

Hunger in America 2014 Study

The Food Bank of Northern Indiana has released its findings of the most comprehensive local hunger study in decades.

"We put boots on the ground and surveyed thousands of local clients and over 100 pantry partners in St. Joseph, Starke, Kosciusko, Marshall, LaPorte and Elkhart Counties to find out what we were up against in the fight against hunger," said Jaime Owen, agency relations manager for the Food Bank of Northern Indiana. She was the project manager for this undertaking, supported by Feeding America, the nation's largest hunger relief organization. "We are proud and responsible partners of Feeding America, but don't forget they simply compiled the information that we and the other 200 food banks across the country worked so tirelessly to gather," added Owen.

“ ... with the average household of 2.7 people that means our network of pantries helps over 13,000 new people every week.

Milt Lee, Executive Director and CEO of the Food Bank of Northern Indiana

The key findings of this local study are sobering. Representative of the harshest statistics is the fact that there are nearly 5,000 new households relying on pantries every week in the Food Bank's service area. "That's almost 900 families having first-time experiences in each county and with the average household of 2.7 people that means our network of pantries helps over 13,000 new people every week," said Milt Lee, Executive Director and CEO of the Food Bank of Northern Indiana.

"But it's not so much about the numbers, as it is about what they mean to family dynamics and the coping strategies they use to get by, not to mention the impact on the overall health of our community," added Lee. "We can spout statistics all day long. The fact that nearly 60% of pantry visitors are working families doesn't mean a darn thing if we don't understand the details and the unexpected outcomes," he continued. The Food Bank learned

that the vast majority of families relying on pantries are female led, single parent households. "Single moms told us that because they work, they sometimes miss out on the higher quality items pantries have during the day and our study unveiled that 1 in 5 said that they've missed work to be able to get better food for their families," concluded Lee.



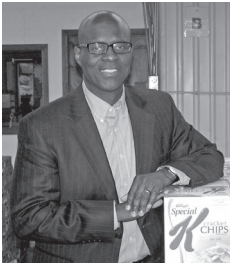
The hunger study proves that hunger insecurity is directly linked to the overall productivity and health of our community, and that everyone from employers to schools to socially responsible organizations like the Food Bank owns a stake in making sure we have the proper collaborative relationships to help families get ahead.

"People ask us all the time how they can help and we tell them that it's important to donate food and funds. But now is the time to really understand what it means to everyone when a family goes hungry," ended Ebony Philips, food bank volunteer, mom and pantry client.

Key findings:

- Nearly 5,000 households in northern Indiana use food pantries each week on a strictly emergency basis.
- Almost one-half million households have been served more than one time each year at food pantries in northern Indiana.
- An estimated 47 percent of client households have a household member who has worked for pay in the last 12 months; in 79 percent of client households, the most-employed person from the past 12 months is currently out of work.

A MESSAGE FROM MILT



We recently lost an incredible volunteer and member of our food bank family. Harry Holycross, who coincidentally, earned our inaugural Volunteer of the Year Award, was put to rest this September. Harry was unbelievably purposeful, not only in his work at the Food Bank of Northern Indiana, but you could also find the retired, 76-year-old go-getter working food drives or taking tickets at the University of Notre Dame sporting events with the same selfless discipline and energy.

It's difficult to express how Harry felt about volunteering or what it meant to him and our organization. And, it was even harder to do so while he was still with us because he would insist that one never ask. In fact when discussing his award with his daughter, her reaction was, "I didn't know about the award ceremony!" When we asked Harry why he didn't mention it to her, his response was, "I didn't want her to feel obligated to buy a ticket." People like Harry are rare, but much less so in organizations like ours and the hundreds of food pantry partners across northern Indiana. No great non-profit can operate without committed volunteers who embody the mission, goals and spirit of the organization.

So, as we drive towards the end of the year and give thanks to all the wonderful financial and food donors who helped us build resources, we want to thank all the folks in our community who give generously of their time.

