a toolkit for staff, partners, and community members to use as a guide when advocating.
- Key leadership met with decision-makers in both Illinois and Iowa to educate them on the Food Bank's operations and how specific policies could be improved to assist more people in our service area.

Learn about our nonpartisan efforts on the new advocacy page on our website, where you can also sign up for our advocacy email list to stay updated on lending your voice to advocate to end hunger.

Visit [riverbendfoodbank.org/advocacy](http://riverbendfoodbank.org/advocacy).



**WOMEN  
FIGHTING  
HUNGER**  
RIVER BEND FOOD BANK

What a night! After delaying the event since 2020, keynote speaker Kelly Corrigan addressed more than 370 guests at the second annual Women Fighting Hunger event in March. Attendees and sponsors collectively gave **\$66,000** to support critical programming that serves the Food Bank's 23-county region.



*Save the date for the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual event - March 30, 2023!*

# IN THEIR WORDS: GOOD FOOD COLLABORATIVE

The Good Food Collaborative is a food-based nonprofit organization that helps fight food insecurity in the Macomb, Illinois area.

“I’m Zac Green and I’m the Food Program Coordinator at Good Food Collaborative. I help build educational cooking programs for adults and kids, and I host instructional cooking videos called the Food U series on YouTube to help empower people with the skills and knowledge to better feed themselves, their families, and the community.”

## — What does the Good Food Collaborative (GFC) do, and who do you work with?

“The GFC believes everyone should have access to quality food. We work with people who just need a little extra help on their way to sustainability.”

## — How did you first get involved?

“I was a volunteer and helped bag groceries and pack meats to send out to families. I wanted to take some of my work and life experiences and help build something constructive for our community. Now I work with kids in our free Kids

Cook! educational program, helping local kids and their families learn basic kitchen skills to cook with inexpensive, whole foods.”

## — What challenges do the people you serve face?

“The biggest challenge we’ve seen is the accessibility to go out and get groceries. Some of the households we serve have a hard time making it out to get groceries for a variety of reasons. That’s one of the biggest reasons our Mobile Food Pantry program (food delivery program serving around 300 households each week in McDonough County) is necessary.”

## — Why should the community want to get involved supporting the GFC?

“People should get involved because we are an organization built on community first — doing everything we can to support the people who live here. When people get access to more food and learn more about what to do with some of the groceries and local ingredients, we get closer to a hunger-free community.”



*The Good Food Collaborative in Macomb, IL delivers food every Thursday to households in McDonough County. If you or someone you know is home-bound in the area and needs food, or if you'd like to learn how to get involved with the GFC, visit their website at [www.goodfoodcollaborative.org](http://www.goodfoodcollaborative.org).*



*Jack Rolling, founding director of St. Stephen's Food Bank  
Photo credit: Dubuque Telegraph Herald*

## ST. STEPHEN'S FOOD BANK'S 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY — FROM CUPBOARD TO COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE



In the early 1980s, a farm crisis gripped the United States. Community leaders in the Dubuque, Iowa area knew there was great need for support and resources for farmers, their families, and the community. In 1982, **St. Stephen's Cupboard** was founded and housed in a 20 ft by 20 ft room in the back of the Dubuque Rescue Mission building. That first year, as a redistribution organization for the newly established River Bend Food Reservoir, St. Stephen's distributed 25,000 meals to four partner pantries.

Jack Rolling, along with Steve Jacobs, led the organization from the ground up. "I got involved because I was working in retail grocery [at Lucky Foods]," Steve remembers. "I was in produce, and the store wasn't too keen on selling fruits and vegetables that didn't look top-notch. We had these markdown tables, and I didn't like seeing any of it go to waste. So, I started buying the food myself and taking it to the Rescue Mission where they'd hand it out to people in need. The director there suggested I talk with Jack about starting something he thought was cool called a 'food bank' that Jack had worked

with in Arizona. We outgrew the space at the Rescue Mission pretty quickly."

Jack Rolling's son, Jim, recalls volunteering with his father during the early days. "I was kind of the grunt," he jokes. "I said 'yes, dad, sure, dad,' and helped wherever he told me to, but it was a good time to be with my dad. He was my scout master and a businessman, and he was a man I admired in many aspects," he remembers.

