

Fall
16

h arvest gatherings



FOODBANK

*Hunger is not a choice.
Giving is.*

www.sharedharvest.org
800-352-3663

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Our Mission:

To find, rescue and distribute food to people living in poverty through an efficient network, uniting the public and private sectors;
To raise awareness of the impact of poverty.



FEEDING AMERICA



OHIO
ASSOCIATION OF
FOODBANKS

Written and edited
by Bob Long

Food security improves - SNAP helps

There is a ray of hope on the issue of food insecurity in America but still a long way to go in fighting hunger.

A report from the Economic Research Service to the US Department of Agriculture shows food insecurity declined from 14% in 2014 to 12.8% in 2015, which USDA says is statistically significant. Just under 16-million households faced food insecurity last year.

Food-insecure homes are ones where a family had difficulty at some point in the year providing enough food for all their members due to a lack of resources.

The same report found children were food insecure in 7.8% of households last year, down significantly from 9.4% in 2014.

"This is certainly encouraging news," said Shared Harvest Foodbank Executive Director Tina Osso. "In addition to some improvement in the economy, this drop in food insecurity is also the result of many other nutrition programs like SNAP and Backpack that help families obtain the food they need to ensure everyone has enough to eat."

Dr. Sandra Black is a member of the White House Council of Economic Advisers. She says the CEA's research shows Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits make a huge difference in lifting families out of poverty and improving nutrition for children. Census data from 2014 indicates SNAP benefits lifted 4.7 million people out of poverty, including 2.1 million children.

"The benefits of supporting low-

income families have much broader implications for our communities on so many dimensions," Black explained.

"Research shows that among children, receipt of SNAP benefits can lead to improvements in short-term health and educational outcomes - both of which can impact long-run earnings, labor market participation, productivity and economic growth."

Black said one study during the recession showed states with high unemployment saw larger increases

in people receiving SNAP benefits. She believes the responsiveness of SNAP provided a bridge to help people from falling into a long-term cycle of poverty.

Black sees strong arguments to protect SNAP from future federal budget cuts because it has been

effective in meeting the goal of pulling people out of poverty.

"The program acts as an automatic stabilizer," Black said. "When the economy is struggling, the program naturally expands as more people enroll, providing protection when individuals or families need it most."

SNAP has made a difference in the lives of many families served by Shared Harvest's network of pantries, soup kitchens and shelters. SNAP Outreach workers helped 1,276 local families file applications, which provided 1,093,500 meals in 2015.

Shared Harvest is about to expand its SNAP Outreach staff this fall (see pages 4-5) to ensure benefits are available to those who need it most.

Qualifying for SNAP benefits

| Family Size | Monthly income before taxes |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| Family of 1 | \$1,276 |
| Family of 2 | \$1,726 |
| Family of 3 | \$2,177 |
| Family of 4 | \$2,628 |
| Family of 5 | \$3,078 |
| Family of 6 | \$3,529 |

Notes from our director

This newsletter focuses on SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program. SNAP is an integral part of the house of cards we have built to combat hunger right here at home. I call it a house of cards because hunger relief is a combination of many private and public collaborations; each one of which lends stability to the overall approach of addressing hunger in this land of plenty. Conversely, the loss or reduction of any one of these programs can cause the whole thing to become unstable or come crashing down.

I say this because it has become popular to denigrate people who receive SNAP benefits. How easily we judge people by what is in their grocery carts. We don't think twice about what others have in their carts whose livelihood is derived from our taxes, like public service employees or government contractors, so why do we focus our contempt on the most vulnerable among us?

I personally know what it feels like to be judged by my grocery cart from an experience when I was on the Food Stamp Program in the 1970's – when they really were paper coupons, not an EBT card that you swipe – so there was no question who was on Food Stamps.

This particular day at the grocery happened to be my birthday. For months I had been 'good' buying rice and beans, off brand packaged goods, cheap cuts of poultry and meat. Buying the ingredients to make my own pasta and sauce and bread, clipping coupons, searching out sale items... doing everything I could to stretch my monthly \$25 food stamp allotment, planning my meals carefully.