Milt Lee

Milt Lee, Executive Director and CEO



From left to right: Jerry Lutkus, Food Bank Chair, Harry Holycross, Food Bank Volunteer of the Year, Milt Lee, Executive Director/CEO.

Food Bank Introduces SOUL Cookies

Proceeds Will Enable Food Bank to Source More Healthy Foods for Partner Distribution

Because the heart and soul of any community is its people, SOUL Cookies were created to help the Food Bank make those most vulnerable a little healthier and hopefully happier by providing even more nutritious foods when and where they need it most. SOUL Cookies were introduced in September during Hunger Action Month.



Proceeds from the sale of SOUL Cookies will be used in the Food Bank's efforts to source more healthy and nutritious foods for our member agencies to distribute to those in need of food assistance. In addition, proceeds will also help stock the Food Bank's Healthy Choices Market with nutritious food and education materials for clients with diabetes and high blood pressure.

Each bag purchased at \$5 is the equivalent of 55 pounds of food for those in need.

Hunger is a community health issue. When individuals and families have to make tough choices such as choosing between paying utility bills or buying food; watering down milk to provide enough for all family members; choosing to purchase medicine or buying food), community members are less productive and positive.

The SOUL Cookie is a chocolate wafer with a pumpkin spice coating – orange – just like the sun. SOUL Cookies are available until Thanksgiving. Call (574) 232.9986 ext. 124 for more information.

FOOD FINDERS

To meet the demand for emergency food assistance, the Food Bank continues to actively seek and partner with local and national manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, food growers, packers and grocers to procure more protein, produce and dairy.

Through the third quarter of 2014, the Food Bank has distributed 5,572,149 pounds of product to its network of member agencies.

Mobile Pantry Statistics

County	# of Distributions	Pounds	Households	Individuals
Kosciusko	24	121,231	2,123	123,354
Marshall	6	33,203	553	1,866
Starke	8	30,822	921	2,621
LaPorte	5	24,251	454	1,537
St. Joe	13	110,997	1,595	5,936
TOTAL	56	320,504	5,646	135,314

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

Four Food Pantries Recognized for Their Outstanding Customer Support and Compassionate Treatment of Clients

The annual agency relations conference was held Friday, October 3 at the Gillespie Center at the Hilton Garden Inn. Over 80 volunteers and staff from food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, youth and senior programs were in attendance. Our speakers this year included representatives from Woodforest Bank, who shared information about their commitment to giving back to the community, the FAN program and highlights on ways banks can participate with non-profit organizations such as the Food Bank and our partners. Carolyn Smith, Director of Food Services for the St. Joseph County Health Department and former Executive Director of the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana in Gary, offered helpful information about safe food handling and storage. Emily Bryant, Director of FISH (Feeding Indiana's Hungry, the state food bank coalition) shared information about SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) outreach. The results of the Hunger in America 2014 national study were reviewed and agencies were provided with a self assessment tool that the Food Bank created as an initial step in the agency tiering process.

Four food pantries were recognized for their outstanding customer service and compassionate treatment of their clients. The Storehouse, located in Mishawaka, welcomes its clients into a warm and inviting waiting area where clients may enjoy refreshments and coffee while waiting to be served. Special birthday packages of cake mix, frosting and candles are prepared for those clients celebrating birthdays.



The Storehouse in Mishawaka.

Christian Community Food Pantry is located in Walkerton. Realizing that their clients were waiting in long lines outside the pantry, often in extreme weather, the pantry made special arrangements with



Christian Community Food Pantry in Walkerton.

the local library. Clients are served sack lunches and drinks in a conference room at the library while they wait their turn for service at the food pantry.

State Street Church, located in La Porte, not only offers their clients generous selections of food products, books, toys and clothes, but they weekly give clients who don't have enough food to last till their next scheduled pantry visit a package of bread, cheese and bologna so they can at least make sandwiches until the time comes for them to visit the pantry again for full service.



State Street Church in La Porte.

Albright United Methodist Church in Mishawaka greets their clients with granola bars and bottled water or other snacks to enjoy while they wait to be served. In addition to a generous amount of food, each family is provided with a bag of personal care items which are deeply appreciated since those items can't be purchased with food stamps.



