



Off the Shelf

Fall 2023



Access to and Awareness of Healthy Food for All



Pam Molitoris
Executive Director

Director's Dish

When we were children, our mother always said it was less expensive to buy healthy food than pay for the doctor bill. I hate to admit it, but I haven't always followed this advice. If you looked in my pantry last year, you would find sugary treats, salty snacks, and carb filled indulgences. I'm the epitome of the classic stress eater.

Like many busy administrators, I often rely on eating on the fly, driving through a fast food restaurant or picking up carry-out. Although I have no intention of not eating out from time to time, I also know that cooking from scratch is a way that I know all of the ingredients that are going into my meals. I am working to take the time to meal plan and cook, and I am amazed at the meals I can put together when I slow myself down.

In my case, I've made these choices. Many of our neighbors do not have the means to make the decision to purchase healthier choices over less expensive food that are often high in sodium, added sugars, and saturated fat. The Foodbank is actively working to give people the opportunity to make choices. From the fresh produce, dairy and protein the Foodbank secures and distributes, to the kitchen cart where local nutritionists demonstrate how to prepare items that we are giving out, to our newest initiative to provide cookware and utensils to youth and their families, we are always trying to put all of the puzzle pieces together to make meal planning and prep less stressful for individuals and families.

With the implementation of our nutrition policy last summer, I am working hard to practice what I preach and control the indulgences. I remind myself that there is a reason that our mother has made it to her 96th birthday with far fewer doctor visits than most. I guess it's true what they say – Mom always knows best!

Pam Molitoris

Community Partnerships

YMCA Old Capitol Farmers Market Donation



YMCA staff picking up fresh produce from local farmers to bring nutritious foods to families in our community.

Storm Relief Food Distribution

Foodbank staff and volunteers help distribute nearly 13,000 pounds of food to over 600 families after severe storms leave thousands without power.



Growing Forward with Nutrition

In June 2022, Central Illinois Foodbank adopted a formal nutrition policy to guide ourselves and our partner agencies in procuring the most healthful food options possible. A plan to increase community engagement was put in place, and the Foodbank was excited for what the future would bring with health and nutrition at the forefront of everything.

Since then, Central Illinois Foodbank has made great strides growing forward with nutrition. Our mobile kitchen carts have provided hands-on education to our neighbors, with **Illinois Extension and SIU School of Medicine** cooking delicious and healthy recipes like banana berry ice cream, summer chili, and veggie pasta at community events.

Families have been engaging with the kitchen carts, talking with the nutritionists, enjoying samples, and asking for recipes. Children are also starting to get curious, with some even jumping in and cutting strawberries to help make some strawberry banana smoothies.

When asked about her hopes for the community, Director of Culinary Medicine, Dr. Stacy Sattovia, MD, expressed how she believes doing cooking demonstrations at food distributions in the community creates awareness that will promote healthier habits: “We want people to be healthy and we want them to know that cooking in a healthy way can be quick.”

Friends of the Foodbank have joined us in taking nutrition, education, and accessibility further. With their generosity, we have purchased kitchenware for our community, including cutting boards, knives, stock pots, sauce pans, frying pans, sauté pans, pot lids, spatulas, and tongs.

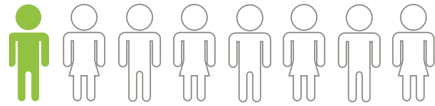
Having kitchenware and understanding how to use them are an important part of living a healthy and nutritious lifestyle. Beyond distributing food across our 21 counties, we want families to feel



empowered to enjoy new, healthy foods with the proper tools and knowledge to do so.

As we support our community in receiving balanced and healthy food options, families can come to food distributions, grab some healthy food, participate in a cooking demonstration, and take kitchenware home with them. Beyond filling tummies, Central Illinois Foodbank will continue to develop creative solutions for food insecurity as we grow forward with nutrition.

IN OUR 21 COUNTY SERVICE AREA

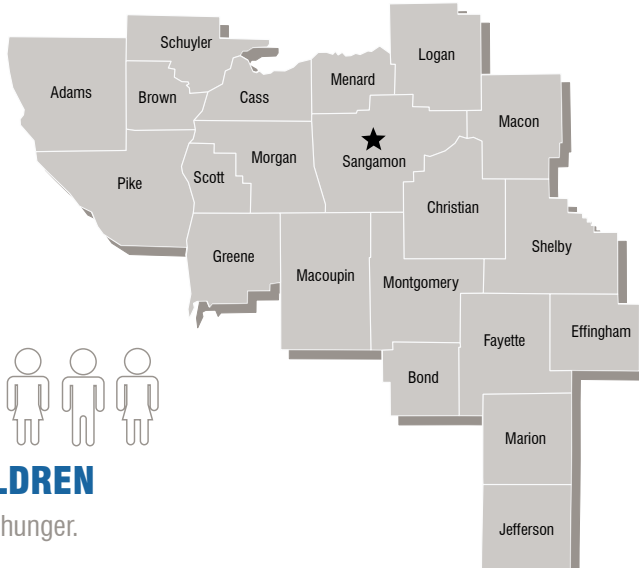


1 IN 8 CHILDREN

struggles with hunger.

NEARLY 80,000 PEOPLE

don't know where their next meal will come from.



LAST YEAR WE DISTRIBUTED



INCLUDING



PROVIDING



We are thankful to HyVee and Feeding America for their efforts to combat food insecurity through the 100 Million Meals* Challenge. #100MMeals From now through September 30th, you can help this great cause by rounding up at the register at HyVee, Dollar Fresh Market, and Hy-Vee Fast & Fresh locations!

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