



FALL 2024

# FEEDING HOPE NEWS

## Nearly 70,000 meals provided by PA OH Gives!

As more neighbors than ever before turn to the charitable food system for assistance, **the Community Foundation of Western PA and Eastern Ohio** continued for a fifth year its efforts to support local non-profits like ours.

**Through PA OH Gives \$1,030,147 was raised for local non-profits with \$17,439.91 coming to the food bank.**

According to Rebecca Page, Executive Director of Mercer County Food Bank "this was a powerful gift which provided **69,756 meals** for our neighbors in need. we appreciate the generosity of the community foundation, and the many donors and sponsors who make giving week possible."



## THIS ISSUE

Letter from Executive Director, Rebecca Page

Ready... Set... GO ORANGE!

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# FALL GREETINGS

## BOARD MEMBERS

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Dear Friends,

As the leaves begin to change, we want to take the time to thank you for another season of supporting our neighbors in need. As you know, more than 15,000 people including more than 4,300 children don't know where their next meal will come from, and we could not continue to meet this ever-growing need without the generous support of our community. We truly appreciate you helping us to Stave Hunger and Feed Hope across Mercer County.

2024 has proven to be the food bank's busiest year in our 41-year history. As we reflect on our work, it is important to note the highlights that were made possible by your unwavering support:

- Welcomed seven new member agencies to the charitable food network in Mercer County: *The Church of the Good Shepherd*, *West Middlesex*; *Bethany Presbyterian, Mercer*; *McQuiston Center, Sandy Lake*; *Hope Center for Arts and Technology, Inc., Sharon*; *Hope Center, Jamestown*; *Vincent New Beginnings, Jackson Center*; *Gentle Shepherd Church of the Nazarene, Hermitage*.
- Implemented School Pantries in Farrell, Sharon and West Middlesex.
- Distributed 2,628,576 pounds of food, a 14% increase compared to this time last year.
- Distributed 488,364 pounds of produce, a 28% increase compared to this time last year.
- Hosted the 4th summer of Myron's Meal Mobile, which has provided more than 21,000 meals to our neighbors in need since its inception.
- Hosted our first 24-hour packing shift for Hunger Action Month – welcoming into the food bank more than 100 volunteers who packed nearly 2,000 boxes!

Because of your generosity, the food bank is now providing supplemental food assistance to more than 12,000 people each month, moving us one step closer to closing the meal gap within our county.

As you and your families prepare for what we hope is a joyous holiday season, I humbly ask you to keep Mercer County Food Bank and the families who rely on our services at the forefront of your mind as no one should have to worry about where their next meal will come from.

With gratitude,

Rebecca Page, Executive Director



# Ready... Set... GO ORANGE!



The food bank held its first ever **24-hour packing shift** to kick off **Hunger Action Month** and prepare for what is historically the food bank's busiest season - the winter months. As families struggle with everyday expenses, we notice an increase in need even higher than the 14% we are currently serving. The increased numbers of neighbors turning to the charitable food system during the winter months is due to a variety of reasons including heating costs, living expenses, and the added pressure of the holiday season.

With this knowledge in hand the food bank created **Ready... Set... Go Orange** and invited hundreds of volunteers to help prepare and learn what the food bank does to support our food insecure neighbors. This event could not have been held without the support of our community.



**Huge thank you to these generous sponsors who made the event possible:**

- Allie's Sweet Tooth
- Ano & Co. Photography
- Apple Castle
- Card My Yard - Boardman
- Dan Hogan
- Dead Possums Riding Club
- DJ Dale Steele
- Giant Eagle
- Greenville Schools
- Haitian Sensation
- Hermitage Schools
- Hickory Grille
- Hilltop Tavern
- Hometown Pizza
- Hope Center of Arts and Technology
- Jamestown Schools
- The Keg
- Kennedy Catholic Schools
- Mercer County Dairy Princesses and Promotions
- Quaker Steak & Lube
- Sharon Fire Dept.
- Sharon Herald
- Sharon Schools
- Sharpsville Schools
- Titan Radio
- Thiel College
- Vey's Pub and Grille

## Get Involved

Our busiest season has officially arrived. Individuals and businesses looking for a way to make a lasting impact look no further!

**Call Patty at 724-981-0353x103** to learn more about how meaningful the gift of time can be.

[mercercountyfoodbank.org/getinvolved](http://mercercountyfoodbank.org/getinvolved)

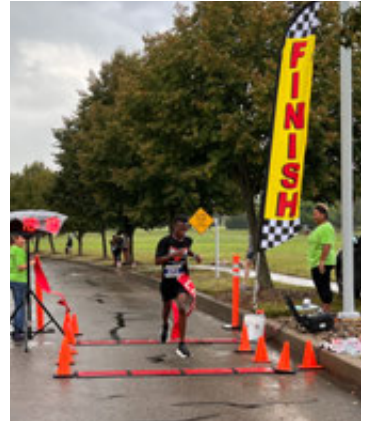


# THAT'S A WRAP

## 14th Race to End Hunger

MCFB held its 14th Race to End Hunger at Linden Pointe in Hermitage. The 5k race/2-mile walk has become an annual tradition for many county residents who agree to lace up their running shoes and take off to support our hungry neighbors. This year we had over 110 racers who helped us reach our goal of raising **\$20,000!** We also had Sharon's Cross Country team led by Heather Schell bring nearly a dozen runners to join in on the fun, with Justin Sims finishing in first place, scoring him a pair of Pittsburgh Pirates Tickets generously donated by the Pirates.

