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AMERICA**

HARVEST NEWS

We are dedicated to relieving hunger in metro Detroit and preventing nutritious food waste.



DISTRIBUTING TO FOOD-INSECURE VETERANS AND FAMILIES OF ACTIVE-DUTY MILITARY MEMBERS

Military families make many sacrifices to protect our country, yet Feeding America reports that 160,000 families of active military personnel faced food insecurity in 2018- 2019. Further, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reports that 1.5 million veterans live in poverty, which puts them at risk of food insecurity. At Forgotten Harvest, we place a top priority on reaching military families and veterans to provide them with access to our free-of-charge nutritious food.

According to Feeding America, multiple factors contribute to food insecurity for military families including a low pay scale for enlisted military members, high rates of

unemployment for military spouses due to the transitory nature of the military service, and the high cost of living, including child care, near many military bases. New legislation from late 2021 is intended to address some of these issues, but they still exist.

In addition, a study issued in May 2021 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reported: 11.1% of working-age veterans (aged 18 - 64) face food insecurity. One of the fastest growing and youngest groups of veterans — those who served after September 11, 2001 — is more likely to

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LETTER FROM KIRK



Even though the pandemic continues to impact us all, 2022 is off to a busy start. Our concern for the health and food security of our community is paramount, and Forgotten Harvest remains committed to helping provide nutritious food to those in need, safely. With a new three

-year strategic plan developed and significant progress on the development of our new campus, we are very excited about the future.

Our new strategic plan builds upon our previous plan and gives us the roadmap to make an even larger impact in the community. **We will focus on 5 key priorities: Access, Supply, Knowledge, Community Awareness and Internal Capabilities.** We will establish new outcome measurements in addition to existing community impact measurements. Our organization will further enhance our effectiveness in solving regional food insecurity, reducing surplus food waste, and advancing a more equitable distribution of nutritious food throughout metro Detroit.

Since the onset of the pandemic, FH has increased its capacity to distribute more food and establish or help re-open area pantry sites throughout southeast Michigan. These activities have increased our annual operating costs more than 40% since our 2020 fiscal year. We are so grateful to have a dedicated and passionate group of some 90 employees supported by thousands of volunteers and supporters.

Just over a year ago, we broke ground on a new facility, and now the first team members will start to move into the new facility in mid-February 2022. The rest of the organization and service programs will transfer and consolidate operations

by April. Our Solutions That Nourish Campaign to support the construction of the new food distribution facility, volunteer center, and campus is almost complete, meeting 97% of our campaign goal. To learn more about this innovative project and campaign, please visit www.forgottenharvest.org/solutions

We can drive transformational impact and help create a sustainable food-security network in metro Detroit. **Strategic investments will be made in the coming months to optimize emergency food distribution and create a more sustainable model, provide a consistent, nutritious mix of food at all pantry locations, and enhance technology and the use of information to maximize client access, collaboration, and community impact.** Sustaining our vision and long-term support for our increased capacity is critical to our success and community support will be necessary.

Check out our website www.forgottenharvest.org for the latest information on our Community Open House this spring. We are so honored and proud to be able to share our new campus with the community and can't wait to show you the new home of Forgotten Harvest.

You are our partners. THANK YOU for your confidence in our stewardship and a significant and meaningful impact. We hope you will continue to invest in our mission and working together.

Kirk Mayes
CEO, Forgotten Harvest

248-967-1500
www.forgottenharvest.org

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UPCOMING EVENTS



Mark your calendars for Forgotten Harvest's 29th Annual Comedy Night at Detroit's historic Fox Theatre on April 29th, 2022!

Join us along with our special guest **Seth Meyers**, an Emmy Award-winning writer and host of "Late Night with Seth Meyers." for an evening in celebration of our community's efforts to fight

food insecurity across Metro Detroit. Proceeds from ticket and sponsorship sales benefit Forgotten Harvest and our ability to provide our 200+ pantry partners with fresh, healthy food.

Check our website for the latest news and ticket information.

<https://www.forgottenharvest.org/comedynight2022/>



DONOR HIGHLIGHT

In January, Rose celebrated her 80th birthday! In honor of her special day, her family planned a wonderful party. She humbly suggested that in lieu of gifts, her guests could provide a donation to a charity, to make a difference in the local community. Rose knew that she wanted to support one of her favorite non-profits, Forgotten Harvest.

