

FOOD *for* THOUGHT

Fighting Hunger with Your Help

FALL 2022 NEWSLETTER

RIVERBENDFOODBANK.ORG



A LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

Many don't take the time to consider others' inability to make ends meet. You have and know many people in your orbit who need necessities, including food assistance, some for the very first time. Our dedicated and amazing staff throughout the bi-state region and our partners in the food pantries are a lifeline to those in need. Thank you for being a supporter of River Bend Food Bank.

The work you help us do is getting more challenging. The Food Bank's need for food has been increasing, while donated food from food manufacturers, grocery stores, and government food subsidies are all decreasing. Food distributed at the Food Bank's own two pantries is up nearly 60% compared to 2021. Additionally, the cost of food is up 17% from 2021 levels and freight and fuel costs have doubled.

To respond to these challenges, the Food Bank has had to buy more food, and the Board has approved an innovative program to subsidize the purchase of food by our partner pantries. This helps but will not make up for the shortfall.

We're also realigning staff to best meet needs. Included in that is the hiring of Nancy Renkes as the new President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO). We are happy to welcome back Nancy, our former Chief Partnership Officer, beginning September 30. During our CEO search, it became clear that Nancy's previous background at River Bend Food Bank, combined with her most recent experience as the Executive Director of the Feed My

People Food Bank in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, made her the right person for the job at the right time. Welcome back!

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the stellar work of the staff since the start of the food bank's change in leadership. Since the beginning of May, long-time volunteer Board member and former Deere exec, Marie Ziegler, has been handling the responsibilities of interim CEO. She and our incredible staff have kept initiatives moving forward and have expertly handled the day-to-day operations. Thank you, all. I can't begin to express our gratitude to each and every one of you.

As we enter a critical period preparing for winter demands and the holiday season, we cannot fulfill our mission without you. Will you please consider supporting the River Bend Food Bank and sharing our story with others who might want to help? Financial and volunteer assistance are always needed. You can fill out and return the envelope enclosed in this newsletter, or visit us online at riverbendfoodbank.org to find volunteer opportunities and other ways to give back. Together we can end hunger.



Board Chair:
Janet Mathis

THANK YOU FOR ALL THAT YOU DO!

Janet Mathis
Board Chair
River Bend Food Bank





Since 1985, the Student Hunger Drive has engaged area high school students in an annual six-week, friendly “competition” to support the Food Bank. This year, 15 schools are facing off to see which can raise the most food and funds to help feed our community during this challenging time.

“The Student Hunger Drive means a chance to give back to the community that has given so much to me. I have the opportunity to provide help to those who need it most, and getting to be a part of something bigger than myself or my school.”

- United Township High School Student

The Student Hunger Drive promotes philanthropy, leadership, and community service for students in grades nine through 12, while helping rescue food that might otherwise go to waste in someone’s cupboard. For the Food Bank, donations go a long way to helping provide variety to people experiencing hunger.

“The Student Hunger Drive is our biggest annual food drive and one of our best fundraisers of



the year,” says Belinda Mielenhausen, Director of Programs. “The food given to us by the community provides a needed variety of items to the pantries that distribute them: sometimes they get canned artichokes or asparagus, masa harina, varieties of canned greens, things that don’t get donated often by manufacturers, but food our guests are looking for. It’s also an amazing learning experience for the students who participate.”

How You Can Help

Help your high school win AND support the next generation of leaders! This year’s Drive is collecting food and funds until **November 10th** and all proceeds go to getting food to the children and adults in need in our community.

- ♥ Ask your grade school, middle school, or high school student at home about the Student Hunger Drive and how you can participate in school activities or fundraisers.
- ♥ Share your school’s social media posts about the Drive and encourage friends and family to donate food or funds.
- ♥ Find your alma mater’s or neighborhood high school’s Student Hunger Drive page on our website and donate to their Virtual Food Drive. See the schools participating and make a gift of any size securely online at riverbendfoodbank.org/shd.

HUNGER ACTION MONTH

September was Hunger Action Month — the Feeding America network’s annual nationwide campaign designed to inspire people to take action and raise awareness of hunger in the United States.

September 23rd was Hunger Action Day — a day when collective efforts across the country are focused on advocacy, volunteerism, and giving back to support widespread hunger-relief efforts. Did you know...

- Hunger impacts every community in the U.S., but rural communities and communities of color are disproportionately impacted?
- For millions of people in America, a daily meal isn’t a choice between different dishes. It’s a choice between food and other basic needs — like medicine, electricity or childcare?
- Over 100,000 people in our region, including 32,000 children, face food insecurity every day?

On Hunger Action Day, River Bend Food Bank held a Day of Giving to raise funds to support increasing our food inventory for our region’s hunger-relief partners.

To see how the community came together to support the Day of Giving, or to learn more about Hunger Action Month and ways to get involved throughout the year, visit riverbendfoodbank.org/HAM.





