



# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

TABLE OF

# CONTENTS

<p><b>1</b> Welcome</p> <p><b>2</b> Our Impact</p> <p><b>4</b> Aurelia Hall Entrepreneur</p> <p><b>6</b> Ryan Bulgrin Sales Representative, Gumz Farms</p> <p><b>8</b> Scott and Darla Turk Volunteers</p> <p><b>10</b> Tony Drake Owner and CEO, Drake &amp; Associates, LLC</p> <p><b>12</b> Charlotte John-Gomez President and CEO, Siebert Lutheran Foundation</p> <p><b>14</b> Elizabeth Kay and Radar Hess Radio Hosts, 99.1 The Mix Milwaukee</p> <p><b>16</b> Bobby Portis Jr. Forward, Milwaukee Bucks</p> <p><b>18</b> Emilie Williamson, RDN, CD Division Corporate Affairs Manager, Pick 'n Save and Metro Market</p>	<p><b>20</b> Northeast Wisconsin Fundors Group</p> <p><b>22</b> Calvin Hopp Packaging and Warehouse Manager, Nortera</p> <p><b>24</b> Ryan Zhang Student</p> <p><b>26</b> Great Lakes Intertribal Food Coalition</p> <p><b>28</b> Maurice "Moe" Wince Milwaukee Investor and Developer</p> <p><b>30</b> Financials</p> <p><b>31</b> Board of Directors and Leadership Team</p> <p><b>32</b> Service Area Map</p>
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Scan the QR code to view our Annual

Report online!



Dear Friends,

As we reflect on another remarkable year, we are filled with immense gratitude for the unwavering support and generosity of our donors, volunteers, and community partners. Your dedication has been instrumental in helping us navigate the challenges and changes of the past year, enabling us to continue our mission of solving hunger across Eastern Wisconsin.

Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin is more than just a food bank; we are a transformative and innovative nonprofit organization dedicated to providing hope, fostering resilience, and addressing the root causes of hunger. Our commitment to these principles has driven us to evolve continuously and develop new creative strategies to meet the ever-changing needs of our community.

Over the past year, we have focused on building strong, collaborative partnerships that amplify our impact. By working closely with local organizations, community leaders, and advocates, we have been able to implement innovative programs and initiatives that not only provide immediate relief but also promote long-term solutions to hunger. These efforts are a testament to our belief that together, we can create a hunger-free Wisconsin.

Our approach is data-driven and community-centered, ensuring that our resources are directed where they are needed most. This strategic use of data allows us to address disparities in food access and to tailor our programs to better serve the unique needs of each community. We are committed to ensuring that everyone has access to nutritious food and the opportunity to thrive.

The stories within this Annual Report are a powerful reminder that we can all help solve hunger in our own unique ways. These stories reflect the resilience, strength, and hope of the individuals and families we serve. Each story is a testament to the transformative power of our work and the impact that your support has on the lives of those facing hunger.

None of our accomplishments would be possible without the steadfast support of our donors. Your contributions, whether financial or in-kind, have made a profound difference in the lives of countless individuals and families. We are deeply grateful for your trust and partnership.

As we look to the future, we remain committed to our mission and are inspired by the possibilities ahead. Together, we will continue to innovate, collaborate, and advocate for our neighbors.

Thank you for being an integral part of our journey.



**Patti Habeck**

*President and Chief Executive Officer*  
Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin



**Sally Piefer**

*Immediate Past Chair*  
Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin Board of Directors

## New Board Chair

We are very pleased to welcome Barclay Ferguson to his new role as Board Chair of our Board of Directors! Barclay has served on Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin's Board of Directors since 2018. He is the Chief Financial Officer at Mosaic Dental Collective and has over 25 years of experience in growing enterprise value for large public and private organizations.

**"It is an absolute privilege to serve as Board Chair for Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin. With an incredibly dedicated staff in both Milwaukee and Appleton, and a remarkable Board, I am thrilled to have the opportunity to support in a larger capacity the impactful and motivating efforts being made in our communities to solve hunger."**