Just two years after its start, St. Stephen's moved to a larger, 1,200 sq. ft. facility at 245 Railroad Avenue in Dubuque to meet the growing need.

Steve recalls how he and Jack worked together for almost 20 years. "Jack and I were complete opposite personalities. I was the numbers guy, took care of the paperwork, and he was a wonderful storyteller and became the informal PR person. The things he was good at were absolutely critical to St. Stephen's success. One of his favorite stories to tell was about a time he and I were on our way back from River Bend Food Bank with a truck full

of food.” He chuckles. “In those early days we made do with what we had for vehicles. A couple of the tires blew out on us long before we got back to Dubuque. We had to drop off the food at a farmer’s barn until we could get the truck repaired and go back to pick it up.”

Over the next 20 years, St. Stephen’s rose to many challenges and moved twice more, finally setting up in the current 6,000 sq. ft. facility at 3145 Cedar Crest Ridge.

Kathy Hutton has been the site director since 2010. She remembers some of the ways Jack and Steve helped that made a big impact over the years. “Steve stayed on the Board of Directors until 2010, and then helped pick up food for the Catholic Charities. To save money, Jack hand-drew and painted the St. Stephen’s logo on the two trucks we had. Even after he retired, he always made sure we had plenty of sand and salt in the winters for the parking lot.”

**Kathy knows firsthand how much the branch has grown. “From 2012 to 2016, we saw a big increase in donated foods (fresh produce, dairy, meats). We built a 16ft. by 16ft. freezer and then a refrigerator the same size.”**

Jack Rolling passed away in November of 2014 after battling prostate and bone cancer. He is remembered as having volunteered at St. Stephen’s up until just weeks before his death. He cherished the organization he helped build to take care of the community.



Installation of refrigeration unit - 2016  
Photo credit: Dubuque Telegraph Herald



Joanne Troy, Operations, stacking food - 1995  
Photo credit: Dubuque Telegraph Herald

## From a 2014 interview:

“It’s been one of the most advantageous adventures I have ever taken,” smiles Jack. “I’m really happy that St. Stephen’s grew so much.”

In 2019, St. Stephen’s became an official branch of River Bend Food Bank. Time for celebration was short, however. A global pandemic on the horizon soon changed the entire world and plunged St. Stephen’s and River Bend Food Bank into a regional food insecurity crisis all too similar to what launched the organization’s hunger-relief efforts 40 years earlier.

**The increase in donations and space was a huge benefit over the last two years. “We saw an increase in need of 30 percent in 2020,” Kathy says. “Right now, with inflation and gas prices rising, we expect continued increases for food support.”**

Thanks to dedicated volunteers and partner food pantries, St. Stephen’s distributed a record number of meals during the challenging years of 2020 and 2021. Steve remarks, “The community partnerships really make the work of food banking vital and energizing.”

“I think it’s a curse being Jack’s son,” Jim laughs. “The apple didn’t fall far from the tree. Now I serve as the president of St. Vincent De Paul and in 2017 helped turn their pantry into a full-fledged grocery store for people.”

**In 2022, the St. Stephen’s Branch celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary serving people experiencing hunger. Today, the branch works with over 100 partner agencies in Dubuque and Jackson counties in Iowa, distributing over 2.3 million meals every year.**

# THE GEIFMAN FAMILY: FOOD CONNECTS A COMMUNITY AND INSPIRES A MOVEMENT



In 1921, George Geifman, a Ukrainian immigrant, arrived in Galveston, Texas and made his way to Davenport, Iowa. With limited English-speaking ability, Geifman made ends meet by selling brooms up and down Brady Street to students living on the Palmer College of Chiropractic campus. However, when the students turned down his wares and told him what they really needed was food, the idea took hold and Geifman turned to wheeling a horse and wagon filled with produce through the neighborhood.