*Looking to join in on the 15th Race to End Hunger? Stay tuned for more details!*



## Myron's Meal Mobile

That's a wrap on another successful summer of feeding children and their families through the food bank's Mobile Feeding Bus, Myron's Meal Mobile. Having officially hit the road on June 10th, the meal bus traveled to 5 set low-income/rural areas throughout the county for a total of 10 weeks serving **5,442 meals.**

The conclusion of summer 2024 brings the **grand total of meals served through the mobile feeding bus to 21,000!** Myron's Meal Mobile could never run without the support of our volunteers and we at the food bank thank every person who lent a hand to ensure children and families receive the food they need to thrive during the summer months.



## Lettuce Talk About Summer...

This summer, the Community Garden on 4th Ave in Sharon saw 53 volunteers, 181 hours + of time, 600+ gallons of water, and a lot of love all which allowed the garden to flourish for another successful summer. From tomatoes to peppers the garden was in full bloom providing nutrient dense produce for our neighbors.





# STOCKING UP



## STUFF - THE BUS -

MCFB once again held its annual **Stuff the Bus** event at Hermitage Giant Eagle, collecting a total of 2,526 **pounds of food**. This annual event that began 3 years ago had but one goal, which was to help fill our neighbors' pantries during the winter months. Due to the support of our community that goal has been achieved each and every year with a **grand total of over 7,800 pounds of food collected**.



Help fill plates this holiday season by making a donation at the register/pump of your local Giant Eagle or GetGo. For every \$1 MCFB can provide 4 meals to our neighbors.



While checking out at the register, consider making a donation at your local TJ Maxx November 1st-3rd to help feed our neighbors.

## Truck-Full of Hope

### FOOD DRIVE



### **DIEHL** AUTOMOTIVE

2757 E. State St.  
Hermitage, PA

Help to feed our food insecure neighbors in Mercer County this holiday season! Bring a bag filled with non-perishable food items (*please, no glass*) to the Diehl Automotive of Hermitage Chevrolet showroom, and fill the bed of their truck, **November 1st through December 15th**.



From Now - December 31, 2024, Hint, Inc. will donate the monetary equivalent of 30 meals per Feeding America® bundle sold on [drinkhint.com](http://drinkhint.com), up to the monetary equivalent of 250,000 meals.



LIVING for GIVING

**QVC Customer Donation Days** are happening now, and between December 3-30, QVC will match customer donations up to \$50,000! Watch for the QVC Together for Good Sweatshirt (*available starting 12/3, GivingTuesday*) all proceeds from the sweatshirt will benefit Feeding America!



# MCFB Is ON THE MOVE



Mercer County Food Bank Staff lent a hand at **St. Johns Community Lunch** cooking a yummy meal of goulash that fed 155 neighbors in need.



MCFB hosted **The Shenango Valley Chamber's July Lunch and Learn** where we invited dozens of chamber members into the food bank for lunch and to learn the in's and out's of food banking!

## Sizzlin' Summer Fun

MCFB partnered with various restaurants to bring Mercer County to life. Fun filled activities paired with delicious food and drinks made for one sizzlin' summer. Special thanks to **The Block by Nova Destinations, Vey's Pub and Grille, and Talbot's Taproom and Terrace** for hosting us!



We had a blast at the **Buhl Day Parade!** Thanks to all who joined us to spread awareness of food insecurity and the fight against hunger.



MCFB celebrated **Reinhardt's 120th Anniversary** on September 20th. As a part of the celebration a collection was taken providing 455 meals..

Grace Chapel Community Church hosted their first ever event **Graceful Strides Walk/Run** with 100% of the proceeds donated to the food bank.



DJ's Greenhouse hosted its annual **Evening in the Garden** on July 12th where \$5 from every ticket was donated to the food bank for a grand total of \$300.00. Thanks for a wonderful evening of food, flowers, and fun!



# Shine the Spotlight PROGRAMS & AGENCIES

## Welcome New Member Agencies!

*From Sharon to Jamestown and all across Mercer County, we work together to fight food insecurity.*



Gentle Shepherd of the Nazarene, Hermitage



Jamestown United Methodist Church, Jamestown

*This month we would like to shine a light on our two child hunger programs...*

## SCHOOL PANTRY & BACKPACK

**The Backpack Program** provides bags of child-friendly, nutritious food for children to take home for the weekends. The program serves nearly 500 elementary and middle school children in seven school districts throughout Mercer County.