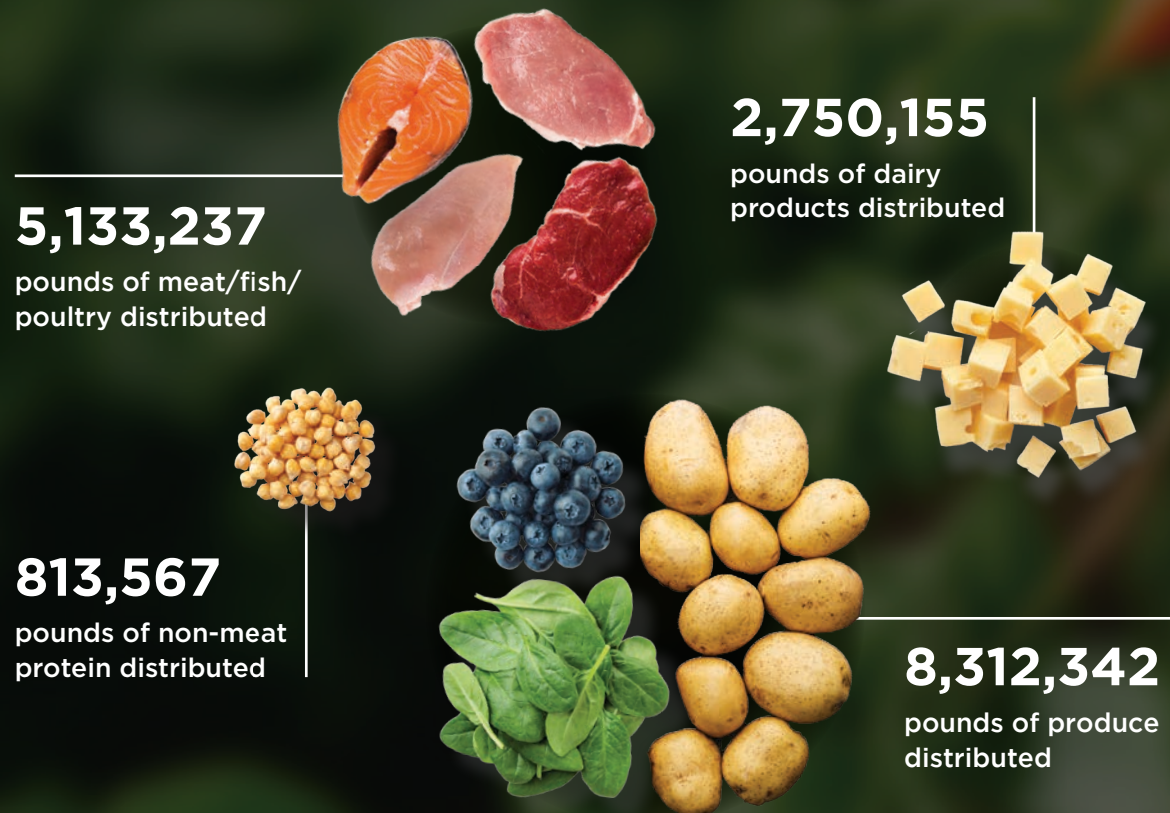
# OUR IMPACT

**38,318,161** Total pounds distributed

**↑ 12%** Increase in pounds distributed (FY23: 34,162,610)

## Fresh and Minimally-Processed Food Distribution

**17,009,301** total pounds of fresh and/or minimally-processed foods distributed



## Programs

**440,658** Pounds of culturally-appropriate food distributed through the Tribal Elder Food Box Program

**134 households** Number of unduplicated people served through the Mindful Meals Program

**604 individuals**  
**368 children** (17 and under)

**204,544** Pounds of produce provided by small, local, and Hmong farmers through the FarmLink Program

**535,060** Total number of period products delivered to area partners through The Monthlies Project\* since 2022  
\*The Monthlies Project is a community initiative.

## Volunteers



**50,068** Volunteer Hours (Milwaukee and Appleton combined)



Equivalent to **25** additional full time employees

## Where We Receive Food From

**38,259,925** Total receipts



# WHEN LIFE

With a budding entrepreneurial spirit, eleven-year-old Aurelia Hall recognized potential in going door-to-door in her neighborhood selling whatever seemed like it might have a market - including trinkets like buttons, beads, and even roofing nails.

But when her mother, Lisa, suggested Aurelia sell something that people might enjoy a bit more, Aurelia took the advice to heart. She talked it over with a neighbor friend and came up with a brilliant plan in June of 2023.

"It was very spur of the moment," Lisa said. "She came into the house and said, 'we're going to do a lemonade stand tomorrow!'"

"I wanted to help people who don't have a lot of money," Aurelia said. She enlisted more friends, who helped create and post homemade signs at the entrance to their north side Appleton subdivision. A helpful neighbor advertised the event on a neighborhood Facebook page, helping to fuel even more interest.

"I came home and there were 50 people in our front yard - I don't know what happened," said her father and Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin Board Member, Eric Hall.

Aurelia decorated her stand with a cheerful tablecloth, and a neighbor supplied chocolate chip cookies to sell along with the lemonade. Aurelia didn't stop there - she also curated a museum of intriguing treasures - such as raccoon bones - and opened it to visitors who made a donation.

"She included anything she thought was rare - some coins I'd given her, some books from when we visited the British Museum, rocks from Lake Superior," Eric said. Additionally, with an excess inventory of unique drawings on hand, Aurelia decided to put some up for sale, offering her original artwork at \$10 apiece.

Aurelia's sale raised \$165 for Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin, enough to provide 660 meals to local families facing hunger. Aurelia said the best part about helping the organization is "it feels good that you did something nice."

# HANDS YOU LEMONS

Aurelia's efforts had other ripple effects: Another friend was inspired to hold a lemonade stand for Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin later in the summer. Aurelia is no stranger to philanthropy. For her birthday, which is right before Thanksgiving, Aurelia collected non-perishable food items for Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin instead of receiving presents from her classmates.

"We talked about it and said we're pretty blessed with what we have, and it's a way to give to others," Lisa said. "And she was very willing to do that."

Aurelia said she liked the idea "because there's a lot of people who need food." She invited both fourth grade classes at her school - 39 students - who had recently been learning about service projects.

"We want to make sure that Aurelia understands that what we have is unusual," said Eric, a military veteran and CEO of Gateway Financial Partners in Downtown Appleton. "We don't have to think about if we're going to have dinner or if a roof is over our head. But a lot of people do, and we want to make sure we're doing something in our community to help out."

Aurelia encourages others to "give to Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin so they can take you on a tour of how everything works and show you how they give food to people."

In June of 2024, Aurelia held her lemonade stand once again, enlisting neighbor kids to assist throughout the day. This year, the fundraiser featured a slip-and-slide as well as a puppy petting station with the family's yellow Labrador. She raised \$309.

"We used real lemons, and the weather was perfect," Aurelia said.

With each cup poured and every life touched, Aurelia Hall has proven that true heroism lies not in grand gestures or flashy powers, but in the quiet strength of unwavering generosity. In a world that often hands you lemons, Aurelia stands as a reminder that even the smallest acts of kindness can turn them into lemonade, offering hope and nourishment to those that need it most.

Aurelia Hall  
Entrepreneur



ORIGIN STORY:

# RESCUING FRESH

# PRODUCE FOR FAMILIES IN NEED



*Ryan Bulgrin*

Sales Representative,  
Gumz Farms

**1,200 acres**

of Wisconsin-grown potatoes



It all began in 1892 when Great Grandfather Gumz immigrated from Germany and settled into a small Midwestern farming community. Now, in its 5th generation of Gumz farmers, Gumz Farms in Endeavor, Wisconsin, is the Midwest’s largest supplier of sweet onions and red and yellow potatoes. It’s also the primary supplier of those staple fresh foods to Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin.

The sheer amount supplied is staggering: On average, the farm supplies about eight loads of slightly imperfect potatoes and onions per week to Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin, ensuring that fresh, nutritious food reaches the tables of those who need it.

“It’s a win-win,” says Ryan Bulgrin, sales rep for Gumz Farms, which is owned by Richard and Roderick Gumz. “We’re able to supply a significant amount of food at a pick-and-pack cost for Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin, and at the same time, the food’s got a home, it’s not going to waste.”

The availability of onions and potatoes Gumz has each week is often greater than even Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin can distribute, so the organization helps Gumz post some of its produce on MealConnect, a web-based platform where other food banks and hunger relief partners nationwide can find surplus food donations. That way, even more potatoes and onions that might not otherwise be sold can find their way to those that need it most.

