

Feeding Hope

2022 FALL NEWSLETTER | WOFB.ORG



People YOU Helped



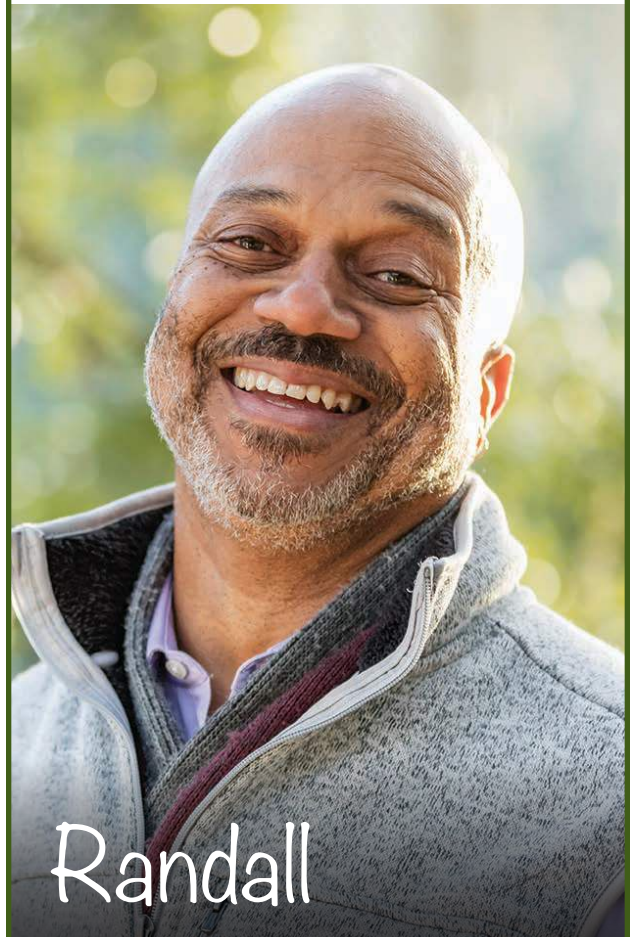
Barbara

“Sometimes I have struggled and, yes, I have gone to distributions when I had a ride to get there. I don’t drive, so I have to rely on others for transportation. I do receive some food stamps, but they don’t always last when you are raising four grandchildren. I have 12-year-old twin girls, a seven-year-old boy, and a five-year-old girl I have been raising since 2018. I am taking care of the children to keep them out of the system. They are my grandkids, so I’ll do whatever I have to do to provide for them and keep them safe and together.

I appreciate all the help I have received from West Ohio Food Bank. It has truly been a blessing for my family, and it helps to make sure that everyone has a meal.”

“I just want to say you are a life saver. To all the people involved, you are doing a great job.

I only get \$10 a month in food stamps so getting this food is a life saver, and, if I could, I would give a hug to everyone involved. This makes it possible for me to eat all month. I just want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the help with food. **I wouldn’t be able to have food to eat for the whole month without West Ohio Food Bank.**”



Randall



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



A Letter From the CEO

Although the height of the COVID-19 pandemic has come to an end, the number of food-insecure families we are seeing needing assistance continues to increase. To meet this need, we have had to pull together with a sense of community, making others a priority in our own lives, and working together; ensuring those who approach us in need of food assistance, receive it.

Over the past year, there has been a 13% increase in the number of unduplicated households being served by West Ohio Food Bank and its network of partner agencies. Of this increase, 8,700 families have been new to the food networking system, meaning they have not received food relief in the past. This increase comes at a time when there are drastic increases in food and fuel costs, shortages and supply chain disruptions, climate change, and global conflicts along with inflation. However, this has also been a life-lesson, teaching us we could all become in need of a little help from our neighbors at any given time because of various circumstances.

“If you ever find yourself needing food assistance, know our network of hunger ambassadors is here. Not only for food assistance, but staff and volunteers are waiting to assist you with a smile, an ear to listen, or a shoulder to cry on if that is what you need.”

If we are lucky, we may never find ourselves needing food assistance from an emergency food pantry or meal site. But if you ever do, know our network of hunger ambassadors is here. Not only for food assistance, but staff and volunteers are waiting to assist you with a smile, an ear to listen, or a shoulder to cry on if that is what you need. Our work truly is a community effort and, to fulfill our vision of ending hunger together, it takes many hands to get food onto the tables of those who need it.

