

# PLENTY

Fall 2022

MEMBER OF  
**FEEDING  
AMERICA**

**food gatherers**  
fighting hunger where we live

**If a picture is worth a thousand words, this photo from Food Gatherers' warehouse is worth hundreds of thousands of pounds of food.**

In our warehouse, Jeff Grigg, a Food Runner at Food Gatherers, looks up at shelves that are normally full with pallets of nonperishable food from the USDA. "I've never seen it look this empty before," he says.

**This is the reality at Food Gatherers and other food banks nationwide as government food resources have declined sharply in the last few months.**

Throughout the pandemic, vast state and federal investments ensured food banks could serve the growing number of our neighbors facing food insecurity.

**In 2020, Congress increased funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP),** one of the USDA's most important sources of protein and vegetables for food banks and those we serve. **However, funding for that extra food ended earlier this year.**

**"For months, we advocated for Congress to authorize additional funding for TEFAP," says Food Gatherers President and CEO Eileen Spring. "That investment didn't continue, creating a gap we must fill quickly to feed our community."**

**This could not come at a worse moment.** The dramatic reduction in USDA food limits Food Gatherers' supply at the same time that record-high food prices have increased demand at local food pantries. We expect demand to rise more when other government financial supports for families end this fall.

**The solution? Increase our food purchases.** Food Gatherers' bulk purchasing fills the gaps, but we are not immune to inflated prices.



*Jeff Grigg, a food bank employee, stands next to bare shelves in Food Gatherers' warehouse.*

"We used to spend about \$11,000 a month on bulk purchasing of meat; now, we are spending more than \$50,000 a month on this one food item," says Eileen.

**Fortunately, in mid-September the USDA announced that it would purchase additional food for food banks. We applaud their action. But the food won't reach our warehouse until Spring 2023 or later, and our community needs food now.**

## How you can help meet the increased need:

- **Donate!** Your gift of any size helps purchase food, fuel our trucks, and feed our community.  
[FoodGatherers.org/Fall22](https://FoodGatherers.org/Fall22)
- **Advocate!** Speak up for policies to ensure access to healthy food and our community's safety net.  
[FoodGatherers.org/Advocate](https://FoodGatherers.org/Advocate)
- **Share!** Spread the word in your community that food is available to anyone in need.  
[FoodGatherers.org/FindFood](https://FoodGatherers.org/FindFood)



**Donate now to fight hunger where you live! [FoodGatherers.org/Fall22](https://FoodGatherers.org/Fall22)**



# Fighting Summer Hunger

When schools close for the summer, families lose access to a critical source of food. This summer, thanks to the incredible commitment of volunteers, program partners, and staff, kids and teens received free, nutritious meals all summer long through Food Gatherers' Summer Food Service Program!

**Together we:**

Served **57,970** meals

Hosted **24** summer meal sites

Nourished **1,216** children



Food Gatherers' 2022 SFSP team: LeRonica Roberts, Mariah Melendez, Makala Connor, Alyson Nelson, Linda Nkemere. Not pictured: Brandon Rutley, Robert Peterson

**Thank You**  
 Summer meals were made possible through generous support from Toyota, Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor, Lake Trust Credit Union, and Rotary Club of Ann Arbor!

# Meet the Dream Team: Chartwells staff fuel futures with delicious, healthy meals

On a sunny August afternoon, the cafeteria kitchen at Pioneer High School rings with the bustle of more than two dozen team members from Chartwells dining service.

Since 2016, Chartwells, the meal program that feeds Ann Arbor Public School (AAPS) students, has been the exclusive food vendor for **Food Gatherers' Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), which provides free, nutritious meals for children at locations throughout Washtenaw County.**

Food Gatherers and Chartwells work together to make sure families have access to nutritious summer meals at community programs and grab-and-go distributions. And there are a lot of moving parts.

**"From the outside looking in it could appear chaotic because there are so many different people involved,"** says Tim Connors, AAPS Executive Chef.

In the kitchen, smaller teams work on different stages of the process, creating frozen meal packs that look like a TV dinner. "All the components are prepared, put in a package, cooled down to temperature, sealed, and then frozen," says Tim. Milk and fresh Michigan produce complete the meal pack.