END-OF-YEAR GIVING

Individuals 72 years old and older, with an employer-sponsored retirement fund, such as a 401(K) or 403(b) plan, must take a required minimum distribution (RMD) each year. This unique situation presents an opportunity to make a year-end

philanthropic gift with significant tax advantages for the donor and valuable support for the organization.

By donating a portion, or all, of your RMD to a registered 501(c)3 organization as a qualified charitable distribution (QCD), you can satisfy your RMD and realize an income tax benefit on the QCD amount (up to \$100,000 annually per individual).

While individuals 72 years old and older are required to take their RMD annually, individuals can begin to take their RMD as early as 70 1/2 years old. Along with tax

benefits, giving through your retirement account is a great way to begin, or expand, your giving in support of the causes most important to you.

Giving through your retirement fund is simple.

1. Calculate your required minimum distribution for the year.
2. Plan your withdrawal. Determine the amount you want to keep and how much you want to donate to a qualified charitable organization such as River Bend Food Bank. For a QCD to qualify as an RMD you must distribute the QCD portion before taking distributions for personal use.
3. Request a check from your retirement fund administrator written directly to the charity. If you have a checkbook for your account, you can write a check directly from there.
4. To ensure the gift counts as your RMD, the gift must be received and processed by the charity by December 31st.

If you have any questions about making a year-end gift through your retirement fund or other planned gift vehicle, please contact Colbie Andes, Director of Individual Giving, at (563) 345-6490 x220 or candes@riverbendfoodbank.org.

Your gift will provide food for those who need it most.

– Colbie Andes, Director of Individual Giving

WELCOME A FAMILIAR FACE AS NEW LEADER!

Nancy Renkes officially joined the Food Bank as president and CEO on September 30. Her tenure in the community, however, extends back much further. Nancy worked with River Bend Food Bank from 2015 – 2020. She moved to Eau Claire, WI in the spring of 2020 for a new role as executive director of that area's food bank — Feed My People. When the opportunity arose to delay retirement and rejoin the River Bend team, Nancy was happy to return to the Quad Cities.



“For 40 years River Bend Food Bank and its partner agencies have worked side by side to provide food for hungry people in a 23-county service area. I am honored to have this opportunity to rejoin the team and continue this important work,” she says.

Through a thorough vetting process, Nancy emerged as the unanimous choice with her experience in food banking and knowledge of River Bend's operations. The Food Bank is excited to welcome her back to the team!

SERVE THE COMMUNITY AND INSPIRE OTHERS

This was the Geifman family's goal when they pledged \$25,000 in support of River Bend Food Bank's Expanding to End Hunger campaign. With their pledge, they challenged the community to join them in supporting the Food Bank.

Within a month of publicizing the match campaign, the Food Bank received an outpouring of gifts and letters of gratitude. The matching gift opportunity inspired over \$84,000 in donations! “Our community responded in a big way. We are humbled by the Geifmans' gift and the response we received,” said Jenny Brinkmeyer-Colvin, Chief Development Officer.

Just as the Geifman family hoped to inspire others, they too were inspired by the generous support ignited by their pledge. In late May, the Geifman family pledged an additional \$18,000, in the hopes of leveraging even more support.

River Bend Food Bank is proud to share that the Geifman family match campaign has raised a total of over \$166,000! Thank you to everyone who made a gift to support this crucial project that will impact our community for generations to come.

MANUFACTURERS, DISTRIBUTORS, AND RETAILERS ... OH MY!

“Typically, donated food accounts for 60% of the millions of meals we distribute annually. This helps fulfill our mission, saves us money, AND reduces food waste,” says Chris Ford, Food Sourcing Manager for River Bend Food Bank. His job is to build and maintain relationships with large-scale food donors and secure ongoing donations. This reduces what the Food Bank spends each year to purchase food needed by its 400 hunger-relief partners across the region.

“Potential donors come from many places,” Ford says. “A new retailer may enter the marketplace, or an existing retailer may add stores in our service area. New or existing food manufacturers that operate in our region may put a product run into an incorrect box or over-produce a product. Local farmers with leftover crops donate fresh produce. Sometimes, a truck driver can donate some or all of their load if the original purchaser decides it can’t be sold due to a packaging or labeling anomaly.”

However, food donations from manufacturers and grocery stores are down by **7.6%** and food subsidies from the USDA and state governments, abundant during the pandemic, have been greatly scaled back - **reduced by over 49%**. Shelves in the Food Bank warehouse that were full last year are now partially empty.

To respond to these challenges, the Food Bank has had to buy more food to provide to pantries and other community partners.

“We’ve increased the amount of food we’re purchasing by about 20% in the past few months,” Ford notes. “In this crucial time, the Food Bank is committed to keeping healthy food items accessible to our hunger-relief partners. Partners pay a nominal fee to help share the cost of the Food Bank procuring and stocking millions of pounds of the food our partners distribute. With food costs up, the Food Bank is subsidizing up to 50% of a selection of items. This increases partners’ buying power and helps meet the needs in their communities.”

Learn more about how large-scale food donations help the Food Bank and find out how to get involved at riverbendfoodbank.org/foodsourcing.



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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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