But this day, as I stalked the aisles looking for best buys, less than fresh produce and marked down meats, I walked by the freezer with the King Crab Legs. I stood there for a moment staring at those legs in the freezer case, but walked by them and continued to shop. They called to me no matter where I

was in that store. I had been living off of rice and beans for so long. I wanted that sense of normalcy that comes with having a special birthday meal. So I walked back to the freezer case and put one package of King Crab Legs in my cart, and returned some of the other items so I could afford them.

Then I went to the checkout line, with my food stamps in hand, and placed my groceries on the counter. The cashier clicked her tongue and gave me a withering look as she saw those crab legs. The guy behind me shook his head and made some derogatory comments. I was so ashamed that I stepped out of the line after returning my items to my cart, walked back to that freezer case and put the crab legs back.

Neither one of those people had any idea how thrifty and careful I had been for months, eating the same five to seven meals, over and over again. Nor did they have any understanding how being poor makes you want just one normal experience, like a special meal on your birthday. All they did was judge me by my grocery cart, and the way they made me feel is still with me today.

I would ask you to walk a mile in these shoes by taking the SNAP challenge for a week, which allows for \$4.40 worth of groceries per person per day. No eating any foods, beverages or condiments purchased before the challenge, no free meals from family or friends. Do you like your coffee in the morning? You will spend almost a day's worth of actual food to get that pound of coffee. It's not easy is it?

Here's the thing though... after this very frugal week, you can go back to your 'normal' grocery store habits, while people who depend on SNAP, face week after week of the same hard choices only to be judged by what is in their grocery carts. We are better than this, don't you think?



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UPCOMING EVENTS

BackPack Program launches
October 17

Make A Difference Day
October 22

Classic Holiday Movies at Springdale Deluxe Cinemas
November 26- December 17
on Saturdays

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER

Holiday Aid Food & Fund Drives
Shared Harvest

Check Out Hunger
Kroger

Community Food Relief
Cox Ohio/Journal-News

Food for Friends
WDTN

Food from the Heart
Kroger



Volunteer on a mission

Jess Kurti understands hard times. When her entire department at work was laid off, she saw firsthand why hunger is an issue in America.

She bounced back from adversity and is now on a mission to volunteer at all 200 Feeding America foodbanks and to run marathons in 50 states.

Jess volunteered at Shared Harvest this summer and said the experience has shown her how tough it is for foodbanks to get

healthy food to hungry people, especially women and children.

"You have people picking the vegetables in our country who can't

even afford to buy that kind of produce," Kurti said.

Jess loves the interaction with other volunteers who share the goal of wanting to stop

hunger.

"My focus is on educating and engaging people," she said. "I like to show how small contributions by each of us can make a tremendous difference."



Jess Kurti

Help us "Check-out Hunger"

The simple step of scanning a bar code in the checkout line at Kroger will allow you to help Shared Harvest Foodbank.

From early November to the end of the year, Kroger will offer its 11th annual "Check-out

Hunger" campaign in the foodbank's 5-county area.

Shoppers can use coupons at each cash register in the amounts of \$1, \$3, \$5 or \$10 to make a donation. In 2015, Kroger

shoppers gave more than \$29,000 to the foodbank.



JOURNAL-NEWS COMMUNITY FOOD RELIEF

Subscribers to the Journal-News will be able to make donations to Shared Harvest during the holiday season.

Cox Ohio's Community Food Relief Project has been assisting the foodbank since 2004. People who receive the paper will be able to use

envelopes provided in several Sunday papers between November and December, or make a contribution online.

In 2015, Community Food Relief provided more than 95,000 meals to people in need with donations exceeding \$13,500.

Stories from the front lines

Shared Harvest's SNAP Outreach Program helps people learn if they qualify and can apply for SNAP or other supports. SNAP Outreach worker Gloria Bateman shares a story this month about the ordeal facing one family of six.

Staci came to the pantry with her husband and four kids. Her husband isn't working right now due to health issues, so the only income she has is child support from her ex-husband for one child and cash assistance. That barely covers rent and utilities. Staci's family visits a couple of food pantries each month to help put food on the table, and they also go through the clothing part of this pantry to help keep the kids in clothing.

