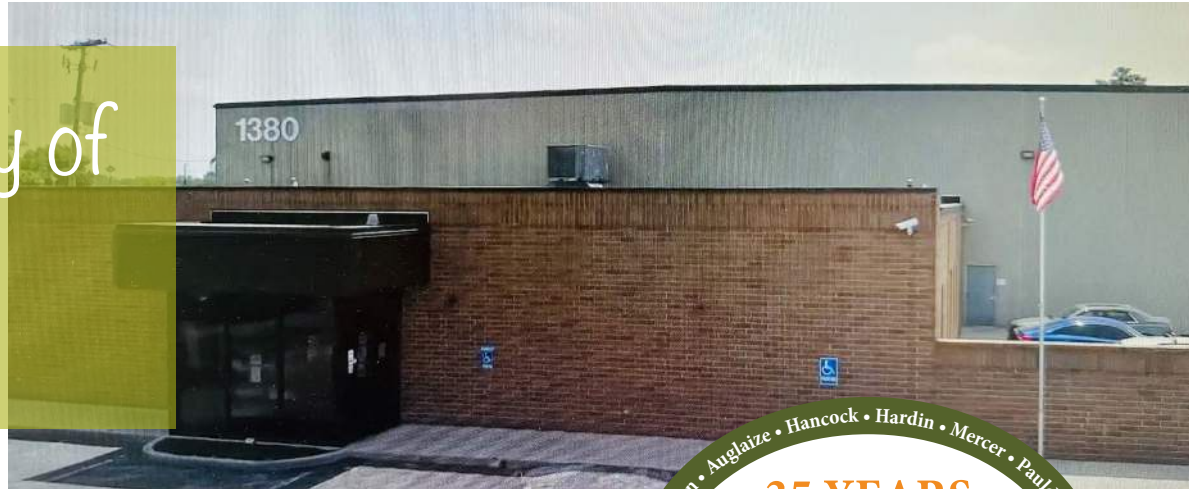


Feeding Hope

2023 WINTER NEWSLETTER | WOFB.ORG



The History of West Ohio Food Bank



The seed for the Lima Area Food Bank was planted in the Lima District Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church. This group consisted of Mrs. Betty Grainger, Chair, Rev. Martha Curry, and Dr. Philip Compton, with the assistance of Rev. Gail Rohrbacher, District Superintendent. Rev. Curry was a member of the committee that established Operation Feed in Columbus, Ohio, which is now the Mid-Ohio Food Bank, one of the largest in the country. The First United Methodist Church, located on the corner of Spring and Union Streets in Lima, Ohio, had some unused space in their basement which they would donate to the Food Bank. Many hours were spent fixing and painting the area thanks to the dedication of Rev. Bushong and his father, Harold, and Harold Newcomer, a trustee of the church.

May 1987: In order to nourish the seed, a board of directors was formed of interested and committed members of the community. The first meeting of the board was held in May, 1987. The regular board meetings were scheduled for the fourth Monday of each month, but for a while, board meetings were scheduled almost weekly. Under the leadership of Rev. Martha Curry, the board of directors worked closely with Matt Habash and Evelyn Behm of the

Mid-Ohio Food Bank.

Early 1988:

During the Summer and Fall of 1987, the

Articles of Incorporation

were filed and the Articles of Operation and Bylaws were adopted. New officers were elected in January, 1988: Betty Grainger, Chairperson; Harold Newcomer, Vice-Chairperson; Philip Compton, Secretary; and Jim Harris, Treasurer. In February, 1988, the first major grant was received amounting to \$5,000 from Maumee Valley Presbytery. With this and other donated money, the board advertised for a director of the Food Bank. On March 21, 1988, Jim Britt was hired as the Director. At this time, the board affiliated with the Mid-Ohio Food Bank as a Subsidiary Distribution Organization (SDO), which is the current status of the agency following the guidelines of Second Harvest, a national food distribution organization. A 30-foot electric conveyer was donated to bring food into and out of the Food Bank through a door at the back of the building.



