

PLENTY

Summer 2021

MEMBER OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**

food gatherers
fighting hunger where we live

There Is No Vaccine Against Hunger

We are looking toward the future with guarded hope. Our schools and businesses are opening, and the availability of COVID vaccines has put us on track to get “back to normal.” At the same time, we know **there is no vaccine against hunger.**

Before the pandemic, having enough food was a challenge for many families and individuals. Today, thousands of your neighbors still struggle to make ends meet and keep food on the table, some for the first time in their lives. Food insecurity in Washtenaw County remains high compared to pre-pandemic levels and the road to recovery will be slower for our neighbors who continue to experience income loss, unexpected bills, medical expenses, and limited access to affordable, nutritious grocery options.

But there is also good news. Despite challenges created by COVID-19, Food Gatherers and our partners distributed more food to more people than ever before. This was possible because our community came together to ensure that our neighbors facing food insecurity would have access to the food they needed. **Without all of us working together, more people would**

have faced additional hardship in the past year.


As we look forward, there is still much to be done to support our neighbors facing food insecurity. You can join the fight against hunger now by donating, volunteering, and advocating for anti-hunger policies!

We know that recovery from the pandemic will take more time than we’d like, but Food Gatherers is committed.

A hunger-free future will only come when we have equitable, reliable systems in place — strong social safety nets, access to affordable food, housing and healthcare, and public policies that address the disparities among us. We have an opportunity to create lasting, positive change in our food system and to adapt our food programs to meet the needs of everyone in our community.

Will you join us in working towards a hunger-free future?

Always Gathering,


Eileen Spring



Donate!

Without the generosity of individuals like you, many more people would have struggled to feed their families. Please consider a donation today to feed your community at foodgatherers.org/summer21.



Volunteer!

Community volunteers are critical to our ability to distribute food safely and efficiently. As public health guidelines are modified, we look forward to welcoming volunteers back to our warehouse. Learn more at foodgatherers.org/volunteer.



Advocate!

Federal food assistance programs were critical during the pandemic and we need to sustain these supports to build a food secure future. Please join food banks across the country advocating to keep existing supports and secure additional investments. Check out our advocacy corner inside this newsletter to learn more about our policy priorities or visit foodgatherers.org/advocate.



Food Gatherers' partner programs distribute food throughout Washtenaw County. Pictured here: Community Action Network, VA Healthcare System, Jewish Family Services, Berea Cares, Progressive Ministry Baptist Church.

Summer should not mean hunger. Donate online at foodgatherers.org/summer21

Welcoming Our Newest Partner: VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System

Out of the more than 40 million people accessing food banks, 20% of households include someone who has served or is currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. This year, Food Gatherers is proud to welcome the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System to our network of 170+ hunger-relief partners!



VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System's first food pantry distribution.

"With around 89,000 Veterans receiving their care through the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System, this food pantry provides us with a unique opportunity to serve a population with significant rates of food insecurity," said Miya Hourani, clinical dietician at the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System.

With the VA's limited space to store food, the partnership with Food Gatherers is critical to supplying the pop-up pantry that serves more than 100 Veterans each month. "So far, we have received an outpouring of support from Veterans and staff expressing how valuable and necessary this program is."

The pantry is hosted the first and third Thursday of each month from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the main entrance of the LTC Charles S. Kettles VA Medical Center. The food pantry is open to all Veterans, regardless of whether they receive care from the VA.

Food Gatherers Presents Spring Gathering Awards

Although we weren't able to host our Spring Gathering reception, Food Gatherers would like to celebrate our awardees!

These amazing women are driving forces in our Health Care and Food Bank Partnership Initiative, which has established a screening and referral process for food insecurity and healthy food access at primary care providers throughout our county. Through this partnership, we are also training future physicians about the importance of food security as a key social determinant of health and how to recognize and address it in a clinical setting.

Thank you all for connecting the dots between hunger and health!



Gatherer of Distinction

Alfreda Rooks, MPA
Director of Community Health Services,
Michigan Medicine



Great Gatherer

Martha M. Walsh, MD, MHSA
Medical Director,
Blue Cross Blue Shield of MI
(Martha was Chief Quality and
Population Health Officer, IHA
when she was given this award)



Great Gatherer

Kristin Collier, MD
Associate Program Director,
Internal Medicine Residency Program,
Michigan Medicine

9,025,797 lbs!

FY 2021 has
come to a close!
This fiscal year, Food
Gatherers distributed a
record-breaking amount
of food, a 14.5%
increase over the
previous year.

