

PLENTY

fall 2017

MEMBER OF
**FEEDING™
AMERICA**

food gatherers
fighting hunger where we live

Food Gatherers... to the Rescue!

For nearly three decades, Food Gatherers has led the way with our Food Rescue Program. Last year, we saved more than 2.8 million pounds of food, which supplies us with a large portion of our total annual distribution of 6.5 million pounds of food for food-insecure people in Washtenaw County.

Food Rescue isn't easy work. Day after day, our trucks bring back pallets of food that food businesses might otherwise consign to a landfill. Our volunteers and staff have to inspect it all to make sure that it's still safe, nutritious and tasty. *On top of that...* rescued food has a shorter shelf life, which means our turnaround has to be lightning-fast to get the sorted food back out the door and into the hands of the people who need it. We have to monitor and be notified of food recalls for every retailer in our area. We have to throw out what we can't save, but we insist on composting unusable foods and recycling packaging as much as possible. It's messy, and it's complicated, and we love it.

We love it because Food Rescue gives us the chance to give back to the community on several levels.

- We're feeding people safe, healthy food.
- We provide businesses with a cost-free service that reduces their dumpster charges, improves employee morale, and gives them a hefty tax credit for their donated food.
- We're doing the right thing for the environment. 30-40% of all edible food in America never makes it to the fork because it's thrown away. Food is the single largest component of municipal landfills, and all that rotting food emits methane, a greenhouse gas 25 times more powerful than carbon dioxide.

So, the next time you see our Food Rescue Partner sticker on the door of your grocer, or our Food Gatherers Truck loading up produce at their dock, please take a moment to thank that business for participating in our Food Rescue Program, being responsible community members, doing the right thing, and helping to fight hunger where we live!



From the President/CEO ~

Dear Gatherer,

Here at Food Gatherers, the late fall and early winter are a busy time for the organization. I'm reminded how fortunate we are to be in such a generous community filled with compassion and a commitment to those in need. Over the last year, we are happy to share, we distributed nearly 6.5 million pounds of food throughout our area, sixty percent of which was fresh produce or protein items and we received a four star rating from Charity Navigator for the 13th year in a row.



Last month some new data became available that will guide us to an even better understanding of food insecurity issues facing Michigan families. The Food Bank Council of Michigan (FBCM) commissioned the University of Washington to produce The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Michigan 2017 to ensure accurate data is available to enable Michigan families and individuals to make progress toward economic security. The report provides reliable tools for calculating the amount of income a family must earn to meet basic needs. Variables, such as family composition and geographic location, are also taken into account. We are looking forward to learning more about our neighbors' needs through this information and how we can better serve the community.

We hope you enjoy learning a bit more about the new CookStars program in this issue of **Plenty**. At Food Gatherers we recognize that food is not only integral to wellness; it can be fun to learn about too!



Forever Gathering,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eileen Spring".

Eileen Spring,
President/CEO

Enjoy the season ahead
and please visit us during our Rockin' event,
we appreciate your support.

Cheers to our recent Community Kitchen Job Training Graduates!

Graduates receiving diplomas, golden spatulas, and chef coats are joined by current work interns. We are grateful to **Graduate Ann Arbor** for hosting a festive graduation this past August celebrating our 21st class. **Food Gatherers Community Kitchen Job Training Program** provides culinary arts instruction to young adults at risk of homelessness. It is part of our effort to not merely alleviate hunger but address its root causes. Special thanks to **Busch's Fresh Food Market, Maurer's Textile, Ozone House, United Way of Washtenaw County** and **Zingerman's Bakehouse**.





Cook Stars encourage healthy eating in local food pantries

Jennifer Green and Fayiza Nabblisi, CookStars participants

Food Gatherers network is on a journey from hunger to health. Through our food procurement efforts and healthy pantry conversion projects, we have created an infrastructure at partner programs to ensure access to healthy food throughout the year. This year we are thrilled to take another leap in this journey by introducing our CookStars Nutrition Ambassador Training Program, created by Shaira Daya, a Registered Dietician and a member of Food Gatherers team.

Shaira is training staff and volunteers at food distributions how to lead basic cooking and food demonstrations to help people prepare and consume healthy meals at home. The lesson plans include basic nutrition, food safety, and healthy recipes using ingredients actually distributed at the pantry such as heart-friendly Coleslaw or Black Bean Salad.

“Clients are more willing to pick up vegetables and experiment with new recipes,” said Kellie from Ozone House. “Pantry coordinators are very excited and enthusiastic about the CookStars program,” said Laura Burton, MSW Intern with Food Gatherers Community Food Programs team. “They are doing a good job of tailoring the program to meet client needs.” “CookStars helps build relationships between agency staff, volunteers, and pantry visitors. It also helps reduce food waste as pantry visitors broaden their knowledge of how to prepare different foods that are available in the pantry,” said Burton. We are grateful CookStars has been so well received and your support of this great program is appreciated!