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THE FOOD BANK MISSION

Everyone should have access to healthy, nutritious food. Together with our partners, we provide food to those in need.

OUR VISION

Ending Hunger Together

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2022-2023

Michael Dulle
President

Linda Hamilton
Vice President

Tim Rieger
Treasurer

Brandon Nevergall
Secretary

Jennifer Niese
Joseph Rocca Jr.
Ronald Rooker Jr.
Greg Stumbaugh
Hans Varga
Crystal Weitz
Tricia Winkler

CONTACT US

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Find us online!
www.wofb.org



A Letter From the CEO

I'd like to start my letter by saying thank you. Our vision of ending hunger together could not be done without your vital support. **During 2022, West Ohio Food Bank distributed more than 8.1 million pounds of food, equivalent to 6.7 million meals.** This food has ensured 46,546 of our hungry neighbors have had food to put on their tables. Of these individuals, 26,811 were new to visiting a food pantry, meal site, or distribution through West Ohio Food Bank's network of partner agencies and community distributions. Many of those new faces needing assistance have shared they were once financial supporters of the Food Bank but are now finding themselves in need of help because of the high costs of utilities, medicine, and fuel. But through all of this, with your support and as a community, we have stood up and made sure those who need access to healthy food were and are, taken care of.



This year marked the 35th anniversary of West Ohio Food Bank being in existence. Throughout those years, the Food Bank has seen tremendous growth in food distribution, programming, staffing, donors, and much more. Since 1988, West Ohio Food Bank has distributed millions of pounds of food throughout its service area. I have had the pleasure of being here for about half of the Food Bank's existence, and I couldn't be prouder of the growth and partnerships we have made in our ongoing mission of ending hunger together.

I would like to invite YOU, our faithful and dedicated supporter, to come to West Ohio Food Bank's facility for a tour and learn about what we do on a daily basis to ensure our neighbors have food to eat. I also invite you to come and volunteer with us, and give back to the community through service while helping us with needed activities to distribute food in a safe and efficient manner. We have several volunteer opportunities to meet your needs. Some of these include: sorting food, packing snack packs and senior food boxes, distributing food, general warehouse and office duties, and more. We have something for everyone. **Our volunteers are very valuable to us and we could not do our day-to-day work without them.**

Thank you for your continued support enabling us to feed thousands of families who struggle to put food on the table. It truly takes a community to feed a community, and we do not take this job lightly. **YOU are at the heart of everything we do, and thank you wholeheartedly for your support. Together we can close the gap on hunger in our 11-county area.**

Tommie Harner
Chief Executive Officer

Agency Spotlight: Neighborhood Relief Thrift Store

Neighborhood Relief Thrift has been in operation for 23 years. Their mission is "To help people in times of need, to provide continued support to community assistance agencies and organizations, to offer for sale quality and safe merchandise to the public at reasonable costs, and to show the love and light of Christ and be a pillar of hope in our community."

The agency provides many different programs and outreach efforts throughout the community. They provide food assistance, clothing, spiritual guidance, and recycling programs of books to third world countries, along with recycling of metal, clothing, books, and paper products.

Pastor Roz says one need he wishes he could fulfill would be more volunteers who are community-minded and/or church-involved to aid with outreach. He is currently in need of more volunteers.

There are different ways you can support this agency. It can be through financial donations (available to make via mail, in-person, or online), or material items, clothing, and hygiene items donated to the store and pantry.

Pastor Roz shares, "We are always looking to partner with other organizations and agencies to meet the needs of the community.



"Donating money or time is always welcome. We are available to help with community outreach programs and work with different schools to provide volunteer opportunities such as assisting with lunches and kid-oriented food box packing."