“Obviously, we want to help people within our communities,” Ryan said. “On the other hand, as farmers, we also have a lot of produce that sometimes doesn’t make it to the retail market just because of slight imperfections.”

According to ReFED, about 38 percent of food grown in the United States goes unsold or uneaten, or about 91 million tons of surplus food.

Gumz Farms’ partnership with Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin began in 2013, before Ryan began working for Gumz, where his father (Doug) is head of onion sales and his uncle (Tom) is the head of potato sales. Ryan initially pursued his education in marketing and originally planned to go into advertising.

“I was working at the farm while going to school and I kept thinking about how what I was learning could apply to what we’re doing here at Gumz,” he said. “The nice thing about working in this industry is it’s pretty challenging, but you also know you’re feeding people—it can be really rewarding in agriculture.”

Some of the potatoes and onions supplied by Gumz make their way back into the communities around Endeavor.

“It makes me feel good. You never know what somebody’s going through—I came from Portage, and as time went on, I realized that my classmates came from all kinds of different backgrounds,” Ryan said.

“You’ve got to help people out when you can, because you never know what might happen. Your situation could change in an instant and you may need help.”

Ryan learned even more about food insecurity by touring Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin’s Milwaukee facility and attending the annual Grateful Plate Gala. “It really speaks it into existence how much of a need there is for this assistance,” Ryan said.

Honored to have been named 2023’s Compeer Financial Food and Agribusiness of the Year, and growing 40% of Wisconsin’s yellow onions and 1,200 acres of potatoes, Gumz Farms is truly outstanding in their field.



# A “JACK” OF ALL TRADES

Scott and Darla Turk  
Volunteers



At least once a week, you can find Scott and Darla Turk packing food at Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin’s Appleton facility, or helping out with special projects like the Tribal Elder Food Box Program. You may also find Scott driving a truck for the food bank, or making deliveries to pantry partners on a 100-mile route around Northeast Wisconsin.

After the recent passing of Darla’s father, Jack, the Turks inherited additional resources for a gift. “We’ve always given, it’s just always been a part of our lives, and we were taught that young,” Darla said. “Our faith is strong so it’s always been a part of us.”



“We’ve been blessed so much, there’s a part of me that always feels like, if I don’t do it, who will?”

In conjunction with the fundraising efforts, it was decided that the individual or organization who made the largest donation to the campaign would get to name the forklift (even if it meant naming it “Forky McForklift”). Through the Turks’ generous donation and those of many other volunteers, “Jack” hit the ground ready to help our neighbors in need in March of 2024. A befitting name coming from a man who spent his life owning and operating a construction business.

But even all of that didn’t seem like enough for the Turks, who have been volunteering for the organization since the Fall of 2022 following Scott’s retirement from Point Beach Nuclear Plant. So in Winter of 2023, Scott stopped in for a chat with Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin’s volunteer team.

“Jack” lifts up the volunteer team in making a significant difference for those who are facing hunger in Eastern Wisconsin. Dozens of individuals and organizations stepped up to offer donations to reach the \$50,000 goal for the forklift, including Marie and Paul Sauvey, Diana Laserstein, Kathy Krause, Jeffrey and Ruth Hargreaves, Lynn Mehlberg and Timothy Geiger, Laura Manley-Mispagel of Old National Bank, Paul Wilfer, Samuel Hamilton and Nancy Tsai, Steven Fusfield, Titus Talent Strategies, and Brian Kiln.

“I asked if there was anything they really needed that wasn’t in the budget,” Scott said. It turned out the organization was in desperate need of a new forklift for its volunteer team - a vital piece of equipment for moving product throughout the warehouse, and preparing it for transport.

Having previously made a donation towards the purchase of a 26-foot truck for Green Bay Habitat for Humanity, Scott knew that if volunteers could come together to raise some of the funds for a large-scale item, then it was more likely to build momentum for the rest.

“I’d had that in my mind,” Scott said. “And Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin was at a point where they needed a forklift. I had no idea what a forklift cost, but we offered to contribute towards that. We’ve been blessed so much, there’s a part of me that always feels like, if I don’t do it, who will?”



CLIMBER TAKES HUNGER RELIEF

# TO NEW HEIGHTS

*Tony Drake*  
 Founder and CEO,  
 Drake & Associates, LLC

Sometimes facing a challenge can feel like climbing a mountain - but in Tony Drake's case, he took that to heart and turned climbing a mountain into a hunger relief challenge.

In July of 2023, Tony and his 16-year-old son Anthony climbed the 13,775-foot Grand Teton, at the same time creating a unique and memorable fundraiser for Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin.



The adventure came about after dozens of conversations with Tony's personal trainer, Ryan Toshner, who is a mountaineer along with his brother Derek. "And for years, they said, 'You should climb Grand Teton with us.' I'm like, 'Guys, I'm a financial advisor from Wisconsin, I'm not climbing any mountains,'" Tony recalled. But since the age of 13, Tony had struggled with his weight, and finally in 2023, decided to take on the climb as a personal challenge to help with his fitness and weight loss goals.

"I've always been mentally stimulated by things that make me wonder if I'm going to be able to do it," said Tony, who promoted the climb on his "Retirement Ready" radio show on 620 WTMJ radio in Milwaukee. Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin created a webpage where supporters could go to pledge donations and Tony's company provided a match on each donation.

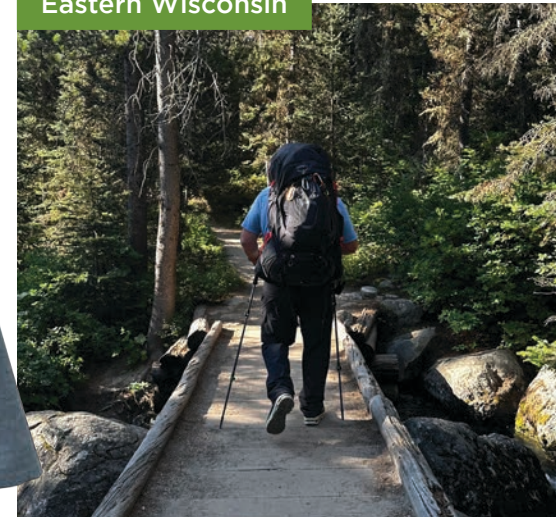
The climb "was physically the hardest thing I've ever done in my life. It was tough," Tony said. Beyond the difficulty of the climb, there were more challenges: On the second day of the climb - summit day - Tony's son woke up with altitude sickness. He was able to push through while staying well-hydrated, but about halfway up, they learned that a 40-year-old hiker had just died at a difficult part of the trail they had yet to navigate.