“I no longer need or want anything besides family and friends. So, instead of gifting me things, let’s share our joy to those in real need.”

The generosity of Rose’s family and friends has enhanced the mission of Forgotten Harvest.

Donations made to Forgotten Harvest are used to feed children, families, seniors, and veterans in the community. The support and thoughtfulness of Rose’s family and friends made it possible to rescue and redistribute meals to feed the community.

Happy Birthday, Rose! We are so thankful to know such a kind and considerate person like you!

For more information on how to celebrate a birthday, anniversary, wedding, or event with Forgotten Harvest, contact Hank Wolfe Rodriguez at (248) 890-5065.

HOLIDAY MEAL PROGRAMS

SHARING THE HARVEST & HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

To meet the higher need during the holiday season, Forgotten Harvest committed to providing special meals through our Sharing the Harvest and Hope for the Holidays programs.

The **SHARING THE HARVEST** program ensured that all mobile pantries that Forgotten Harvest served during the month of November, received at least one distribution day with whole turkeys or turkey pieces along with the regular rescued food provided.

The **HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS** program provided 6,000 holiday themed meal boxes to every agency open from December 20th – 23rd. These boxes included an array of holiday foods with recipes to make macaroni and cheese, green bean casserole and more. This program fed up to 18,000 people.

These holiday programs made a large community impact and delivered hope to those in need this holiday season.

Special thanks to our Hope for the Holidays presenting sponsor, Kroger Co. of Michigan and Event Sponsor RouteOne, Gongos, Wolverine Packing,



Priority Health, Steve and Beth Swartz and Joanne and John Carter for helping to support our goal of making sure that no one goes hungry this holiday season.



HARVEST HEROES

POWERED BY
FORGOTTEN HARVEST

CREATIVELY AND EFFECTIVELY RESCUING SMALLER VOLUMES OF FOOD

Harvest Heroes is a collective of do-gooders in the very best way.

Each driver hits the road weekday mornings, traversing southeast Michigan, making stops at four to five food rescue locations and then transporting the bounty to a nearby food pantry where it is distributed to people in need.

The volunteers use their own vehicles and fuel to complete the routes, collecting food that might otherwise go to waste. The quantity picked up at each food rescue site, including chain stores, independent grocery stores, catering companies and restaurants, averages 50 to 75 pounds – too little for Forgotten Harvest’s truck fleet to manage efficiently, but more than enough to make a difference in the lives of people who are food insecure.

This program is the essence of what Forgotten Harvest was founded on, one individual making the difference in the lives of many.

Hugh Mahler, an eight-year volunteer with Forgotten Harvest, started the program in 2018 when Tim Hudson, Forgotten Harvest’s chief development officer, came to him about solving the problem of how smaller portions of donated food could be collected. Hugh and another volunteer started the program on a small scale, proving its viability. Last year, Harvest Heroes was the second most active volunteer group, donating 1,898 hours of time.

Hugh sold his business in 2010, looking for volunteer experiences and wanting to do something worthwhile with his new-found free time. He ended

up spending many hours at Forgotten Harvest, both in the warehouse and in the office. He was a familiar face among staff and other volunteers.

Harvest Heroes has grown beyond Hugh’s expectations, with 25 volunteers handling daily routes.

Currently, 32 routes are active, with 300,000 pounds of food rescued in 2021. Because food donors are expecting weekly pick-ups, volunteers are asked to make a long-term commitment (at least three months). There are provisions for absences or vacations, but program success is strongly dependent on the obligation to the route assignment. Among the food donors are Hollywood Market, Aldi’s, Grand Traverse Pie Company, Great Harvest Bread, Fresh Thyme and many, many others that donate fresh produce, prepared foods, baked goods and dry goods. Little Caesars is a large donor, with six Eastside stores donating pizzas twice a week, thanks to the generosity of franchise owner Louis Asher.

New to the project, Dollar General signed on in the fall of 2021 with close to 90 metro Detroit stores making donations. Dollar General stores are often located in food desert areas and sell frozen and packaged food.