Neighborhood Relief Thrift Store

1500 Elida Rd., Lima, OH

Hours: Mon-Sat 10am-6pm

Phone: 419-999-GIVE (4483)

Online: neighborhoodrelief.com



Employee Spotlight: Stacy Tapia

Stacy has previous experience working as a Material Analyst (Supply Chain/Logistics) for production products (two years of automotive/manufacturing/warehousing), Client Service Manager for First Federal Bank (six years of banking experience), and over 15 years of effective customer service and sales experience leader.

After the pandemic, Stacy went searching for an impactful career to utilize her acquired skills to truly make a difference in the world. While she was attending the University of Findlay, she volunteered to assist with a food distribution at the school. She thoroughly enjoyed being a helpful hand to assist others in need. After finding the Development Coordinator position listed for West Ohio Food Bank, she knew the Food Bank was where she belonged and knew she could truly make a difference to neighbors in need.

Stacy enjoys painting, pottery, watching football, working on cars, spending time with her daughter, cooking, and threading/henna eyebrows.

As a Development Coordinator, Stacy's goal is to enhance and improve the Food Bank's fundraising strategies, marketing plan, and implement changes to support the Food Bank's mission.

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit."

- Aristotle

Volunteer Spotlight: Pathstone's Worker

Pathstone is a government-subsidized program for individuals who are 55 years and older. This program assists with transitioning the individual back into the workforce and does not impact those who may receive SNAP, housing, or rent assistance.

Laura started with Pathstone in 2018 wanting to get back into the workforce. She made the decision to get back into the workforce. In October 2022, Pathstone sent her to West Ohio Food Bank, where she works as a receptionist and greeter for visitors.

We asked Laura what she liked best about working at West Ohio Food Bank. She said, "I love it all. I have learned additional computer and office-setting work and what all is involved with this type of work. This type of work is ideal for me because I

am unable to lift a lot anymore which may limit some jobs I may be able to do. I enjoy all the staff and volunteers. Everyone has been wonderful to me."

Laura has two grown children and two grandchildren she helps babysit. Laura spends a lot of time with the grandchildren, which doesn't leave a lot of spare time for other things, but she loves it. We are so grateful to have Laura at West Ohio Food Bank. If you stop by the Food Bank you will most likely be greeted by Laura's smile and friendly personality.



The History of West Ohio Food Bank *(Continued from Page 1)*

Late 1988: The seed began to sprout on April 13, 1988 when the first food shipment from Mid-Ohio Food Bank arrived, and the Lima Area Food Bank opened its doors for business. The Grand Opening celebration was held on June 17, 1988, with Representative Michael Oxley as the Keynote speaker. In September, 1988, the Food Bank served as a local site for food from the Festival of Sharing by West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church. The Food Bank also served as the collection agency for the Boy Scout food drive in November, 1988. By this time, the board had enough money after eight months of operation to purchase a used van for local food pickups. **At the end of 1988, after eight months of operations, the Food Bank had processed 68.7 tons of food for 30 agencies in seven of the eleven counties in the service area.**

Today: The Food Bank has moved from a basement in a church, to a former grocery store, then an older five-story warehouse, to its current home located at 1380 E. Kibby St. There have been numerous changes since the Food Bank's inception. The Lima Area Food Bank, as it was known, is now West Ohio

Food Bank. Second Harvest changed its name to Feeding America along with Mid-Ohio Food Bank changing its name to Mid-Ohio Food Collective, Inc. **The 68.7 tons of food distributed in 1988 has increased to between 10-11 million pounds of food, serving thousands of food-insecure individuals located within 11 counties of West Central Ohio.** The Food Bank has a fleet of five refrigerated box trucks, one cargo van, and one pick-up truck. There are 100 partner agencies of West Ohio Food Bank and more than 50 additional programs provided within its service area. The growth, partnerships, and collaborations over the years have been incredible, making West Ohio Food Bank a trusting, caring, generous, responsible, and reputable organization within West Central Ohio.