Staci and I talked a little to see what I could do to assist her with this temporary situation. I helped

sign the family up for SNAP and medical assistance and suggested they visit SELF to help them with their electric bill with a budget plan for the local utility company.

Just in case, I also gave them a list of soup kitchens in Hamilton where they can go to help supplement their tight budget with nourishing meals.

Even with all of these stressors, Staci is trying to find a job to help the family while her husband recovers from his medical problems so he can return to work.

Shared Harvest expands SNAP outreach...

"I try to keep people motivated that help is coming for them, and the system isn't broken. Some people are convinced the system is broken and it's a waste of time to apply."

**Robert Zohfeld,
SNAP Outreach worker**

Shared Harvest's SNAP Outreach is expanding from two to three full-time staff members to improve service in Butler, Warren, Miami and Darke Counties. Robert Zohfeld and Peter Engelhard have joined program coordinator Gloria Bateman and will become full-time employees in October.

SNAP Outreach does much more than help people apply for benefits. Bateman and her staff now use the Ohio Benefit Bank to help people apply for SNAP online and to see if they might be eligible for other services.

"We can also help them with medical applications, cash assistance, childcare vouchers, HEAP utility assistance or financial aid forms for college," she said.

Bateman can tell electronically if a person may qualify for SNAP, but she is careful not to tell them the exact amount they might receive because the final determination is by the local Job and Family Services office.

"Some people are very worried about whether they qualify, so I try to let them know they may receive

some benefit, and that takes the weight off their shoulders," Bateman said.

"I recently met a father in Lebanon with three sons, and my computer showed he could get \$511 in SNAP benefits. Sometimes people are surprised by the amount they can receive."

Gloria said the job also includes helping people who have been incarcerated to get back on their feet. During a recent visit to one of our food pantries, Serve City in Hamilton, Gloria helped Douglas apply for benefits. He had just been released from prison and was living at the CHOSEN homeless shelter while trying to get back on his feet.

Bateman's biggest concern is the lack of assistance for senior citizens. "In the 11 years I've been doing this, the allotment for seniors hasn't changed, so the question is why benefits haven't increased as the cost of living goes up," she said.

Robert Zohfeld joins staff

After working in a warehouse, Miami University soon-to-be-graduate Robert Zohfeld loves his

new work as a SNAP Outreach employee. "Helping people doesn't feel like work - it feels like a service," he said.

Robert has found people at pantries in rural areas have been a bit more hesitant to apply for SNAP. "At some pantries I visit, like the ones in Middletown and Franklin, I see people who are a bit more desperate for help," he noted. "They sometimes come to me with tears in their eyes, talking about not having any place else to turn."

When he sees on his computer that a client may qualify for SNAP, he tells them how important it is to follow through with getting benefits. "Some people are convinced the system is broken and it's a waste of time to apply," said Zohfeld. "I tell them 15 minutes of your time for this application can possibly provide a lot of money to help your kids."

Robert recently met a man named Doug, a widower with four kids between 7 and 16. Doug came to the pantry in Lebanon in a bad mood but left much happier knowing he could get close to \$500 in benefits.

Left: Robert Zohfeld joined the Shared Harvest staff in July. Center: Gloria Bateman works on a SNAP application for Douglas who is trying to find work after being released from prison. Below right: Peter Engelhard also joined the SNAP staff in July.



... to reach more people in need

Expanding SNAP (continued)

Welcome to Peter Engelhard

Peter Engelhard says his passion since high school has been helping other people and letting them know about the resources available to them. The recent Miami University graduate has enjoyed volunteering and being active in the community, so his new SNAP outreach job is just what he wanted.

"I've met people who didn't know applying for SNAP was available when they came to a pantry," he said. "Some people don't want to apply because they feel ashamed or they don't want people to think they're lazy."

Peter has met some people who haven't applied for SNAP because they felt others might have needs that were greater than their own.

Peter recalls meeting a man who had lost SNAP benefits and was at the Franklin Area Community Services pantry because it was the only place where he could get food. "I helped him re-apply for SNAP, and he called me a week later to let me know he had been approved," Engelhard said. "That really made my day."