The problems we face with increased need and limited supply continue to be significant, but the support from you and the communities we serve remind us of what we can accomplish when working together. We are working hard to serve all who need assistance in our 11-county service area, and with your help, our neighbors know they can count on us to be there for them.

Thank you for continuing your vital support of West Ohio Food Bank.

Tommie Harner
Chief Executive Officer

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Nonprofit of the Year Award

The West Ohio Food Bank was named the winner of the Lima Allen County Chamber of Commerce's Non-Profit of the Year Award at the masquerade ball and ceremony held on May 3rd at the UNOH Events Center in Lima.

The West Ohio Food Bank becomes only the third non-profit to win the award twice, (2016, 2022) joining Lima Allen Council on Community Affairs (1998, 2014) and the Allen County Council on Aging (2006, 2013).

"It's been a challenging past couple of years, and we couldn't have done everything we have been able to do without a great board and a great staff," said CEO Tommie Harner, as she accepted the award at the ceremony. "Everyone (all of the non-profit award nominees) could have won this award, because we are all awarded every day when we help those that we serve."

The three finalists for this year's Non-Profit of the Year Award were Crossroads Crisis Center, Inc., Cornerstone of Hope Lima, and West Ohio Food Bank. The award was sponsored by the Tom Ahl Family of Dealerships.



Employee Spotlight: Steven Rakes



Steven has previous experience with the West Ohio Food Bank. As a member of the Ohio National Guard, he was one of the soldiers assigned to us during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2021.

Following the completion of the Ohio National Guard's mission with food banks across Ohio in July 2021, "Rakes," as he likes to be called, was hired as our new Distribution Coordinator. He oversaw most of our scheduling and remote monthly distributions we do on-site in the 11 counties we serve in West-Central Ohio.

Now, as our Community Impact Coordinator, Rakes enjoys his role of meeting with community members and growing our volunteer database. Volunteers are one of the main keys to our overall success and Rakes has embraced his role to encourage more groups, individuals, and organizations to be a part of our mission of "Ending Hunger Together."

Thanks, Rakes, for stepping into this important role at West Ohio Food Bank!

Volunteer Spotlight

Marcus & Marjorie

Q Why do you volunteer at West Ohio Food Bank?

A It's a way to reach out and help those in need and we believe in WOFB's goals and purpose. We have the ability to help and are happy to do so.

Q What would you say to someone considering volunteering?

A WOFB is a good place to volunteer. We have a desire to help those in need within our area. It's also important to be flexible and adaptable to WOFB's needs.

Q When did you start volunteering at WOFB?

A Early in the year 2021.

Q What do you like to do in your spare time?

A We stay very active with our family and seven grandchildren along with the community and church. We always find things to do and volunteer not only at WOFB, but other organizations as well.



Elaine

Q Why do you volunteer at West Ohio Food Bank?

A I had the opportunity to spend a day volunteering at WOFB during one of our service days when I worked at Mercy Health. It was then I became more aware of the services offered by WOFB and the amount of work accomplished with so few staff. I learned WOFB is part of the Feeding America network, and I had supported Feeding America with financial contributions for a number of years. We don't have a food shortage in this country; we have problems getting it distributed to people who need it the most. That's what Feeding America and WOFB are trying to solve. When I retired, volunteering at WOFB to help with this process seemed like a good fit for me.

Q What would you say to someone considering volunteering?

A I would encourage them to jump right in and offer their services. There's a need for help on so many levels, and the work is truly rewarding, as you can see your direct impact on other people's lives.

Q When did you start volunteering at West Ohio Food Bank?

A Since I retired from Mercy Health in 2017.

Q What do you like to do in your spare time?

A I enjoy biking, walking, golfing, photography, and reading.



We Love Our Volunteers!

In FY22 we had **800 volunteers** who provided **4,976 hours** or the equivalent of **4 full-time members** of staff!



Via our USDA-funded Senior Box Program, we provided **13,197 boxes**, containing **600,000 pounds of nutritious food**, to low-income seniors.

9 million pounds of food, including **1.35 million pounds of produce** were distributed to our network of food pantry and agency partners. That's **7.5 million meals** for children, seniors, and families in need.