The major uptick in volume generated by Dollar General required 20 new drivers for the Harvest Heroes fleet. The Dollar General project was organized at a national level through Feeding America, a network of U.S. hunger-relief organizations, and is being executed at the local level through Forgotten Harvest’s Heroes.



“It’s been very rewarding and satisfying,” says Hugh. “Instead of being a corporate guy and running a business, I put on working clothes and just do manual stuff. It’s been a great experience. This program fits a need for many retirees in my position”

Interested in becoming a Harvest Hero? Contact Nicole Peeples, volunteer manager, at 248-268-7510 or npeeples@forgottenharvest.org.



Volunteers distribute our Hope for the Holidays food boxes at the Vets Empower (Flat Rock)

have a service-connected disability than veterans from other service periods. These factors suggest working-age veterans are vulnerable to issues with food insecurity. Understanding food insecurity among working-age veterans compared with working age nonveterans can provide useful information for maintaining a healthy veteran population well into the future. By making a focused effort to serve active military personnel and veterans across metro Detroit, we serve those who make the decision to protect each of us.

Examples of Forgotten Harvest's current nine partner organizations with services focused on veterans and military families include: **Michigan Veterans Foundation, Kensington Church, Macomb County Veterans Food Bank, Safe Place Veterans Transition, and Vets Empower (Flat Rock).** We continue to seek additional partners in our priority to address military family and veterans' food insecurity - a situation that we feel is unacceptable for the many men and women who have given so much of their lives to our nation.

Forgotten Harvest is honored to serve those who serve our nation.

WHAT DOES THIS FOOD MEAN TO YOU?



"It means a lot nowadays because people can't go to work because of Covid, and all these different variants coming out, and the prices of groceries and things have gone up since last year. People are having a hard time, and they appreciate things

like this. The holidays are tough for everybody. Heating cost is going to go up. All those things are happening. So this is even more important right now."

— Jimmy & Shelia G



"This pantry means a lot to me and the community. It helps those in need who cannot afford the essentials. And I can pick up and share with a neighbor who is disabled and doesn't have the ability to get the help they need. I came here today because the holidays are coming up and I have to stay in certain budget. I'm trying to maintain what I need to as far as my bills,

because with the holidays and grocery costs being higher, every little bit helps and it's just a blessing to have this here in our community."

— Tamela O



SOLUTIONS THAT NOURISH CAMPAIGN

We have made great progress on our **Solutions That Nourish Campaign**. Forgotten Harvest has now raised 97% of the gift commitments and pledges needed to build our \$17 million innovative food distribution and volunteer center: The new campus at 15000 Eight Mile Rd. This new facility is almost complete and will be operational by spring 2022. This funding support that is needed is in addition to our normal annual operating and program support.

Thank you to all the donors who have already contributed to this important endeavor by either

making a leadership gift, pledge, or purchasing a Brick Paver for the new Visitor & Volunteer Patio!

Help us reach our fundraising goal! To learn how you can participate, please visit our campaign website: www.forgottenharvest.org/solutions or call 248-298-3421. Site tours are available.

We are truly grateful for your consideration at this transformational time.

For 30 years, Forgotten Harvest has rescued nutritious surplus food and delivered it to emergency food pantries throughout the tri-county area for distribution to those in need.

During the pandemic, many of those emergency partners were unable to open. Our sustaining donors, the Harvest Sustainers, were one of the reasons that we had the flexibility to adjust our model, allowing us to directly distribute the food to the rising need in our community. Our annual operations budget is primarily privately funded, which means that in order to continue our regular programs and operations, we need to raise money annually. **The Harvest Sustainers allow us to have income that we can count on each month to do our work.**



As such, each month, families have food on their tables because of the people who establish regular monthly or quarterly gifts to Forgotten Harvest.

Sustaining donors also help us plan for the future. We use client data that we collect to determine the number of people in need in an area in order to create our next distribution location. Regular donations provide the security we need to establish those pantries.

If you are interested in becoming a Harvest Sustainer, you can choose recurring gift directly on our website at **www.forgottenharvest.org/donate/** or please contact Kimberly Kalmar,

Director of Individual Giving at kkalmar@forgottenharvest.org or 248-864-7525.