Advocacy Project

Visit www.sharedharvest.org and click on the

"Raise Your Voice" icon to learn how you can become an advocate in the fight against hunger.

**DON'T FORGET TO VOTE
ON NOVEMBER 8!**

If you have a personal story you would like to share about receiving SNAP benefits...

**Contact Shared Harvest'
Sarah Ormbrek:
800-352-3663 or
sarah@sharedharvest.org**

History of local SNAP outreach

Gloria Bateman recalls when Shared Harvest received a grant from the US Department of Agriculture to launch a program to identify and remove barriers for people who might be eligible for food stamps.

The OSU Extension Office in Butler County, Miami University, LifeSpan and Butler County Job and Family Services partnered with the foodbank to launch an effort to educate people who hadn't applied for food stamps because they felt it was so complicated, or they might not be eligible.

The project started in April 2005 with Serve City Food Pantry in Hamilton and Family Service of Middletown being the first agencies to invite foodbank staff to talk with clients about applying for food stamps.

"I started off helping people shop at the pantries for a month so they'd get to know me, before I started assisting with food stamp applications," Bateman said. "Back then, we did paper applications, and if the pantry had a copy machine, we would copy the clients' proof of identity and income. Then I'd go back to Shared Harvest and fax it to Job and Family Services."

The foodbank expanded the outreach program to Warren County in 2006 and to Miami County four years ago. Darke County was added recently.

Food stamps became known as SNAP - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - in 2008, just before the onset of the Great Recession, which triggered a large increase in the number of people seeking assistance.

"During the Great Recession, I always kept a box of Kleenex on my desk," Bateman recalled. "Fathers would come in, and you could tell they'd never been through anything like this before. I would see the tears welling in their eyes as I filled out the SNAP application."

One of Gloria's other memories of her SNAP outreach work was the year employees of AK Steel in Middletown were locked out in a labor dispute. "Shared Harvest took thousands of pounds of food to the union hall, and I remember processing 48 applications for benefits in one day," she said.

So you think it's easy to live in poverty?

If you run a food pantry, you've heard many stories about the crisis that cause people to turn to you for help. But leaders of the pantries had a chance to experience life in poverty first hand during Shared Harvest's annual agency conference.

Cari Wynne and Shelly Wallpe of the Butler County Educational Service Center put pantry directors through a simulation called "COPE": the Cost of Poverty Experience. People were divided into groups of various "family" sizes and given a series of crisis to deal with over a four-week span.

"We wanted them to understand the challenges people face and why they make the decisions they make," Wynne said. "Middle class people often look at families in poverty and think their behavior is crazy, but if they saw the issues they faced each day, the decisions can be easier to understand."

Most "families" found they couldn't put aside money for food while dealing with a host of weekly problems. Issues included seeking loans from banks when you have poor credit, or putting yourself at the

mercy of a pawn shop owner to get the money you need to pay for rent, medical bills, or gas. Negotiating the maze of social services, getting daycare for kids or dealing with the police, courts or probation officers were examples of many issues that might arise.

Wynne points to two critical issues that often leave families frantic or desperate - transportation and medical care. "How are you getting to a job interview or to a job if you don't have a car?" she explained. "Butler County lacks a countywide system of mass transit, and that's a serious barrier."

Many families in need also lack health insurance, which also leads to difficult decisions about going to the doctor or getting medicine they need. "We're seeing families who aren't healthy to begin with because they don't have the preventive care many of us take for granted," Wynne said. "Life spirals out of control when the medical bills come in."

Many participants were surprised by how tough it was to pay all of their bills, deal with medical issues and find a way to put food on the table for the family.

Below: Food pantry employees at Shared Harvest's agency conference got to find out what life is like for their clients during a poverty simulation. Each "family" faced different crisis that led them to deal with employees at places like banks or pawn shops.



The flamingos are flocking at the foodbank



"Tomorrow's results are created by today's dreamers.
You can have a significant impact on the fight against hunger.