"I think the gravity of that news hit me pretty hard at that moment," Tony said. "Derek said to me, 'Don't worry, Tony, we're just going to do one step, one breath, one section at a time,' and I just started thinking about all the things in life I could apply that to."

**over \$8,000**

Raised for Feeding America

Eastern Wisconsin



They passed through an area of craggy 'chimneys' where at one point there was a 6,000-foot drop. "Finally we got to the summit - it was incredible. I'm in tears, we're hugging and exhausted. It was a major, major accomplishment," Tony said.

They each burned over 13,000 calories during that 18-hour day. And ultimately, Tony's Climb Against Hunger fundraiser raised more than \$8,000 for Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin.

Tony, who founded Drake & Associates in 2002 and now has offices in Waukesha, Mequon, and Grand Rapids, Michigan, has worked with Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin in several ways, including through client events, food collections, and volunteer food packing days. "To me, when I thought about teaming up with the organization, it was a no-brainer to me," Tony said.

The oldest of three siblings, Tony grew up in Milwaukee with parents who were factory workers and "we certainly had what we needed, but I understood what it felt like to be right on the line of things going wrong and life taking a quick turn," he said. "No matter where you are, there's somebody that has it worse than you can probably help lift up. That's been really important to me especially as I've had this success in my companies that I'd never dreamed."

"The ability to help give back just in a tiny little way, it feels really good to feel like maybe you're impacting some of those families and helping them have a better future."

WITH THEIR ROOTS IN TOOLS,

# SIEBERT LUTHERAN

# HITS THE NAIL

# ON THE

# HEAD



*Charlotte John-Gomez*  
President and CEO, Siebert Lutheran Foundation

When Albert F. Siebert founded Milwaukee Electric Tool in 1924, he couldn't have foreseen that the Great Depression would strike just five years later.

"He was a very faithful man, and prayed that God would help his business to survive," said Charlotte John-Gomez, President and CEO of Siebert Lutheran Foundation. "It not only survived, but it has evolved into Milwaukee Tool, which it is known as today."

Siebert made a promise that he would sell his business and dedicate his legacy to doing God's work upon his death.

"And that's exactly what he did," Charlotte said. Siebert Lutheran Foundation was established in 1952 with an initial infusion of \$35 million.

Siebert was particularly inspired by the Bible chapter Matthew 25, which encourages people to feed the hungry. "Working with the food pantries at the Lutheran churches is a way that we can fulfill Mr. Siebert's legacy," Charlotte said. "And Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin does that so well."

Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin works with 31 food pantry partners at Lutheran churches in some of Southeast Wisconsin's most

underserved areas, reaching more than 15,000 neighbors. "These are ordinary people like you and me, and people who have had some sort of event in their life that triggered the need for food assistance," Charlotte said. "And no one should have to wonder where their next meal is coming from."

Siebert Lutheran Foundation has funded Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin for a quarter century, granting over \$3.2 million to the organization, enabling it to help pantries source food and critical infrastructure such as coolers, freezers, and shelving.

"Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin really has a way of bringing it all together in such a way that the pantries can better serve their guests," Charlotte said.

Recently, the Foundation supported the launch of Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin's new 'Dairyland Delivery' pilot program, a critical offering that ensures Lutheran partner pantries have a consistent supply of fresh, healthy dairy products like milk, eggs, cheese, and yogurt. With 1-in-6 children facing hunger in Eastern Wisconsin, "there is an urgent need for healthy and nutritious food choices," Charlotte said.

This year, the Foundation and Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin have partnered to pilot an Outreach Coordinator who will be on the ground at food pantries ensuring that clients have access to services such as help with signing up for FoodShare benefits, or finding the closest free clinic. Charlotte said, "The Outreach Coordinator enables pantries to provide more than just food by offering services that address the root causes of hunger." She added, "We love this model because it helps identify community resources that the guests might need to build pathways to stability so that families do not have to keep returning to the food pantry."

Joining Siebert Lutheran Foundation six years ago, Charlotte has a background working with a community development organization, as well as managing HUD grants. Charlotte is also a member of the Rotary Club of Milwaukee, which helped to establish Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin back in 1982. Shortly after college, Charlotte served in the Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic, inspiring her commitment to giving back.

"That was life transforming because it helped me realize I love working with the community," she said. "I love helping to impact people's quality of life...I feel like my mission is to try to leave this world a better place for so many people."



Elizabeth Kay

Radio Host,  
99.1 The Mix  
Milwaukee



Radar Hess

Radio Host,  
99.1 The Mix  
Milwaukee

## RIDING THE AIRWAVES

# TO STUFF THE BUS

Each year in Milwaukee right before Thanksgiving, an annual food drive event in collaboration with Pick 'n Save - Stuff the Bus - encourages people to do their part to fill multiple Milwaukee County Transit System buses with thousands of pounds of non-perishable food items for families experiencing food insecurity. And each year, radio personalities Elizabeth Kay and Radar Hess of Milwaukee's 99.1 The Mix have been the voices behind this event, getting people charged up and ready to donate online or bring food items - or even frozen turkeys - to pack the bus.

They say their energy and enthusiasm for this annual event comes from their ability to use their platform to help out the community.

"It means a lot year after year to see our listeners show up and witness this become a family tradition," Elizabeth said. "It warms our hearts to watch people come together for such a good cause. Seeing what the reach has been is overwhelming."

"Once you see the people come out and donate and thank us for making this our charity, you really kind of get that warm fuzzy feeling," Radar said. "I'm a short guy, so my voice is the only big thing about me. So to be able to tell people, 'Hey, come out and donate,' and then have them actually listen to that voice, it really gives you a special feeling."

The Mix's partnership with Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin was a "natural fit," Elizabeth said. It began years ago with a desire by the radio station to be a part of a holiday food drive with great visual impact - and seeing buses filled up with food especially impacts young donors, some of whom come by to donate money from their piggy banks that they've saved all year.

"And it's like, 'Man, you're eight years old and you're going to give back instead of saving for yourself?' That's incredible," Radar said.