Welcome New Board Members

Food Gatherers would like to introduce and welcome the four newest members of our Board of Directors!

T. Anthony Denton, JD, MHSA

Senior Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer
University of Michigan Health System
Michigan Medicine



"I have been a long-time supporter of Food Gatherers' vision and mission to feed the hungry and homeless in need of nourishment and good health. I am committed to reducing food insecurity, a key determinant of health, which when successful, can inspire hope and enable the vitality of an individual, family, and community one day at a time."

Favorite vegetable: A tie between broccoli and tomato. For those who say a tomato is a fruit....nope!

Cindy Leung, ScD, MPH

Assistant Professor
Department of Nutritional Sciences
University of Michigan School of Public Health



"I care deeply about promoting food security, food justice, and food equity. Food Gatherers works in each of these areas in my neighborhood and community, and I'm honored to serve on its Board."

Favorite vegetable: Watercress

Carla O'Connor

Director, Wolverine Pathways
University Diversity and Social Transformation Professor
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor
University of Michigan School of Education

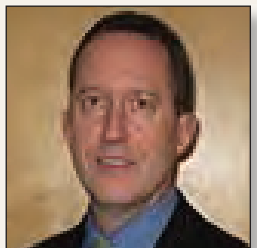


"As an educator, I am deeply aware of how inadequate access to food and food of high quality compromises children's ability to actively engage school and learning. At the same time, education plays a vital role in galvanizing the public to interrupt food inequality and the negative educational and social consequences that follow. Food Gatherers' long-standing and impactful fight against hunger and food insecurity is not only critical but highly connected to my own investment in the field of education."

Favorite vegetable: Cabbage

Chris Tressler

Senior Director of Tax and Asset Accounting
Wacker Chemical Corporation



"I've been a big fan of all that Food Gatherers has done for the Washtenaw County community over the past decades. I wanted to help try to make sure that Food Gatherers is well-positioned to continue providing and expand the critical role played in reducing food insecurity in the local community."

Favorite vegetable: Hard to pick just one, but right now I'd have to say brussel sprouts! Broccoli and carrots round out the top 3!

Free Meals Make for a Fun Summer Break

Summer is here and that means Food Gatherers' Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is in full swing! Throughout Washtenaw County, our staff and community partners are hosting meal sites to ensure kids and teens get the food they need to have a healthy and happy summer break.

When school is out, free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch programs end for the season, and many families rely on programs like the SFSP to fill the gaps. At meal sites, families can pick up a week's worth of balanced meals for each child or teen. With 21 meal sites available throughout Washtenaw County, SFSP provides a convenient one-stop resource for families.

The locations of the free summer meal sites are posted on Food Gatherers' website: www.foodgatherers.org/summerfood. Families seeking food can also text FOOD to 877-877 or call Food Gatherers for more information at 734-761-2796.

The 2021 SFSP is offered in partnership with the Michigan Department of Education and support from Toyota Research & Development, Jon and Ashley Oberheide, Milk Means More, Kiwanis, and Blue Cross Complete of Michigan. Thank you!



Food Gatherers' 2021 summer food team: Emma, Trinity, Kayla, Erin, and Robert.

ADVOCACY CORNER: YOUR VOICE MATTERS

Food banks play a critical role in increasing access to healthy, nutritious food, but we aren't the only solution. Ending hunger will take more than providing emergency food to our neighbors, it will take action to address and eliminate the root causes of hunger in our society.

Food Gatherers advocates for local, state, and federal policies and programs that address food insecurity and its causes, but we can't do it alone.

Your voice matters! Will you join us?

- Sign up for advocacy alerts from Food Gatherers: www.foodgatherers.org/signup
- Watch this Advocacy 101 video to learn more about your role: www.foodgatherers.org/advocacy101

Food Gatherers' Policy Priorities for 2021 include:

- Child Nutrition Reauthorization (school meals, summer meals, child care meals, WIC)
- Enhancing SNAP benefits to promote economic stimulus
- Funding The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) to better support food banks
- Extending the Pandemic-EBT programs to help families
- Extending the increase in the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit to aid families with children

Learn more about Food Gatherers' advocacy initiatives at www.foodgatherers.org/advocate!

Upcoming Events

Weingartz Mow Down Hunger

September 2021

Weingartz will match donations to Food Gatherers! Look for details later this summer.

Hunger Action Month

September 2021

Build awareness about hunger during Hunger Action Month, the national campaign sponsored by Feeding America. Follow along on our social media pages to find ways to participate!



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