Have you considered leaving a gift to Shared Harvest Foodbank in your will? Learn more about this kind of support by calling Mitchell Willis, Director of Development, at (513)874-0114 or e-mail mitchell@sharedharvest.org

Memorials and Honorariums

Food Donors & Drives

In Memory:

Of: Deceased members of the Capella family
By: *Anonymous*

Of: Tom Avance
By: *Paul & Karla Avance*

Of: Phillip E. Baker
By: *Phillip & Wayna Baker*

Of: Pauline & Paul Bonner
By: *Paul Bonner*

Of: Carol Ann Schwab
By: *Burnham & Flower, USB Financial Services, DuMont, FTB Financial Services, Tammy Gamble, Dan & Sandi Crowley, Kenneth & Sonya Garbe, Robert & Mary Alice Gast, Jerry & Cleo Gerber, Tom & Lucille Honnert, National Resource Conservation Service, Steven & Patricia Ormiston, M. Rehm, Ernest & Marcia Schlichter, Barry & Charlotte Shahmann*

Of: William, Lillian & David Rucker
By: *Sharon Campbell*

Of: Doris J. Castor
By: *Mark Cox*

Of: Father's Day memorials for Ron & Fred Seiter, Dewey & Wally Denning, Ben & Joe Ever, Virgil Hahn
By: *Donna Denning*

Of: Dennis Pendl
By: *William & Jean Dineen, David Freeman, Tom & Patty Kuehn, Christopher & Margaret Leary, Robert & Sharon Primm, Deborah Slaughter, Robert & Darlene Spicer*

Of: Tom Geiger
By: *Louis & Cheryl Geiger*

Of: Brian Nagel
By: *Margaret Himes, Ronald & Lynne Hord*

Of: Josephine Long
By: *Edward Loving*

Of: Bernard Mack
By: *Yoalnda Mack*

Of: Thelma McClung
By: *Susan Marvin*

Of: David Metzler Sr.
By: *Sandy Metzler*

Of: Betty Weber
By: *Bari Meyer*

Of: Jerry Krusyewski
By: *Darlene Onyette*

Of: Harry & Landon Otto
By: *Loretta Otto*

Of: James E. Paulus
By: *Suzanne Paulus*

Of: Paul & Betty Thompson
By: *Pam Sackenheim*

Of: Louis & Doris Schellenbach
By: *Mary Clare Schellenbach*

Of: Melvin L. Shaw
By: *Nancy Shaw*

Of: Mathew & Doreen Clark
By: *Angela Clarke & Michael Sheehan*

Of: Sgt. Alexander Pak USMC
By: *Daniel & Sheila Siefer*

Of: Anthony LoBuono
By: *Bill & Sandra Spadafora*

Of: Tom Stallman
By: *Judy Stallman*

Of: Thomas Stitzel
By: *Joan Stitzel*

Of: Jan Bozek
By: *Donald & Rosemary Uliano*

Of: Elmer VanWinkle
By: *Lois VanWinkle*

In Honor:

Of: Helen Pater
By: *Anonymous*

Of: Ed Bolger
By: *Alice Bolger*

Of: Corbin Cornett Sr.
By: *Corbin & Margaret Cornett*

Of: David Benn, Jim Berger, Rob, Jerry, Brian & Steven Daviaux, Mike Daviaux, Mike & Deron Denning, Keith Seiter
By: *Donna Denning*

Of: Frank & Florence Meder's anniversary
By: *Gloria Gardner*

Of: Birthdays for Robin Griss Solazzo and Jeff Griss
By: *Dick & Mary Griss*

Of: Mary Knollman
By: *Leonard Knollman*

Of: Praying Americans & Christians
By: *Phillip & Elsie Marcum*

Of: Kristen Mitchell
By: *Priscilla Mitchell*

Of: Skip & Susan Warm's 50th anniversary
By: *Randy & Barb New*

Of: Sam Shoemaker
By: *Lois Shoemaker*

Food Donors:

