



# feeding MATTERS

a publication of the Food Bank of Northern Indiana

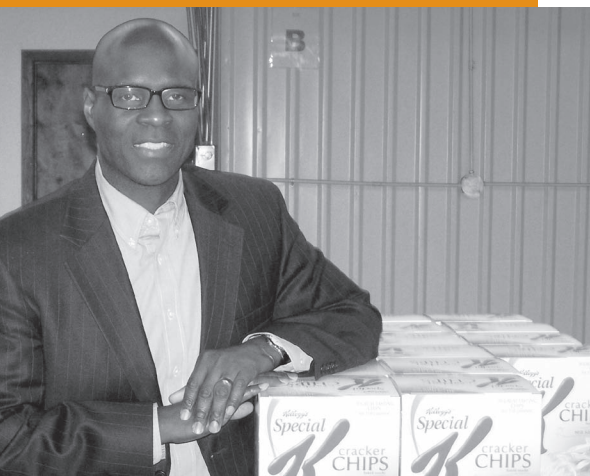
Winter 2012

## New Leadership at Food Bank of Northern Indiana

*New Executive Director Brings  
Business Acumen and New Vision  
to Organization*

Milt Lee joined the Food Bank of Northern Indiana as executive director in May 2011. Lee hails from South Bend, is an alumni of Washington High School and Ball State University and lives in the community with his wife Kate and sons Cooper and Isaac.

Most recently, he served as executive director of Urban Youth Services for the YMCA of Michiana. During his tenure at the Y, he developed a life skills training plan to prepare youth for college or a career. From 1999-2007, Lee was franchise director for the South Bend Chocolate Company. Prior to that he worked in marketing as assistant general manager at the Marquette Mall in Michigan City and University Park Mall in Mishawaka. Said Lee, "I would change nothing from my career path. Every experience shaped me for this challenge, and I couldn't feel any more prepared to serve."



## A MESSAGE FROM MILT

### Our Children, Our Future Leaders

There is a trend looming on the horizon of 2012 that is very promising for our community. There is a youth movement of civic responsibility that is fueling the concept of Social Entrepreneurship among our young people.

I visited Saint Mary's College where young students conducted an impressive Hunger Banquet that brought great awareness to this issue. What was most impressive was not the organization of the event, or the spot-on statistics they cited, but that the focus was on a passionate call to action, and not the sincere ignorance that usually comes with attempts to impress a fellow student or faculty.

I hosted a Chamber Youth Leadership Group that told me leadership was about being of real service to people, before it could leave my lips. And, I witnessed a sophisticated, high school hunger drive that generated nearly 800,000 pounds of food. 2012 will be the year of the young social entrepreneur.

A number of local, key indicators like young leadership in the mayor's office, the creation of the YMCA's youth center called Innovation Delta, the impressive architecture and intent of the Kroc Center, the school corporations support of The Career Academy, New Tech High School, Riley Early College, and the public's trust in their potential outcomes are encouraging and supports this theory.

The Food Bank is creating space for encouraging aspiring social entrepreneurs, young and old, to come and work on solutions to local social problems. I'm convinced that 2012 will be the year businesses, both nonprofit and for profit, will finally be inspired and rewarded for helping to create an environment, platform and even physical space where young people can go on a journey of self-discovery that involves risk taking and be given permission to grow from the pain failure causes. I see real, young mentor leaders emerging, and helping to develop solutions to problems that keep us from growing as a city and as a community.

Milt Lee  
Executive Director and CEO  
Food Bank of Northern Indiana

# Food Bank or Food Pantry - What Exactly is the Food Bank?

Is it called a food bank or food pantry? It's a mistake most people make when talking about the Food Bank of Northern Indiana – especially since the organization's largest member food pantry is located on site. Some would argue that there is no difference between a food bank and a food pantry, but actually there is a great amount of difference.

The Food Bank of Northern Indiana is a warehouse for millions of pounds of food and other products and a distribution facility, for a network of 196 member agencies serving a six-county service area. Our partner agencies purchase and distribute food from the Food Bank to nourish and serve clients directly – through pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and senior and day-care facilities.

Located on site is the largest pantry in our service area, The Community Food Pantry of St. Joseph County. This pantry was the first in the community that offered patrons 100% client choice – the opportunity for each patron to shop for his or her specific needs.

Through the generous donation of the Estate of Philip D. Quinn, Ph.D., the Community Food Pantry went through a complete renovation and remodel in the fall of 2010. The remodeled pantry offers patrons a less industrialized shopping experience including a larger space with a bigger waiting room, specific entrance and exit areas to create better client flow, upgraded shelving for better usage of the space, ability to reconfigure the space based on the amount of food available for clients, and bright colors to provide a positive and cheerful shopping experience.

