

# PLENTY

Summer 2022

MEMBER OF  
**FEEDING  
AMERICA**

**food gatherers**  
fighting hunger where we live

## Prices Are Up . . . So Is Hunger

**F**or many in our community, a visit to the grocery store can be full of hard questions.

*If I buy meat, can I still afford milk?*

*If I shop today, will I have enough for rent?*

*Will the food I need to manage my health condition put me over my budget?*

**Food insecurity forces families to make tough choices between paying for food and other necessities like rent and medical care.** Today's skyrocketing grocery prices make it even harder to stretch a budget.

According to the USDA, it costs Michigan families 13.9% more to buy groceries this year. Concerned families are turning to food banks to feed their children. "It's a relief for families to know that they can rely on a local, easily accessible pantry for fresh groceries," says Eileen Spring, President/CEO of Food Gatherers. "We continue to keep food flowing to the community and spreading the word that help is available."

When inflation first surged, Food Gatherers' hunger-relief network saw a 30% increase in visitors from February to March 2022.

Rising prices also take a toll on hunger-relief programs. **"We spent twice as much on meat in the first three months of 2022, than we did in the previous three,"** says Eileen. The cost of Food Gatherers' emergency food boxes, providing one week of nonperishable groceries, increased by 25%. Outside of food, operational expenses like fuel, freight costs, and vehicle maintenance have increased significantly.

**Food Gatherers' direct service programs are also feeling the pinch.**

"With prices up and donations down, we are doing more with less," says Scott Roubeck, Community Kitchen Manager. The Community Kitchen, in downtown Ann Arbor, serves 25 breakfasts, 80 lunches, and 100 dinners daily. To continue to provide nourishing meals to the community, Scott says he has adapted his food sourcing.



Food Gatherers driver, Franky, stands by one of the food bank's eight trucks.

**"I used to provide most meals with donated meat. These days I purchase a lot more, and at higher prices."**

Complicating the situation, many pandemic-related government assistance programs have or are expiring, meaning more people are losing essential financial resources when they need them most.\* Food banks also anticipate a 50% reduction in donated food from the USDA.

"With rising prices for families, operational challenges for food banks, and the loss of government assistance, **we find ourselves in the middle of another perfect storm,**" says Eileen. "Many view this summer as closer to 'back to normal' but food banks are facing a looming hunger crisis."

**There is a lot we can do together, as a community, to ensure everyone has access to the food they need.**

- Donate to cover rising food and operation costs
- Advocate for essential government programs and local funding for safety net programs
- Spread the word about the resources Food Gatherers is providing in our community

Please visit our website today to learn more and sign up for our email newsletter to receive regular updates from Food Gatherers: [FoodGatherers.org/SignUp](https://FoodGatherers.org/SignUp).

**\*Many SNAP households will lose \$82 per month of critical benefits when the Public Health Emergency declaration ends.**

**We need your support. Donate now at [FoodGatherers.org/Summer22](https://FoodGatherers.org/Summer22).**



In an incredible show of community support, letter carriers and postal workers in Washtenaw County gathered 127,776 pounds of donated food during Stamp Out Hunger 2022!

Coordinated by the National Association of Letter Carriers, Stamp Out Hunger is the largest food drive in the country. After a two-year hiatus during the pandemic, Stamp Out Hunger returned this year on

May 14th. All donations stayed local, supporting Food Gatherers and our partner agencies.

This year's total was just shy of the "all-time high" in 2014!

We are grateful to everyone who donated, to our local letter carriers for collecting donation bags along their route, and to the many volunteers who will inspect and sort each donation!



Food Gatherers staff, Josh and Dan, collect donations with Jane Grant, the NALC 434 Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive Coordinator.

## Thank you, Alex Bloom!

On May 11th, Food Gatherers wished a happy retirement to Alex Bloom, our longest-serving volunteer. Alex started volunteering with Food Gatherers more than 30 years ago with a local school program. He has served longer than any other volunteer or staff member!

In 2012, Alex received the Volunteer Service Award at the annual Feeding America Network Summit in Detroit. This prestigious award recognizes the year's most distinguished volunteer from more than 200 food banks across the nation.

"Getting to know Alex has been one of the greatest privileges in my 28 years at Food Gatherers," says Eileen Spring. "Alex's weekly visits and his relationships with our staff and volunteers have been a cornerstone of our organization. His generous service has made our community a better place and is an example to us all."