During the event, Elizabeth and Radar try "to share many different stories of people who are facing hunger, because we're trying to convey to people that hunger doesn't discriminate," she said. An example that sticks with her is a retired teacher whose husband had suddenly passed away and subsequently had family members move in. "And that was very eye-opening for myself and Radar. We walked away from that reminded that these families are often just experiencing circumstances that they can't control, and that's why it's important to help."

Additionally, Radar is moved by "veterans and senior citizens who come from that proud generation of, 'I can handle myself, I don't need handouts.' But we know that they need that help, so we're always trying to get the word out."

During one Stuff the Bus event several years ago, Elizabeth and Radar had set an ambitious goal for frozen turkeys during the broadcast. "Well, the broadcast was winding down and we were short about 20 turkeys from our goal." That's when a man arrived with a shopping cart full of frozen turkeys. "He said, 'My wife of over 50 years is dying of cancer right now at the hospital. I was leaving the hospital and I just felt really lost, and I turned on the radio and I heard what you all were doing, and I thought, we've been blessed with such an incredible life; she would want me to give back.'"

"It warms our hearts to see

people come together for such a

good cause. Seeing what the reach

has been is overwhelming."

"That was a moment when I realized this is impacting people in so many ways," Elizabeth said. "And that inspired more people—and that's the ripple effect of what this broadcast can do for Stuff the Bus."



# NBA Star Uses Mother's Lessons

Growing up in Little Rock, Arkansas, in a family led by a hardworking single mother, Milwaukee Bucks Forward Bobby Portis Jr. was influenced to make life better for struggling families - and at the same time, be an inspiring role model for young fans. And that developed into finding ways to support the community that cheers him on.

"Partnering with Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin has been phenomenal for me," Bobby said. "Being able to use my platform to give back, inspire, and just motivate others living in surrounding areas where I play ball has been great. Just being in Wisconsin in general, they've been so supportive of me since I joined the Bucks."

For the past three years, Bobby has served as the ambassador for Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin's PB&J Challenge campaign, which raises awareness about childhood hunger and collects monetary donations and product donations of peanut butter and jelly - one of the most highly-requested items at food pantries across Eastern Wisconsin because they are packed with protein and nutrients for children, and are shelf-stable.



# TO BLOCK HUNGER

*Bobby Portis Jr.*  
Forward, Milwaukee Bucks



"You sometimes have opportunities come your way that you're forever thankful for, especially an opportunity like the PB&J Challenge that specifically focuses on childhood hunger," Bobby said. "It's a big-time passion of mine, giving back to the next generation. That's been great for me. We've helped out a lot of kids through this campaign so far, and hopefully next year can be even better."

Bobby also supports Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin's mobile food pantries to ensure they can distribute enough fresh food to people in need throughout the entire year.

And still, Bobby asks Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin staff what else the organization needs. When pantry partners were low on frequently requested items like fresh dairy products and produce, The Bobby Portis Foundation twice donated semi-truckloads of those items to get the food to people who needed it. "We're not in this to change someone's situation, we're just here to give a helping hand along the way," he said.

Bobby was inspired by the dedication of his own mother, Tina Edwards, to launch the foundation that is focused on helping families led by single mothers like her.

**"Being an underdog in real life, coming from the situation that you are in, it might seem kind of unrealistic to dream of things—but through believing in yourself, putting a little hard work into it, and sacrificing within whatever you want to achieve, you can become whatever you want to become."**

"To this day, it's like we are the same little kids we were 10 or 15 years ago - the love and admiration we have for our mom, the respect we have for her is just different," said Bobby, who as the eldest sibling had the "big responsibility of not only trying to lead by example and make a good name for the family for my brothers to follow, but also having to be a man early on as a kid," he said. "It just changed my perspective."

For Bobby, working with Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin is a slam dunk because the organization values the same things that he does. "When you partner with someone, when you put your name with someone else's name, obviously it has to be a great match," Bobby said.

"I can't say much more about the great things they do for the community and just how organized they are in general."

"Giving back to his community is something Bobby has always taken pride and passion in," said his mother, Tina. "The City of Milwaukee has embraced him just as well as he has embraced the City and his partnership with Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin came to be because he wanted to make a difference. Being able to see Bobby giving back makes me smile, and as a mom, I know it's way bigger than basketball."

COLLABORATIONS ARE A

# RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

*Emilie Williamson, RDN, CD*  
 Division Corporate Affairs Manager,  
 Pick 'n Save and Metro Market



It's hard to imagine how Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin could operate on the scale it does without the support of retail partners like Pick 'n Save and Metro Market.

With 86 stores within Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin's service area, Pick 'n Save and Metro Market help provide meals across Eastern Wisconsin via the Fresh Rescue Program that include meat, dairy products, and bakery items. In 2023, 32 million meals were donated across the state including nutritious food from retail locations, manufacturing, and supply chain facilities.

"It's incredible to see the scale of the impact we have together across Wisconsin," said Emilie Williamson, Division Corporate Affairs Manager for Pick 'n Save and Metro Market.

These two retail chains also provide grants, sponsorships, matching contributions, and support to Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin for annual campaigns like Food for the Holidays, as well as the PB&J (Peanut Butter & Jelly) Challenge, which provides shelf-stable protein sources to local food pantry partners. Pick 'n Save and Metro Market also are key partners for Milwaukee's Stuff the Bus event - along with 99.1 The Mix and the Milwaukee County Transit System - which in 2023 collected 4,301 pounds of food for neighbors in need.

"Stuff the Bus is one of my favorite events, bringing together so many organizations to support those who are hungry in our community," Emilie said. "In addition, our teams participate in many volunteer opportunities to support the food bank throughout the year."

In her role, Emilie works closely with Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin on events and programs, which ultimately help nearby pantries get food into homes as quickly as possible.

## 32,000,000 meals

donated across Wisconsin

in 2023 alone

"Through our collaboration, we are living our purpose to Feed the Human Spirit and increasing access to food for individuals and families who might need it."

Emilie's passion for food developed early, with a desire to learn about new foods and expand her palate. "As soon as I grew up and started exploring things, I wanted to taste more food and try more food." Emilie earned a degree in hospitality and food service management, working at restaurants and events before coming to Roundy's, which is now part of Kroger.

"When you talk to people, you have the unique opportunity to see how food plays a role in their story - part of my job is to help make sure other people get to create those memories," Emilie said.

