



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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# **Grateful Plate Gala Brings Community Leaders and Local Celebrities Together to Solve Hunger**

Keynote Alex Hart-Upendo, the 12-year-old founder of Build-A-Bow LLC from Racine, will share his journey from homelessness and hunger to starting his own business.

**MILWAUKEE, WI (April 29, 2019)** – More than 350 business and community leaders will gather **Thursday, May 23** at the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts for the annual Grateful Plate Gala, presented by **Walmart**, to help solve hunger in our community. In its 13<sup>th</sup> year, the event raises nearly a million meals for local children, seniors, and families.

The theme of this year's gala is "The Everyday Heroes," and will celebrate everyday heroes like volunteers and pantries that are helping solve hunger each day.

**WHO:** **Coreen Dicus-Johnson**, Network Health President and CEO and **Mike Sprang**, Valley Cooperative Association Vice President of Sales and Marketing, will serve as co-chairs for the event.

**Alex Hart-Upendo**, a child entrepreneur who has seen local and national recognition, will appear as the keynote speaker and share his story of surviving homelessness and hunger.

**Mark Shapiro**, Jewish Community Center Health President and CEO, will serve as auctioneer.

Milwaukee radio and television personality **Elizabeth Kay** will host the evening.

- WHEN:** Thursday, May 23  
5 p.m. Cocktails and Silent Auction  
6:30 p.m. Dinner and Live Auction
- WHAT:** 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Grateful Plate Gala – An Evening to Solve Hunger
- WHERE:** Marcus Center for the Performing Arts
- WHY:** In eastern Wisconsin, 1 in 7 people don't have enough to eat. These numbers are even worse for children (1 in 5 facing hunger) who will soon face a summer without access to school meal programs. The event is held in Milwaukee County, where every child is eligible for school meal programs. When school is not in session, they lose access to these programs and the vital nutrition they provide.

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**Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin** is the largest hunger-relief organization in the state with locations in Milwaukee and Appleton. Founded in 1982 by the Rotary Club of Milwaukee, Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin is a local and independent member of the Feeding America network. Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin collaborates with 600+ hunger-relief programs, including food pantries, meal programs and shelters to provide more than 20 million meals annually to nearly 400,000 people across 36 counties in eastern Wisconsin. Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin also supports programs that improve food security for people facing hunger and works collaboratively with community partners to solve hunger. To learn more about hunger in Wisconsin, visit [www.feedingamericawi.org](http://www.feedingamericawi.org).

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