Albright United Methodist Church in Mishawaka.

Congratulations to our agency partners of the year! Each of the award winners was presented with a certificate and a \$500 gift certificate to the Food Bank of Northern Indiana. Thanks to you and all of our outstanding partner agencies for your hard work and dedication to ending food insecurity in northern Indiana.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

During 2014, our amazing volunteers have donated 21,000 hours to date! Thanks to the dedicated individuals, businesses and organizations who give so freely of their time to help us feed the hungry. A variety of opportunities are available to help including sorting bread, pastry and frozen meat; stocking the agency shopping area, assisting in the Community Food Pantry of St. Joseph County; filling sacks for our Food 4 Kids Fun Packs Program and Senior Nutrition Program along with maintenance inside and outside of our facility. In addition, volunteer help is also needed for special events which benefit the Food Bank and occasional special mailings. If you have an hour or two to share, we welcome your assistance. For more information about volunteer opportunities, please contact Bill Nowostawski, volunteer coordinator, at (574) 232.9986 ext. 128.

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Angie Nelson
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Healy Group, South Bend, Indiana

Michael J. Ryan
Wells Fargo Bank, South Bend, Indiana

Milt Lee, Executive Director & CEO
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.

The Food Bank of Northern Indiana is a proud member of the National Diaper Bank Network.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Senior Nutrition Program

As 2014 comes to a close, the Food Bank will have delivered 8,100 bags to seniors in northern Indiana. That's up 938 bags from 2013. In 2014, 699 seniors have participated in this program.

Food bags include pasta and sauce, bread, potato or rice, a vegetable, fruit, snack, canned tuna or chicken, a dinner helper and a frozen meat product based on availability. Each bag weighs no more than seven pounds so it can be easily carried by the seniors who receive them.

An investment of \$13.65 provides one senior with one bag per month. An investment of \$136.50 provides 10 seniors with one bag per month. An investment of \$1,365.00 provides 100 seniors with one bag of food each month. If you are interested in providing program support, please contact Theresa Thompson at (574) 232.9986 ext. 122.

Food 4 Kids Fun Packs Program

During the 2014-2015 school year, the Food Bank's Food 4 Kids Fun Packs Program is providing weekend food packs to 1,818 students in Elkhart, LaPorte, Starke and St. Joseph Counties. The Fun Packs Program is free to eligible students. Since 2009, the Food 4 Kids Presenting Sponsor is The Jordan Automotive Group.

Each week throughout the school year, participating students receive a bag. Each week, students receive two snacks, one cereal bar, one cereal bowl, two meal cups and two drinks (juice and/or milk). These items provide breakfast and lunch for two days for one child. These items are nutritious, kid-friendly, shelf-stable and ready-to-eat with little or no cooking (some items may need to be heated in the microwave).

Sponsorship is critical to the sustainability of this program. You can help area students focus on learning instead of focusing on the pangs of hunger. An investment of \$140 will feed one child for the school year. An investment of \$7,500 will feed approximately 50 children for one school year. Call (574) 232.9986 ext. 124 to learn more.

UPCOMING EVENTS

4th Annual Santa Breakfast & Holiday Happenings at Eddy Street Commons Saturday, December 6, 2014

Better not pout, better not cry. Have breakfast with Santa at Eddy Street Commons to benefit the Food Bank, that's why! Start your holiday season in style with Holiday Happenings at Eddy Street Commons.



Three breakfast seatings – 7:45 a.m.; 8:45 a.m. and 9:45 a.m. \$6 per person in advance or \$10 at the door. Proceeds will benefit the Food Bank of Northern Indiana.

In addition, from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., Eddy Street Commons merchants will offer a variety of free activities for children and their families. At

noon, the parade will take place on Eddy Street and Santa will light up the Commons by flipping the switch on the 23-foot Christmas tree. For more information about Holiday Happenings at Eddy Street Commons, visit www.eddystreetcommons.com.