**The Food Bank and the Community Food Pantry of St. Joseph County – not the same... but sharing the same commitment to nourish our communities in northern Indiana.**

# FOOD FINDERS

## Working with Retailers, Manufacturers and Growers to Feed the Hungry

Dave Melander, director of business development, and Amanda Peterson, resource opportunity developer, actively partner with local and national manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers, food growers, packers and brokers to procure food – food that may have been damaged during packaging, is near its expiration date, an abundance collected during the harvest season or grown/produced specifically to be donated.

The Food Bank also works with food brokers and aggressively bids through the Feeding America CHOICE System which allows our organization to an even greater variety of products for our agency members at greatly reduced prices. These items are then placed on a shopping list, orders are assembled and the products are distributed to our member agencies and to those in need.

Through partnerships with Walmart, Kroger, Jewell, Marsh, Sam's Club, Target, Aunt Millie's Bakeries, the Indiana Pork Producers, Indiana Poultry Association and a number of local manufacturers, the Food Bank receives thousands of pounds of food each week. Items acquired through these store donation programs is edible. What once ended up in the landfill, now helps provide a variety of foods throughout the year.

Embracing the Food Bank's message that hunger is a community health issue, Melander and Peterson have been actively procuring produce by working directly with the grower to acquire the "Hard Seven" – apples, cabbage, carrots, onions, oranges, potatoes and sweet potatoes. Currently, the Food Bank is part of the *Grow to Give* program through Lennard AG Co., which distributed 2.2 million pounds of potatoes in the fall of 2011. We welcomed 98,000 pounds of potatoes to distribute. In addition, Berry Plastics in Goshen, Ind., through its corporate/agriculture partnerships, provided land and harvested butternut squash. We distributed nearly 11,000 pounds to our member agencies this fall. While not considered as one of the "Hard Seven," squash could be included regionally because of its long shelf life. More than 40,000 pounds of onions were also distributed through the Food Bank during the fall.

Our affiliation with Food Rescue, Inc. of Noblesville continues to grow. Through Dan Hancock, owner of four Little Caesars locations in Kosciusko, LaPorte and Marshall Counties, we have received and distributed more than 17,000 pound of pizzas to those in need throughout northern Indiana in 2011. Said Dave Melander, "We are extremely thankful for our food donor partnerships, as we couldn't accomplish our work without them."



*The Food Bank distributed 98,000 pounds of potatoes during Fall 2011 through Lennard AG Co. Grow to Give Program.*



*In addition to pizza rescue, Little Caesars locations in Kosciusko, LaPorte and Marshall counties conducted food drives during the holiday season to benefit the Food Bank.*

## Ideas Exchanged and Information Gleaned During Third Annual Agency Conference



*Chef Bela, Life Treatment Center, educates and entertains during a cooking presentation, using foods available at the Community Food Pantry of St. Joseph County, during the Third Annual Agency Conference.*



*Cecila Torres, Community Services of Starke County (left), accepts an Agency of the Year Award from Jaime Owen, agency relations manager, during the Third Annual Agency Conference.*

Our 196 member agencies were invited to participate in the Food Bank's Third Annual Agency Conference in late October. Sessions included Grant Writing 101, Social Networking, Cooking with Chef Bela Szalay, Pantry Gardens, and Food Safety. In addition, the Second Annual Agency Awards were presented to the following Food Bank member agencies:

**Starke Community Services** – For more than 30 years, Starke Community Services has been one of only a few pantries in this county. In January 2010, they served approximately 150 families each month. Currently, they're providing services to more than 275 families each month. In addition to food, Starke Community Services offers assistance with utilities, transportation, health equipment and senior meals.

**God's Highway to Heaven** – Located in Warsaw, this small pantry has been operating for more than 19 years. In February 2010, they served 18 families. They currently serve more than 50 families each week. Their pantry director ensures clients that they can call her at any time and she will get them food.

**New Hope United Methodist Church's Elizabeth Abel Food Pantry** – Located in Elkhart, this pantry's humble beginnings included distributing vegetables they grew in their garden. A church member, celebrating her 94th birthday, asked the congregation to donate food to start a pantry instead of giving her gifts. Those "seeds" planted by this woman grew as the pantry went from serving approximately 150 families in January 2010 to currently more than 600 families each month.

**Community Food Pantry of Bremen** – Housed in the basement of a church, this agency forms a human chain of volunteers to pass each box of food down a narrow and steep staircase to receive deliveries from the Food Bank of Northern Indiana. The director of this pantry has been known to call everyone in town to help unload. This pantry has grown from serving 197 families a month in January 2010 to nearly 300 per month in 2011.

**Clay United Methodist Church Food Pantry** – This pantry has grown from serving 95 families a month in 2010 to approximately 171 families a month in 2011. In addition to numerous activities to feed the hungry in St. Joseph County, Clay United Methodist Church sponsors 25 students at Harrison Primary Center in the Food 4 Kids program.