Anonymous
ABC Trucking
Advance Foods
Bradly Clark
Chickpea Chicks Hummus
CLEAResult
Colorado Premium Foods
Continental Express
CRS Trucking
DHL
Ellenbee Leggett
Essendant
Estes
Freestore Foodbank
Frisch's Restaurants
Frito-Lay Company
Girl Scouts of Western Ohio
J.M. Smucker Company
JAG Trucking Inc.
Kellogg's
Love's Transportation
Meals of Hope
Meijer Distribution Center
Mondelez/Kraft Biscuit
Mondelez/Nabisco
Needy Baskets of Southern Miami County
Ohio Association of Foodbanks
Ohio Department of Job & Family Services
Prairie Star Farms
Royal Logistics
Sanderson Farms
Schwanns Food Service
Taylor Warehouse
Tropicana
Vendor Supply of Ohio
Victory Wholesale Grocers
Weaver Brothers, Inc.
West Ohio Food Bank
White Castle

Food Drives:

AK Steel Souper Bowl
Barclay Card
Bourdeau Dental Studio
Bridgeport Elementary School
Brookdale Senior Living
BSI Engineering
Butler Co Job & Family Services
Butler Co. Bar Association
Butler Co. Childrens Services

Butler County Fair
Butler County RTA
Butler Tech FFA
Buzzard Bay
Cort Business Services
Delta Kappa Gamma Chi Chapter
Dollar Tree
Elks Lodge #422
ES3
Fairwood
First Financial Bank
GE Aviation
Hamilton Freshman
Heritage of Miami Bluffs
Kroger Employee Bag Off
Lane Libraries
Linden
Lyondell Basell
Macy's
Manheim Cincinnati
NALC Stamp Out Hunger
New Beginnings Covenant Church
Northrup Grumman
Ohio Dept of Rehab & Corrections
Ohio Means Jobs
Ridgeway
Riverview
Ryan's Tavern
Sojourner
Talapanda FFA Chapter
The Dry Cleaning Shop
Towne Properties
Triplefin

Individuals

Paul Allen
Robin Blankumsce
Jim Fatheree
Holly Foster
Joseph Frees
Diane Goodman
Vada Love
Matthew Oswald
Kathy Simpson
Sharon Teeple

Retail Pick-up:

Aldi's
Kroger Company
Marsh's Supermarkets
Meijer Stores
Target
Walmart

Consider giving a dustless gift for the holidays. Use the enclosed envelope to make your donation. Provide the name & address of the dustless gift recipient, and we will mail a holiday card announcing your tax deductible gift.

Plan a Holiday Aid Event Now!

It's time to start planning for Shared Harvest Foodbank's Holiday Aid campaign.

Your community group, church, school or business can collect canned goods between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Or consider

a cash drive where each dollar you collect means seven meals for a hungry family in our community.

Contact Community Engagement Director Crystal Corbin at: **1-800-352-3633 or crystal@sharedharvest.org**

Foodbank Staff

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Gloria Bateman | SNAP Outreach |
| Dylan Bostwick | Driver/Warehouse Associate |
| Ann Copple | Administrative Assistant |
| Crystal Corbin | Community Engagement Manager |
| Holli Curry | CSFP Administrator |
| Peter Engelhard | SNAP Outreach |
| Nick Davidson | Direct Services Associate |
| Rick Devine | Operations Manager |
| Nate Hoskins | Warehouse Manager |
| Debbie Houston | Food Production |
| Bob Long | Communication Specialist |
| Sarah Ormbrek | Agency Relations Director |
| Tina Osso | Executive Director |
| Terry Perdue | Chief Fiscal Officer |
| Darrell Sandlin | Chief Operating Officer |
| Mike Stamper | Retail Pickup |
| Mike Williams | Driver |
| Mitchell Willis | Director of Development |
| Robert Zohfeld | SNAP Outreach |

Banking on our banking friends

Shared Harvest Foodbank received more than \$3,000 from fund raising projects by two area banks.

First Financial Bank employees raised \$1,400 for the foodbank so they could enjoy casual Friday's.

Shared Harvest Director of Development, Mitchell Willis, also received a donation of

\$1,650 from the leadership team at Woodforest Bank in Hamilton.

That contribution was part of a statewide project by Woodforest employees to assist all 12 Feeding America partner foodbanks in Ohio. Woodforest donated more than \$47,000 statewide to help fight hunger.

Below: Shared Harvest Development Director Mitchell Willis accepts a donation from Linda Hill of First Financial Bank and a check from leaders of Woodforest Bank.



Fall 2016

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