

**Off the
Shelf**
Fall 2020



ADAPTING TO CHANGE





Pam Molitoris
Executive Director

The older I get, the more I talk about time flying. In all honesty, the last six months have fluctuated between moving at hyper-speed, being stuck in place, or moving in slow motion. We know that we are not alone in dealing with the challenges of COVID-19. Like so many others, we have had to adapt to the rapidly changing environment – learning to run while flying.

We can see the world in two different ways – through the lens of obstacles that are in our way or through the opportunities that are in front of us. We choose to use these times as an opportunity to respond more robustly to provide food to the growing number of struggling families.

With safety as our number one priority, the Foodbank is relying on our outstanding partnerships. In connection with Feeding America, Feeding Illinois and the United States Department of Agriculture, we are partnering with existing vendors and establishing relationships with new ones. This allows us to not only maintain distribution efforts but expand them in ways that are effective in the current environment.

The greatest challenges we are facing are balancing the growing need for food, food safety, and personal safety. As we provide food to our partners, we are constantly evaluating the level of risk each distribution method presents. We continue to encourage our partners to pass food out through a drive-thru model whenever possible. If that is not feasible, we encourage curbside pickup, limited occupancy, and appropriate physical distances.

None of this would be possible without the support of our individual donors, corporate donors, national and state partners, and volunteers. The number of moving parts and people involved in addressing the food needs of our communities is staggering. From those who donate food or funds to purchase it, as well as those who volunteer to distribute to neighborhoods, all are critical to the effort.

The innovation and dedication of our partners, volunteers, and donors in providing food and other support to our neighbors is inspiring. While this road has been long, and at times certainly rocky, we are hopeful. We are so proud of our communities and how they have come together to help our neighbors. These acts of kindness and care keep us steadfast on this uncharted path.

Pam Molitoris

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



Our amazing "Farmers to Families" partners **Prairie Farms, Gordon Food Services, and Central Illinois Produce** have been working hard to provide families grocery boxes of dairy, meat, and produce for no-contact deliveries .



We have teamed up with **Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Illinois** and a local caterer to help provide local families with sack lunches and to-go meals three days a week.



Donations from **Horace Mann, Feeding America, Grand Lodge of Illinois**, and countless others, keep food on thousands of tables in central and southern Illinois.

FEEDING OUR NEIGHBORS SAFELY



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF CENTRAL ILLINOIS

Prepacked boxes of groceries provided by the USDA's "Farmers to Families" program have enabled the Foodbank to modify how food distributions traditionally take place. Individuals were once able to receive their groceries in an open layout much like a farmers market, however, individuals are now encouraged to stay in their vehicles for their personal safety and for the safety of those distributing the food.

Working with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Illinois, the Foodbank has capitalized on this new drive-thru food distribution method to provide meals to hundreds of families every week in one of Springfield's hardest hit areas. "...I think that for our families, it takes the stress off them to know where their next meal will come from, because they know at least three days a week, they can count on the club to provide lunch and a variety of food boxes," said Boys and Girls Clubs CEO and Executive Director Tiffany Mathis.

"We are overwhelmed not only by the support from Central Illinois Foodbank, but also from the impact these food distributions have had on our community," said Deann French, Director of Marketing Communications and Research Development.

"Since we started doing the distributions early this summer we have seen a huge uptake in the number of families showing up regularly. Come by any Monday, Wednesday, or Friday and you will see cars lined up around the block and beyond. The response from ALL has been one of extreme gratitude and appreciation."



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Drive-up food giveaways throughout our 21 county service area



9,022

Pre-packed boxes of dairy, meat, produce, and 1/2 gallons of milk distributed every week



18,525

To-go meals by a local caterer for families and seniors



4,229,193

Since COVID-19 restrictions began, the Foodbank has distributed the equivalent of 4,229,193 meals



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Diane and Rodney Bergeron



"You get to see the people that are actually needing the boxes of food in person. It tugs at your heart - it's a nice thing."

Diane and Rodney Bergeron have been volunteering at the Foodbank since August 2019. After retirement, the couple wanted to continue to stay active, while putting their time toward a good cause. Volunteering two to three days a week, the two have dropped off countless boxes at various housing complexes and community sites throughout our service area.

While the pair normally drop off boxes of dairy products and fresh produce, the two really enjoy attending our pop-up food giveaways to lend a hand. "You get to see the people that are actually needing the boxes of food in person. It tugs at your heart - it's a nice thing," says Rodney.

Over the past year, volunteers have donated more than 13,000 hours at the Foodbank. A special thank you to each and every one of our volunteers for your helping hearts, hands, and dedication.

TO HELP OTHERS FIND FOOD



Visit the **Food Locator** at centralilfoodbank.org



Text **FINDFOOD** to 855-536-6320

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OUR MISSION: TO PROVIDE FOOD, AND DEVELOP AWARENESS OF AND CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR FOOD INSECURITY.