When a grocery store downtown went out of business (in what today is Kaiserslautern Square Park on 3<sup>rd</sup> and Brady streets), Geifman took it over. That first store would grow to multiple locations and become well-known in the Quad Cities community as Geifman Food Stores. The 15-store chain of grocery retailers would feed residents all over the area for several decades, before selling or renting out the real estate to other retail and commercial businesses like Hy-Vee, Inc. in the mid-1980s.

Today, Steve Geifman, fourth generation family member and Quad Cities resident with his wife Joni and children Ethan and Stella, runs Geifman First Equity — a Midwest real estate development company with 45 commercial and retail properties — and the Geifman Iowa Family Trust (GIFT) Fund.

“We’ve been in business for 101 years and grocery was the main focus until the mid-1980s. Food is in our blood.” Geifman smiles. “I actually do most of the grocery shopping for our family because I absolutely love it. I recently took a tour of the River Bend Food Bank warehouse, and it was a neat experience. It reminded me a lot of walking through our family’s warehouse when I was a kid.”

In April, the Geifman family committed **\$25,000 to support River Bend Food Bank’s EXPANDING to End Hunger Campaign** as a match for community donations. For the months of April and May, donors had the opportunity to make their own gift of any size in support of the Campaign and have it matched dollar for dollar by the Geifmans, up to \$25,000.

“Our son, a senior at Bettendorf High School, was involved with the Student Hunger Drive last year. We’ve supplied the Quad Cities with food for a long



Steve Geifman (far left) and family, brothers Jeff, David, and their families, father Richard and mother Joannie in September 2014.

time, and we wanted to find a mission for our family and the Trust to really help the Quad Cities with something we understand.”

Older brothers Jeff and David, along with retired father, Richard, all take part in deciding how to support the community through charitable donations to nonprofit organizations.

“We do what we have learned and observed. Our mom never turned anyone down who needed help; from having us shovel the neighbor’s driveway to making it easier to give to local charities. You never know what anyone is going through, and everyone should be treated the same way. After our mom’s passing in 2015, we pledged to keep her commitment of ‘doing good’ in our community.”

As of May 5, 2022, the Geifman match campaign has raised **\$84,000!** The response from the community was so overwhelming that the Geifmans have now pledged an additional **\$18,000** to match any gifts made to support the EXPANDING to End Hunger Campaign until June 30, 2022.

*“It feels really good to help others. The Food Bank’s mission to feed people facing food insecurity is something we understand. Everyone needs to eat. We hope we inspire others to come together and support this movement in our community.”*

*- Steve Geifman*

# GALESBURG BRANCH CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Progress is visible at our soon-to-open Galesburg Branch! Construction crews are hard at work installing HVAC units to power the building, including the 4,000 sq. ft. cooler/freezer once it is built. Drywall is being hung inside and bricks are being updated outside to provide a solid structure for the new home of FISH food pantry and River Bend Food Bank. The Galesburg Branch is scheduled to open at the end of the summer of 2022.



## BIRDIES FOR CHARITY

The Birdies for Charity pledge deadline is July 1<sup>st</sup>! If you live in the greater Quad Cities area, please consider pledging your support today using River Bend Food Bank's Bird number: 1570. Each gift is guaranteed at least a 5% match provided by Birdies for Charity, making your gift go further to fight food insecurity.

Make your gift online today.

[birdiesforcharity.com/donate?charity=1570](https://birdiesforcharity.com/donate?charity=1570)





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## SAVE THE DATE!

### St. Stephen's 40th Anniversary Open House

July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022, 4-6pm

Convivium Urban Farmstead

Appetizers served, 40th anniversary presentation at 5pm

## SHARE YOUR STORY

Tell us how the Food Bank has impacted your life at [riverbendfoodbank.org/sharestory](http://riverbendfoodbank.org/sharestory).



*"It's so rewarding to see so much good come out of volunteering. We're very proud to be part of an organization that's so open to people just coming in and getting food if they need it."*

*- Martha & Paul Tabor, volunteers at St. Stephen's Branch*



### Find Food

Find a pantry near you. Learn if you qualify for state food assistance programs.



### Volunteer

See individual and small group opportunities near you. Learn how your organization can get members involved.



### Give

Host a funds drive. Find out if your employer matches donations and support River Bend Food Bank's mission.



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