**All meals meet the USDA's nutrition requirements and are convenient and kid-friendly.** Kids in the program may be home alone while their parents are at work, so the meal packs are designed to be easily reheated and enjoyed.

**"The food is beautiful every time,"** says LeRonica Roberts, Food Gatherers' SFSP coordinator. "The meals are nutritious, very colorful, and have food that kids want to eat."



Drivers help deliver summer meals



Connie, a Chartwells team member, gives a tour of the milk cooler

**This year the meals were especially helpful for families experiencing rising prices of essentials like food, gas, and rent.** The team at Chartwells feels inspired knowing that their food bridges the gap for families during the summer.

For William Latham, who joined Chartwells' team in February, community is at the center of his work. **"Service is probably one of the most rewarding and exciting things you can ever do in your life,"** says William. "Knowing that you're serving the community and bringing joy to people who don't have access to food and to see their faces when they pull up and they walk away happy with the meals that they get."

**Food Gatherers' and Chartwells' collective commitment to the community fuels the teamwork necessary to innovate and center the needs of the kids served.** "It has been a beautiful partnership," says LeRonica. "Even with unexpected challenges, their attitudes are awesome. They always come through. **This is the dream team.**"



Each meal includes seasonal Michigan produce



Chartwells and Food Gatherers staff celebrate the end of a successful summer meal program



"Except for when we take field trips, lunch is my favorite time of day because the food is so good."  
 - Samson



"Grab-and-go summer meals are important because sometimes we just have enough money to pay the bills. Not only do they give meals out but they give granola bars and vegetables to go with the dinners. The summer would have been a lot more difficult without the meals."  
 - Johanna



"Red is my favorite color but I really like the green apples."  
 -Teddy



# Feeding America CEO Visits Food Gatherers

In September, Food Gatherers' staff were honored to host Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, CEO of Feeding America, the nation's largest network of food banks, food pantries, and meal programs. Claire listened to the concerns and experiences of our community and shared her vision for the network. After learning more about Food Gatherers' history of innovation and resiliency, she invited staff to share their advice for her as a leader.

Food Gatherers is proud to be a member of the Feeding America network and looks forward to continuing to work together toward an America without hunger.



Feeding America CEO, Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, visits Food Gatherers' warehouse

## Farmer with a Heart of (Yukon) Gold!



Earl Cornprobst grows and donates potatoes to fight hunger

Boil 'em, mash 'em, or donate 'em to Food Gatherers! That's what Earl Cornprobst of Nook & Cranny Farm does with his potato crop.

When Earl retired, he wanted to spend more time outdoors. "I've spent a lot of time with the public, farming is my 'me time'," Earl says. "I wanted to grow potatoes but I needed a reason to do it." Fighting hunger is that reason.

Earl now makes regular trips to Food Gatherers from his farm in Temperance. So far in 2022, Earl has donated more than 6,730 lbs of potatoes!

We always look forward to his visits and are so grateful to have him as our 'best spud' in the fight against hunger!

## Agency Advisory Group Launches New Cohort

Food Gatherers' Agency Advisory Group is a diverse cohort of program partners that share insights and contribute ideas on how to serve the community. In its second year, the group will:

- Brainstorm ways to express appreciation of our partner programs
- Provide feedback on the food we distribute to them
- Work with Food Gatherers to design TEFAP/USDA protocols
- Help design a communications tool kit for partner programs and clients



FY 2023 Agency Advisory Group members: Alex Easley, A.E City of Hope; Cheryl Wasson, Second Baptist Church of Ypsilanti; Howard & Jeannette Pettygrue, Word of Deliverance; Robert Walker, St. Louis Center; LeRonica Roberts, Markell Miller, Oto Alves-Pfleiderer & Rolanda Logan, Food Gatherers

## Upcoming Events

### Busch's Season of Sharing

November 14 - 27

Busch's annual food and fund drive to support Food Gatherers. Please visit any store to participate.

### Rockin' for the Hungry

November 29 - December 3

Stay tuned for details as we join forces with Ann Arbor's 107one and Kroger to raise 1 million meals!



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