Current CookStar participants include:

- Active Faith
- Aid in Milan
- Community Action Network – Bryant Community Center
- Faith in Action
- Hope Clinic
- Jewish Family Services
- Ozone House
- St Louis Center
- Unified HIV Health and Beyond
- Ypsilanti Church of Christ
- SOS Community Services.

Pilot funding for CookStars is funded, in part, by a grant from the Walmart Foundation State Giving Program. We are hoping that continued funding comes from generous donors like you!



AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support Food Gatherers every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the same prices and same selection as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to Food Gatherers. **On your first visit to AmazonSmile, please select Food Gatherers to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping.** Then, every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation to us.

Thank you!

SNAP facts

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Supports Ending Hunger. Eating healthier foods helps low-income people and their families stay well and have the energy they need for today's active lifestyles.

SNAP Supports Kids. Proper nutrition is vital for growing children. SNAP has been shown to improve child health, educational outcomes and behavior.

SNAP Supports the Elderly and Disabled. SNAP helps the elderly and disabled not only to eat, but to eat proper and nutritious meals so they can stay healthy.

SNAP Supports Michigan's Economy. SNAP dollars move through Michigan's economy, creating a virtuous cycle of benefits far beyond their initial dollar amount. Research from Moody's Analytics suggests that for every dollar spent by SNAP, roughly \$1.70 is added to the economy.

SNAP Supports Ending Hunger. SNAP reduces food insecurity and helps give citizens the nutritious food they need to survive and thrive.



Dan Vaughn

Volunteer Renaissance Man

For the past two years, washing dishes has been Dan Vaughn's favorite part of his volunteer shift in Food Gatherers Community Kitchen. His advice to anyone interested in volunteering at the Community Kitchen? Eat before you go to work or you'll crave all the great food being prepared. He's especially impressed with the dessert selection and the variety of options offered to folks going through the line.

He is always excited to work with Scott Roubeck, one of the Community Kitchen Coordinators. "I'm impressed with how seamless, thoughtful and pleasant Scott makes the experience for volunteers and visitors to the kitchen."

Dan's been taken back by the level of need in Ann Arbor and is focused on being a part of the solution. In addition to working in the Community Kitchen, Dan has also volunteered as a food runner at Grillin' and helped with collections at Rockin'. He's even been gracious enough to help Food Gatherers obtain free Google advertising to supplement our fundraising efforts.

Dan told us that if he could establish his own non-profit it would be either a wellness program for kids or an agency that assists families with finance management, regardless of income.

Here at Food Gatherers, we are grateful to Dan and all of the volunteers who make the organization so strong and impactful in the community. Thank you Dan for all you do!



Jim Cooper

Farewell to long-time volunteer

Longtime volunteer Jim Cooper recently relocated from Ann Arbor, and had to hand in his Food Gatherers apron. Jim has volunteered with us since 2004, and from his first volunteer shift he was hooked. In the 13 years he's been with us, Jim's worked as a food runner in the Community Kitchen, helped out in the warehouse, and even lent a hand during special events like Grillin' and Rockin'.

When he retired from work in 2009, Jim increased his commitment to Food Gatherers by adding more weekly food runs as well as a regular lunch-time shift at the Community Kitchen. Jim especially liked volunteering for Food Gatherers because his time was never wasted. "There's always something to do," he said.

"As a volunteer, the time I put in here is meaningful," said Jim before he departed Ann Arbor and Food Gatherers. "I enjoyed all of it." He especially enjoyed visiting our partner agencies and meeting the people we help. "It's a very fulfilling feeling," he said.

We appreciate all the ways that Jim has given to us over the years, and he will be missed! We wish you all the very best, Jim!

Upcoming Events:

Rockin' for the Hungry November 28 – December 3

Ann Arbor's 107one radio personalities broadcast live at our largest annual outdoor food and fund drive. Gifts made during Rockin' are matched by lead community members. foodgatherers.org/rockin

Little Women December 7-9 Washtenaw Community College

Special activities provided by Food Gatherers. Showtimes and tickets available at wildswantheater.org

An Evening with George Winston Sunday, December 10, 8 pm The Ark, 316 S Main St. Ann Arbor

Proceeds benefit Food Gatherers. To purchase tickets, visit a2ark.org

Take a Chance Tuesday Fourth Tuesday of every month, (except December), 8 pm The Ark, 316 S Main St. Ann Arbor

FREE monthly concerts that showcase up-and-coming musicians. Donations of non-perishable food and funds are accepted at the door and benefit Food Gatherers.



Washtenaw Coordinated Funders



Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation



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United Way of Washtenaw County



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