During the pandemic, Emilie continued her education becoming a registered dietitian. That certification helps her to enhance those conversations about food and health, and it's why she appreciates the efforts by Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin to craft food boxes with specific nutrient attributes or organic components.

"Our organizations are making the effort to provide food choices that resonate in our communities and by tailoring offers, we are supporting the needs of the individuals that make up our community," Emilie said. "Providing access to fresh, nutritious, affordable food options and choices is vital."

In August 2023, Pick 'n Save and Metro Market partnered with Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin on another new initiative, accepting FoodShare benefits for refrigerated Kroger Delivery services and offering 500 gift cards to cover the delivery charges.

"Together, we create impactful and unique collaborations," Emilie said. "Through our combined resources, we are creating the recipes that enable us to provide more meals across our shared communities and increase food access for those in need."



# FROM BOARDROOMS TO BACKYARDS



## Corporations Confront Community Issues Together

When the pandemic struck Northeast Wisconsin, it was difficult for area nonprofits to keep their doors open - "but they still had to service people," said Jodie Larsen, Vice President of Community Engagement for Oshkosh Corporation. Many of these organizations were turning to funders in the area with requests for necessities like PPE (personal protective equipment).

"We said, 'How do we manage to get through all this?' We were all getting the same requests," Jodie said. "We knew that we could work through more problems if we worked together and worked with the organizations, whether it be Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin or other organizations."

So Oshkosh Corporation and other regional companies, such as U.S. Venture, J. J. Keller & Associates, and Kimberly-Clark, put their minds together to coordinate on the items they could supply. "Then Valley Packaging Industries (VPI) raised their hand and said 'we can store these items for you and distribute it as well.' We needed that partner. That's how the Northeast Wisconsin Funders Group began."

The Northeast Wisconsin Funders Group quickly evolved into "a forum for educating ourselves and learning about the issues that our communities are facing," Jodie said, including how food pantries are impacted by changes in government funding, and "how we can continue to make sure that our neighbors have the food they need."

The group meets once a month, drawing 25 to 30 attendees at each meeting. This August, the Funders Group visited Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin to learn more about Map the Meal Gap, a study done by Feeding America's National Office that shows where areas of hunger and food insecurity affect local populations—and they also returned to pack food as volunteers.

Even prior to the pandemic, Oshkosh Corporation has been a strong partner of Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin, working with the organization to create the tremendous Feed the Body, Feed the Soul event. During the event, over 1,000 volunteers package 105 tons of rice in only 12 hours.

The event developed after The Oshkosh Corporation Foundation reviewed its structure around giving, including finding better ways to support youth, and zeroed in on United Way's ALICE rate - Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed - essentially, those who are working but struggle to afford basic expenses.

"We saw that the communities where we live and work have high ALICE rates," Jodie said. "And so that, in turn, led us to looking at basic needs, which is very simply food and shelter."

The event brings in live music - most recently, NEW Dueling Pianos - to provide entertainment for volunteers while they're working for a good cause and learning about the need to combat hunger in Eastern Wisconsin.



"It's been a great event for us because we're able to bring in companies from the community to help purchase the bulk rice for packing," Jodie said. "And then in turn they get to bring their team members to volunteer and package the foods, so it's a win-win for both sides."

"When you're a volunteer, you're going to learn more about what you're doing and why you're doing it, which hopefully will lead to future donors," Jodie said.

Over the past seven years, Oshkosh Corporation has enlisted 6,200 volunteers and packed 1,258,700 pounds of rice. And after this year's hugely successful seventh event in September, the company is taking it on the road, replicating the program with other food banks across the United States.

**1,258,700 lbs.**

of rice have been packaged over

the past seven years



Watch our video to learn more about **Feed the Body, Feed the Soul**

# KERNELS OF

# KINDNESS



**750,000 lbs.**

of corn distributed to families

since 2022

At its food processing facility in Fairwater, Wisconsin, food manufacturer Nortera (formerly Bonduelle Americas) packages thousands of ears of cob corn every day.

With 13 facilities in North America, Nortera is considered the leader in processed vegetables, canning or freezing close to half a million tons of veggies each year. The company is committed to creating a positive social impact, including by combating food insecurity throughout the communities that are home to its plants in Canada and the United States.

When leaders at the Fairwater facility near Fond du Lac wanted to find a way to ensure more of its corn reached people who needed it most, they knew Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin would be a good place to start.

Since 2022, the food manufacturer has worked with the organization to get cob corn to families who are experiencing food insecurity - 750,000 pounds in all. Prior to its partnership with the food bank, the bulk of those cobs with slight imperfections were sent back to farmers and sometimes discarded. Now, nearly all of that corn - with the exception of what ends up on the floor - is instead going to people who need it in Eastern Wisconsin.

"As we run the corn on our production line, if there's any kind of damage or missing kernels, we have to reject them from the line," said Packaging and Warehouse Manager, Calvin Hopp.

So far in 2024, that has amounted to over 240,000 pounds of mini corn cobs, and Calvin anticipates at least another 100,000 pounds to families by the end of the year.

Nortera's Fairwater plant specializes in processing those mini-corn-on-the-cobs, the two-and-5/8-inch cobs served at many sit down restaurants. The company processes raw vegetables, and packages retail cobs of corn from 6 to 24 ears to a package, as well as food service boxes of 96 ears.

Nortera sends out the corn in large bulk totes that Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin volunteers then break down and package into smaller bags for distribution to pantry partners. "We don't want to see that corn go to waste - there's really nothing wrong with those cobs of corn that are going out, and it's something that's very nutritional," Calvin said.

The 40 to 50 workers on the production line are aware of the partnership with Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin and are happy to know that all of the corn is going to good use. "They really like to see that. If it's something that's just a sort-out, we save that and we send it to Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin. Something hits the floor, it goes to the farmer."

Calvin and Nortera's shipping department work closely with food bank staff, setting up the orders when the produce is available.

"I always want to make sure that people have something to eat, I know there's less fortunate people out there and they're in need," said Calvin, who grew up in Wisconsin and has worked at the Fairwater facility for more than 30 years. "And if we can help out, we definitely want to do that."



*Calvin Hopp*  
Packaging and Warehouse  
Manager, Nortera  
(formerly Bonduelle Americas)

# LAUNCHING A LEGACY

Ryan Zhang  
Senior, Brookfield  
Central High School



At Brookfield Central High School, students have the opportunity to choose from dozens of special-interest extracurricular clubs that run the gamut of causes. And if a student does not quite find the club they're looking for, they can just start their own.