With immense gratitude, we thank Alex for his many years of service and wish him a very happy retirement!



Alex Bloom receives an award at a reception for Food Gatherers' supporters in 2010.



A SFSP attendee poses by the Meet Up and Eat Up sign at a food distribution site in Ypsilanti.



## Summer Meals Feed Kids and Teens

For kids facing hunger, summer vacation can be anything but a break. Without the free and reduced-price meals they receive during the school year, the summer days can be long and difficult. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) helps fill the meal gap for families during the school break.

Food Gatherers is the largest sponsor of the SFSP in our community. The 2022 SFSP is offered in partnership with the

Michigan Department of Education and support from Toyota Research & Development, Lake Trust Foundation, and Rotary Club of Ann Arbor.

For more information on the Summer Food Service program, including a list of the 2022 sites, visit [FoodGatherers.org/SummerFood](http://FoodGatherers.org/SummerFood).



Alex Bloom and Eileen Spring celebrate Alex's retirement after more than 30 years of service.

## Welcome, New Gatherers!

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



### Veretta Nix

Human Resources Director  
Zingerman's Community of Businesses

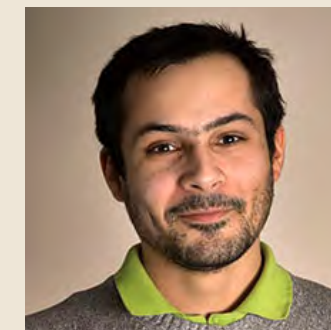
"I was raised to believe that I have a responsibility to contribute in positive ways to support my community. Food Gatherers provides healthy food choices to people in need, demonstrates care and respect, and supports the health of our community. I look forward to serving on their Board."



### Jackie Lapinski

Vice President Performance Excellence  
Trinity Health Michigan

"I'm honored to be joining the Board for such an incredible organization who is committed to ending hunger in our community. Food is a basic need and something too many of us take for granted. In our community, we're fortunate to have a strong network of services who can support our most vulnerable people and families."



### Oto Alves-Pfleiderer

Community Food Programs Coordinator  
Food Gatherers

Oto joined Food Gatherers in May 2022. Oto speaks fluent Spanish and Portuguese. Before joining Food Gatherers, he worked in immigration legal aid in Texas and Michigan.

# We Got The Beet!

This spring, the USDA and Michigan Department of Education awarded Food Gatherers the 2021 Turnip the Beet Award. The award recognizes sponsors of the Summer Food Service Program who go above and beyond program requirements to serve appetizing, nutritious meals to children during the summer months.

Food Gatherers was one of fourteen agencies nationwide to win a gold-level award. It was presented to LeRonica Roberts, Community Food Programs Coordinator, in recognition of exemplary work on the program.



The Community Food Programs team received the Turnip the Beet award for the 2021 Summer Food Service Program.

## Give What You Grow!



A WTMC student shows off an early harvest from the school's garden program.

Did you plant a garden this season? You can donate your extra harvest to fight hunger! Your donations of fresh produce help us meet our goal of distributing nutritious fruits and vegetables along with shelf-stable products. Bring donations to our warehouse at 1 Carrot Way, Ann Arbor, Monday–Friday, 9:00 a.m.–4:45 p.m.



## Advocacy Corner

**The White House announced that it will hold its first conference on hunger, nutrition, and health in 50 years.** The goal is to end hunger and increase healthy eating and physical activity by 2030 so that fewer Americans experience diet-related diseases like diabetes, obesity, and hypertension. Food Gatherers applauds this and will work closely with Feeding America to give our neighbors living with food insecurity the opportunity to share their priorities and needs during the conference. To learn more about our advocacy efforts, visit [FoodGatherers.org/Advocate](https://FoodGatherers.org/Advocate).

## Upcoming Events

### Mow Down Hunger

September 2022

Generously sponsored by Weingartz, this fundraiser will match your donations to Food Gatherers! Look for details later this summer.

### Hunger Action Month

September 2022

Hunger Action Month seeks to bring awareness, spark conversations, and inspire action about food insecurity. Follow along on our social media pages to find ways to participate!



### Food Gatherers Main Office

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    @foodgatherers