**Broadway Christian Parish** - In addition to the food pantry which serves over 300 families monthly, this organization serves a daily breakfast for those in need, a community lunch every Sunday, offers a place for homeless to take showers, receive their mail or use computers. They also host the Christmas Jubilee each year where needy parents may "shop" for toys for their children and also receive food baskets with the ingredients for a festive holiday meal.

Our agencies are seeing as much as a 50% increase in need over the last year. While it can be frustrating to be faced with such an overwhelming need, Michelle Rose from Christ's Commissary told a story of one of her clients that puts into perspective why our agencies work so hard to do what they do. Michelle wrote: ***A gentleman came up to get his groceries. I put his meat selection in a bag, and he moved on in line. I remembered that we had milk, which is rare. I caught up with him, and said "sir, would you like some milk?" He burst into tears as he turned around and said "I really need this. How did you know? Did you read my mind? God Bless you!"***

## Thank You!!

2011 saw the formation of our first Agency Advisory Council. The group of agency directors and Food Bank staff met monthly to network and problem-solve. Their advice and dedication has been invaluable to the Food Bank.

Thank you to Mary Kneller of Church Community Services in Elkhart; Kerry Czocho of Faith Mission; Shelley Rose of Christ's Commissary, also in Elkhart; Jerry Secrist of Mary and Jerry's Helping Hands in Mentone; Teri Brandt of Common Ground Food Pantry in Plymouth; Marie Harsell of Bremen Community Food Pantry; Randy Perkins of Living Epistle in South Bend; Bela Szalay of Life Treatment Center; Liz Kurtz and Jessie Bulosan of the Salvation Army, South Bend; and Nancy Nichols of Broadway Christian Parish, South Bend.



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Milt Lee, Executive Director  
Food Bank of Northern Indiana

Marijo Martinec, Editor  
Food Bank of Northern Indiana

*The Food Bank of Northern Indiana works in partnership with the community to feed the hungry, increase awareness of the effects of hunger, and lead programs designed to alleviate hunger. The Food Bank of Northern Indiana serves Elkhart, Kosciusko, LaPorte, Marshall, Starke and St. Joseph Counties and is a member of Feeding America, Feeding Indiana's Hungry (FiSH) and United Way.*

**Share your time and talent with us. Volunteer at the Food Bank. In 2011, our volunteers provided more than 15,000 hours. Call (574) 232.9986 or visit [feedindiana.org](http://feedindiana.org).**

## Board of Directors

## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

### Backpack 4 Kids Program Shields Students from Stigma of Hunger Insecurity



*– Bob Hayden, left, vice president and general manager, Jordan Automotive Group, presents Milt Lee, executive director, with a check for the 2011-2012 Backpack for Kids program. Since 2009, Jordan Automotive Group has been the program's major sponsor since 2009.*

One in four children in the United States lives in a hunger insecure household. Since 2006, Backpack 4 Kids has been helping feed children in northern Indiana over the weekend and during holiday breaks during the school year. Designed for students in grades K- 6, the Backpack 4 Kids program is free for students who are eligible for the free and reduced lunch program.

During the 2011-2012 school year, the Food Bank is providing backpacks to 1,055 students in 16 schools in northern

Indiana. The participating schools are: Battell, Emmons, Harrison, Lincoln, Madison, Muessel, Perley and Coquillard Primary Centers in St. Joseph County; Hawthorne, Mary Beck, Monger and Beardsley Elementary Schools in Elkhart County; Know Elementary in Starke County; New Prairie, Prairie View and Rolling Prairie Elementary Schools in LaPorte County. Selected schools are identified as having a high rate of children eligible for free lunch programs.

Jordan Automotive Group has been the program's major sponsor since 2009. Food 4 Kids is funded by donations, sponsorships and grants.



## HUNGER.

It is highlighted each holiday season in the community but is in fact a year-round problem in northern Indiana. As our economy in the region continues its slow recovery from the recession, many in our community struggle with hunger insecurity and the need is now even greater.

According to Feeding America, the Food Bank of Northern Indiana's parent organization, one in six people struggle to get enough to eat in this country. Seventeen million children are at risk of hunger – one in four.

Feeding America and Feeding Indiana's Hungry (FiSH), the state association of Indiana's 11 food banks, released **Map the Meal Gap**, in the spring of 2011, providing the first detailed look at the food budget shortfall of families struggling with hunger in Indiana each year – an estimated total of \$389,851,730.

Just over one million Hoosiers are food insecure. Of them, 40 percent do not qualify for food stamps or other government programs.

To fill this meal gap, these individuals often rely on food banks or other charities to eat. In northern Indiana, there are 132,610 individuals or 18.4 percent of the population facing hunger insecurity.

**17 million children are at risk of hunger – 1 in 4.**