That's exactly what BCHS senior Ryan Zhang and his cofounder, Evan Goddard decided to do in launching a service club for Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin.

After being inspired by the organization's Grateful Plate Gala - which he attended with his mom, Sherry, a Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin Board Member - Ryan thought a club would be a perfect opportunity to offer a way for students to give their time and talents to a worthy cause - hunger relief.

During the Gala, Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin "celebrated all they have accomplished, and I thought it was really cool that they had this many cans delivered, this amount of food packaged, and their reach and influence," Ryan said. "That's when I knew I wanted to work with them more."

With having several friends who had already volunteered with the food bank, "I knew that there would be motivated or interested students at our school, and I know that Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin is always looking for volunteers," Ryan says. "Our club would bridge that gap."

For Ryan, Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin offers "a direct connection to the underprivileged areas of our state and our area," he said. "It's important to us here in Brookfield because we don't really often see that side."

In the short time since Ryan and Evan established the club in the Spring of 2024, nearly 70 students have registered. They've already participated in a food packing event at the Milwaukee campus and raised funds for the organization during Brookfield Central's all-school picnic at the end of May.

"Our team decided Dippin' Dots would be cool because we know that people would find that as an attractive item," Ryan said. The team was able to generate a \$40 profit towards donations.

Ryan also worked with the organization to set up a donation box at the school, collecting 167 non-perishable food items by the end of the school year.

"While high school students might understand there's food insecurity throughout the world and even in the area, it's not often something they see directly or talk about in relation to their community," he said. "I thought that if I could have something for them at our school, it could help people to see firsthand what's going on in our state. And by growing that reach, it helps more people and it gets people in our community more involved."

Ryan has seen how participation in the service club has been impactful for his fellow students. On the day his club participated in a box packing volunteer opportunity, they sorted, packed, and labeled 9,707 pounds of food, or the equivalent of about 8,089 meals. "All my friends said it was a fun time, because they're able to go with their friends and talk while they're able to do this meaningful work," Ryan said.

When the service club selected its executive board, they included students of other grades—not just seniors—to help with continuity and to carry on the service work. "My hope is that it can be something long-lasting and fulfilling, so it's something that can be carried over and passed on," Ryan said.

Ryan hopes to leave a legacy of how future leaders at his school or at any school across the country can make a difference right in their own backyard. With his sights set on the next big challenges after high school, and his eyes on a career in the medical field, Ryan's days of helping build better communities are just beginning.



**"My hope is that it can be something long-lasting and fulfilling, so it's something that can be carried over and passed on."**

CULTIVATING WELLNESS:

# Tribal Elder Food Box Program Focuses on Food as Medicine

When the pandemic struck, older adults and those who had pre-existing conditions were among the most endangered. For Wisconsin's Tribal communities - which were disproportionately impacted by the virus - the losses were devastating.

"We were losing our most vulnerable and most valuable of people - our Elders, who are our knowledge-keepers and our culture keepers," said a member of the Great Lakes Intertribal Food Coalition, or GLIFC.

Many of these Elders had experienced health conditions like diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and obesity. And with Native American populations experiencing food insecurity at a rate about twice the rate of white populations, limited access to healthy foods can often exacerbate these conditions.

When emergency food boxes were distributed in response to the pandemic, Tribal leaders recognized the boxes typically did not reflect traditional indigenous health-promoting foods and the items included often amplified existing chronic illnesses.

In the Fall of 2022, several Tribal partners came together, in collaboration with Feeding Wisconsin, to coalesce efforts to source healthy foods from local and Tribally-owned businesses. That's when they formed GLIFC, which supports the economic development of indigenous and local food producers in the Great Lakes region, with the vision of an Intertribal Food Hub.

Soon after, GLIFC, which is made up of elected delegates from all 11 Federally-recognized Tribes in Wisconsin and other partnering organizations including Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin, developed the Tribal Elder Food Box Program.

The program provides nutritious and culturally appropriate foods for Tribal members over age 55 - helping to heal individuals as well as Tribal communities as a whole by strengthening indigenous food networks.

"This is a practice of recovery and preservation by utilizing the resources that we've always had," a GLIFC member said.

These farm-to-table food boxes contain proteins and seasonal produce representative of the traditional, indigenous foods as desired by Tribal Elders, including grass-fed beef, bison, wild-caught fish, chicken, pork, white corn flour, greens, apples, berries, heirloom white corn, beans, squash, potatoes, tomatoes, jams, maple syrup, and dried teas. These foods align closely with the traditional diet of Great Lakes Indigenous Peoples, which avoids added preservatives or pesticides.



"There's value in supporting these small producers, and seeing it continue."

Tribal leaders also wanted to ensure food was harvested and produced in a sustainable way while strengthening local economies, revitalizing historic trade routes.

During its first year, the program reached seven Tribes in Wisconsin and Michigan with 10,800 boxes of food, enlisting seven indigenous producers to supply food products.

By the end of 2023, GLIFC and the Tribal Elder Food Box Program had provided more than 2,300 Tribal homes with nearly 64,000 culturally specific and nutritious food boxes.

GLIFC has also secured significant grant funding to help support smaller-scale Tribal farmers and producers, helping to create food sovereignty for the Tribal nations. "It's a big deal—that's how you create sustainability. There's value in supporting these small producers, and seeing it continue."

The Tribal Elder Food Box Program purchases food products for the program using a 'waterfall' structure, with highest priority going to Native/Tribal descendance, followed by other identifying BIPOC producers, and then to other local Wisconsin producers, prioritizing those who grow organically.

The program now includes 65 producers, 33 of which are Tribal producers in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan. GLIFC is working to expand capacity, building an even broader coalition of Tribal producers as the Tribal Elder Food Box Program grows. In the Ho-Chunk Nation, for example, a grant will allow comprehensive farmer recruitment training to kick off early next year. The program will teach "anything and everything that we need to get our people producing."

The training will include different tracks such as urban farming and gardening, and will focus on building skills and creating access to land, equipment, technical assistance, and more. Farmers can include those who are conventional farmers, backyard gardeners, food foragers, tree tappers, or anyone who aspires to be.

