

# Off the Shelf

Summer  
2022



**ACCESS FOR ALL**



## DIRECTOR'S DISH



**Pam Molitoris**  
*Executive Director*

Nine words that create a sense of urgency, a sense of commitment, a sense of purpose and community - Access to and awareness of healthy food for all. This vision statement, adopted just a few years ago, guides us in our work to feed our neighbors.

The road ahead of us is not easy, it never has been. It is filled with bumps along the way, barriers and road blocks that can lead us off our path. The challenges of our global community, our economy, and supply chain weigh heavily on our minds. We have but two choices, rise to the challenge or succumb to it. For anyone that knows anything about me, they know that the second is not an option.

This time period and the stress it brings, reminds me of a time when my personal life was a bit more stressful than I cared for. My husband had been traveling for work and at best was home for a couple of days every few weeks. Our son was involved, well, maybe overly involved, in sports and we were constantly on the move. At times I felt that I didn't know which way was up.

After trying to manage it all, I reminded myself that not everything can be a top priority and that I can't have

control of everything in my life. Slowly, things became more manageable. I'm not saying that I ever achieved the illusive life balance, nor am I sure there is such a thing, however, things improved.

The Foodbank has been going through this same process. Where should our priorities lie, what do we have control over, and who do we need to bring to the table? If we let our vision statement drive us, the answers become clear. Our priority is providing access to healthful foods, we have some control over the food we secure, and we need a variety of people at the table – our donors, our volunteers, our food assistance partners including those with knowledge specific to nutrition, and those who access services from both rural and more populated communities.

Our next step is adopting a formal nutrition policy based on Healthy Eating Research (HER) Nutrition Guidelines. This policy will guide us in the food we solicit and how we communicate with the community and our partners. Our efforts in the past 15 years of putting greater emphasis on fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy and protein, have provided a firm foundation for this work.

We look forward to sharing updates as we take this journey together!

*Pam Molitoris*

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS: NUTRITION POLICY PLANNING

Our highest priority is providing our neighbors with healthful foods, which are essential to a healthy lifestyle. While over half the food we distributed last year consisted of nutritious items including fresh protein, produce, and dairy, we have undertaken a new initiative, in partnership with Feeding America and Blue Cross Blue Shield through the Nourish Grant.

Central Illinois Foodbank is adopting a written nutrition policy which will help guide us and our 150+ partner agencies in our efforts to procure the most healthful food options possible.

These guidelines categorize foods into three groups based on how often they should be chosen to provide a balanced, healthy diet. The goal will be to reduce consumption of sugar, saturated fat, and sodium, while simultaneously increasing amounts of high-quality protein, fiber, and nutrients. When fully

developed and implemented, the Foodbank's new nutrition policy will allow us to continually excel in our goals to provide access to the best, nutritious options to our neighbors.



**Members of our nutrition policy working group meet at the Foodbank on March 23.**



## RURAL ACCESS TO HEALTHFUL FOODS

Hunger can affect anyone, no matter where they live, but food insecurity is often more pronounced in rural areas due to the long distances often required to travel to the nearest grocery store. According to data from Feeding America, rural counties account for nearly 90 percent of the highest rates of food insecurity nationwide.

Coupled with the rising price of gas, food, and the impacts of inflation overall, it has become more difficult for rural residents in our 21-county service area to find reliable sources of fresh, nutritious, and affordable food close to home. That is where Central Illinois Foodbank and our network of feeding assistance partners come in.

Recently, the rural communities of Athens (Menard County) and White Hall (Greene County) have been further impacted by the closures of their local grocery stores. As a result, some residents have turned to local food pantries and drive-thru food distributions.

“With the price of gas and the increased price of food, it’s very hard for people to get to some of the stores to get what they need,” said Ken Gennicks, Lead Pastor at Athens Christian Church. Gennicks has helped coordinate a monthly food distribution at his church in partnership with the Foodbank for over a year, and credits his volunteers for making a positive impact in the community.

“Although we have a Dollar General Store and a Casey’s



**Ken Gennicks helps coordinate a drive-thru food distribution at Athens Christian Church on March 16.**

General Store, it isn’t the same as having a grocery store that has fresh fruit and vegetables,” Gennicks added.

For White Hall residents Rachael Wells and Kandys Kessinger, the food they have received at drive-thru food distributions and from their local food pantries have helped ease some of the pain of traveling long distances for food, allowing them to pick up a variety of nutritious items for their families.

“It’s hard, especially with gas prices going up,” Rachael said. “The food helps us all, we really appreciate it. And it’s always given to us with kindness.”

## AGENCY SPOTLIGHT: JACKSONVILLE

Staff and volunteers at the Jacksonville Red Shield Market Community know what it means to provide access to and awareness of healthful food for all. Located at 331 Douglas Avenue in Jacksonville, the food pantry provides dry goods, produce, protein, and dairy in a grocery store-style setting.

Last year, the pantry provided over 400,000 pounds of food to more than 11,240 individuals in Morgan County. Captain Chris Clarke said that while the grocery store format has been in place for only six months, the reception from the community has been outstanding.

As a result of their work to expand client choice and efforts to promote healthy eating, Red Shield Market was recently named a winner of the Healthy Pantry Initiatives Award by the University of Illinois Extension. Central Illinois Foodbank is grateful

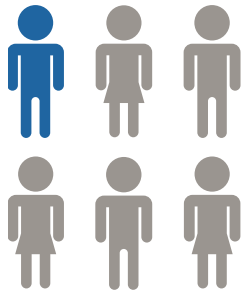
for the Red Shield Market and all of our feeding partners across central and southern Illinois for their continued partnership in fighting hunger 365 days a year.



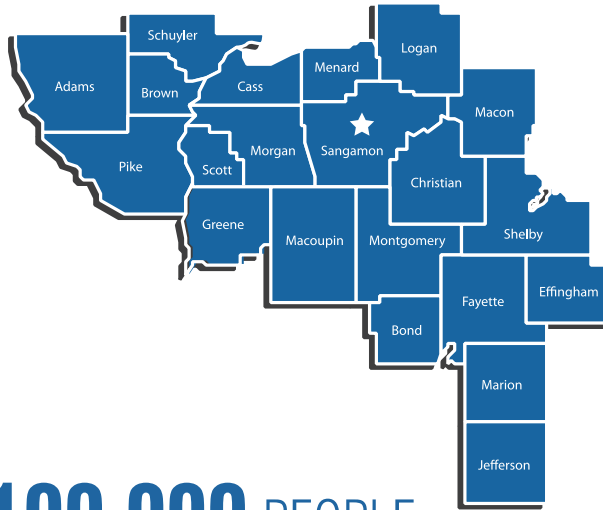
**Produce and other items on display for pickup at Red Shield Market in Jacksonville.**

# QUICK FACTS

## In our 21 county service area



**1 IN 6 CHILDREN**  
struggles with hunger.



NEARLY **100,000** PEOPLE  
don't know where their next meal will come from.

## LAST YEAR WE DISTRIBUTED



**12 million**  
lbs of food

## INCLUDING

**6.8 million**  
lbs of fresh protein,  
produce and  
dairy



## PROVIDING



**10 million**  
meals across  
21 counties

## TO HELP OTHERS FIND FOOD



Visit the **Food Locator** at  
[centrallfoodbank.org](http://centrallfoodbank.org)



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

Standard carrier message and data rates may apply, based on your cell phone carrier. If you would no longer like to receive messaging, please text STOP to 855-536-6320 and you will be unsubscribed immediately. For help with the system, please text HELP to 855-536-6320. You may receive up to 4 messages per month based on need of emergency messaging. Privacy Policy Link: [https://trumpia.com/main/privacypolicy\\_recipients.php](https://trumpia.com/main/privacypolicy_recipients.php)

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