A member of GLIFC notes "The people that help and take part in what we're doing are our food warriors. They're not doing it to get rich, but they're doing it, and that's how we were taught. Take care of yourself, your family, your neighbors. If everyone does that, look what we'll have - a thriving beautiful community and reservation."



Watch our feature video on the Tribal Elder Food Box Program



To learn more about the Tribal Elder Food Box Program, visit [FeedingAmericaWI.org/Tribal-Food-Security](https://FeedingAmericaWI.org/Tribal-Food-Security)

# BUILDING AN OASIS IN A FOOD DESERT

Raised in inner-city Milwaukee in a close-knit family of eleven brothers and sisters, investor and developer Maurice 'Moe' Wince grew up with both food insecurity and housing insecurity. "Our parents were recipients of AFDC, food stamps, and several other federal government assistance programs. With eleven children to feed, there was never enough."

Now, as a real estate investor and landlord, Moe and his wife, Yashica, own an astounding nine of the houses from which his family had been evicted from while growing up.

A University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Distinguished Alumni Award recipient, Moe began his career as a homeless case manager at Healthcare for the Homeless, a Milwaukee nonprofit organization dedicated to housing individuals with chronic mental illness. In working with landlords and city officials, he realized he could "make a greater and stronger impact by housing the individuals that the organization was having the most trouble placing," Moe said. That's when he purchased several rental properties and later expanded into owning a few businesses.

**"We are not just in the community, but we've become a part of the very community that we're existing in."**

*Moe Wince*  
Investor and Developer



After civil unrest following the tragic 2016 shooting death of Sylville Smith by a Milwaukee police officer, Moe's church, which is now The Embassy Center MKE, launched listening sessions and town hall meetings to address gaps in basic needs in the neighborhood to help improve the quality of life for residents.

"We found pain points - the people had needs that were not being addressed," Moe said. That included housing, food insecurity, economic development, entrepreneurship, access to healthcare, and more. "So we led the charge in trying to transform the community."

As a direct result of feedback from the town hall meetings, Embassy's Bishop, Walter Harvey, launched the nonprofit Prism Economic Development Corporation (EDC), which opened the UpStart 24-hour commercial kitchen in one of Moe's buildings.

This innovative space now hosts up to 27 culinary artists while they refine their craft and pursue a place of their own.

Additionally, it was clear the community needed a grocery store. Sherman Park's 40,000 residents were experiencing high percentages of childhood obesity, diabetes, cholesterol, hypertension, and high childhood lead levels. And with few options nearby, some residents were relying on purchasing most of their food from two nearby gas stations.

In July 2022, Moe opened the Sherman Park Grocery Store in one of his buildings. "We wanted to combat all those health ailments by taking over and transforming this retail spot into a fresh food access, full-scale grocery store."

At about the same time, Moe's local alderman pointed him to Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin's Food Leaders Lab, a leadership and advocacy program that empowers participants to create goals around solving hunger, develop relationships with elected officials, and build advocacy skills. Moe's participation in the Food Leaders Lab Program helped facilitate the successful opening of the store and its connected programs, which has created a local economic ecosystem.

As a result, Sherman Park Grocery Store and Prism EDC collaborated to launch the Cultivate program, through which high school students are paid to grow and sell kale, spinach, and table herbs within 14 hydroponic gardening pods from Fork Farms. The store also sells baked goods made by the culinary artists at UpStart, as well as from others within the community.

"We are not just in the community, but we've become a part of the very community that we're existing in," said Moe, who also opened a laundromat, a multipurpose Community Impact Center—where the culinary artists from UpStart can host events—and a dance studio.

Moe has since shared his story with lawmakers in Washington, D.C., and has advocated for additional support and funding for Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin's Food Leaders Lab Program. With 13 additional food deserts in the city of Milwaukee, Moe hopes to expand upon his model, keeping the continuity and consistency of the program neighborhood by neighborhood.

"It's something that we're doing, and we're doing it well," Moe said. "We've demonstrated that it works."

From a childhood marked by hardship, to a successful real estate investor, Moe exemplifies how personal triumph can inspire profound generosity. By channeling his resources and time building an oasis in a food desert, he embodies the true spirit of giving back, turning his own story of perseverance into a beacon of hope and support for others.



**Watch our feature video about Food Leaders Lab**



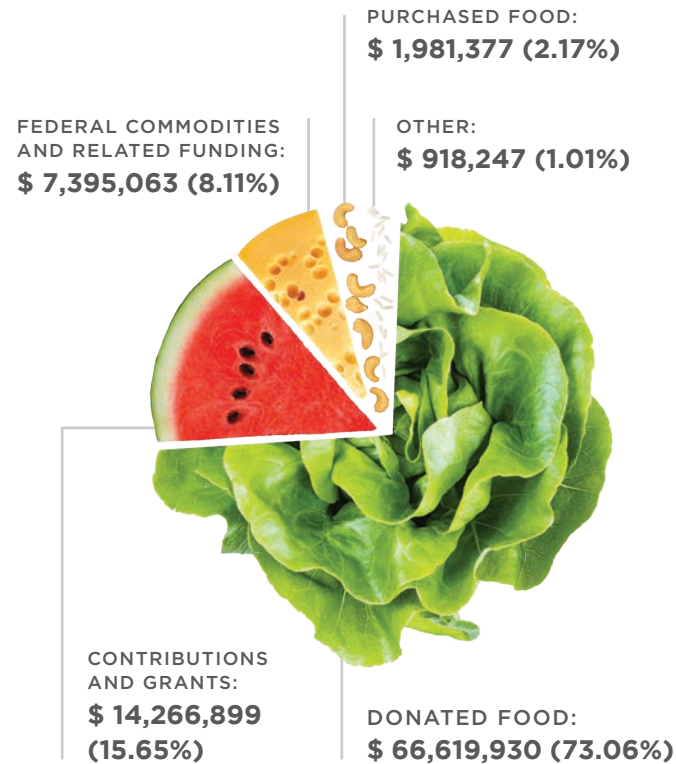
Financials

**\$91,181,516**

TOTAL SUPPORT

**\$92,404,249**

TOTAL EXPENSES



**\$1 = 4 healthy meals**

\$1 donated will provide up to 4 healthy meals



**96¢**

96 cents of each dollar donated goes directly to supporting hunger relief

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Appleton, WI 54913  
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**Milwaukee**  
1700 W. Fond du Lac Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53205  
414.931.7400