**The School Pantry Program** is designed to provide students in grade school who are facing hunger access to healthy, nutritious food five days a week. Currently in its first year of operation the program is providing food to 100's of low-income students and their families within the school districts of Farrell, Sharon, and West Middlesex.



Collectively both programs look to provide food to one of our most vulnerable populations children and with more than 4,300 children who live in Mercer County struggling to know where their next meal will come from, we look to continue expanding so no child goes to bed hungry.



# Thank you VOLUNTEERS & DONORS



Linde



FarmRX



Werner Co.



Lamar



FactSet



Sharon Elks



BakerTilly



Pathstone



First National Bank



Hill, Barth, & King  
CPA's & Consultants



BC3 Linden Pointe -  
eAcademy



Laurel Technical Institute  
- Gigi's Table



## Now enrolling... Carrot Club 2025!

Carrot Club is a fantastic annual sponsorship opportunity for organizations to partner with Mercer County Food Bank to starve hunger and feed hope while receiving some great perks at various sponsorship levels.

**Want to learn more?** Contact Director of Development, Alexis Spence-Locke, at [alocke@mercercountyfoodbank.org](mailto:alocke@mercercountyfoodbank.org) or 724-981-0353 x108.



# Shine the Spotlight STAFF & VOLUNTEER

## Staff: Bailey Shepard

*What is your role at MCFB?* I'm the Agency Relations & Programs Manager here at MCFB! I oversee our nearly 40 member agencies, the Feeding America platform Servicelnsights, and Programs including MilitaryShare, Fill-A-Glass with Hope, CSFP, Backpack, School Pantry, and Emergency Food for Emergent Needs.



*What inspired you to work for the food bank?* I grew up as a backpack recipient with a single mother raising the household. I never imagined working in any other field.

*What is your favorite part of your job?* Getting to know the neighbors more than just to serve them. We meet so many neighbors daily and we can connect in so many ways.

*What do you do outside of work?* I'm an avid music snob always on the hunt for a new vinyl. Every Saturday, you can see me either at one of our feeding sites or thrifting at the Salvation Army.

*Do you have any creative talents/special interests?* I love collecting antiques-especially little villages.

*Favorite Food?* Red Bull, Juneberry specifically

*Favorite Movie?* *Juno* – greatest coming of age movie EVER!

## Volunteer: Shari Perry

*How long have you been volunteering at MCFB?* Two years

*What inspired you to volunteer at the food bank?* Recognizing the number of people in Mercer County that go without.

*What is your favorite part of volunteering?* Volunteering alongside fellow volunteers, making new friends, and giving back because thirty years ago I was in need of help with food, being a single parent of four children.

*What do you do outside of volunteering?* Spend time with my husband, attend church and fellowship with church members, and be there for my grandchildren.

*Do you have any creative talents/ special interests?* Knit, crochet, and make jewelry.

*Favorite Food:?* Chicken • *Favorite Movie?* *The Chosen Series*







# HUNGER ACTION MONTH

September was Hunger Action Month, the national campaign of Feeding America created to raise awareness of hunger throughout the country. Locally individuals, civic groups, and businesses lent their support in ensuring Mercer County Food Bank's work was spread loud and proud across the county.

It was once said that "Day after day, ordinary people become heroes through extraordinary and selfless actions to help their neighbors," and we thank each of you who collected food, hosted give back events, volunteered, wore orange - the color of hunger, or simply liked/shared a social post. Through your extraordinary and selfless actions, the food bank can continue working to meet the need for food assistance amongst our neighbors.

A special thank you to all who joined our 30 ways in 30 days calendar. We are already excited to see all the fun ways you create to give back next hunger action month.



1 Check out MCFB's HAMB billboard on Rt 62 donated by Lamar	2 Cheer on Mercer County Food Bank at the Bull Day Parade	3 Check out Girl Scout Troop #1636's Myson scavenger at Ives Mill Farmstead	4 Day Of Advocacy for All Mercer County Chambers	5 Crimson Vipers funds drive all month long	6 #FiveCuffHolidays and food collection at Claudia's all month long	7 Come see MCFB at the Sharon Carnival
8 Whole Life Services food collection all month long	9 Drop a food item at the Bull Club this week for a chance to win a 1 mo. membership	10 Hunger Action Month internal food collection	11 FactSet Hunger Action Month internal food collection	12 UPMC Horizon Inner Resilience food collection challenge all month long	13 Black Bear Dispensary food collection all month long	14 The Herald goes ORANGE for Hunger Action Month and to kick off Good News Fund
15 D'Onofrio's goes orange TODAY ONLY! Register round up collection	16 Gilbert's Risk Solutions food collection all month long	17 Sharon Pulse internal funds drive & Matching	18 Quaker Steak & Lube, Sharon food collection all month long	19 Kelly's Hallmark Ladies Day Collection	20 All month long bring a non-perishable food item to Olympic Fun Center for a free skate	21 TODAY ONLY! Drop a non-perishable food item at Dum Dum Donuts for 25% off select merchandise
22 Stop by Donna's Omelet for orange milkshakes all month long	23 McKinley Showcase Kitchens & Baths food & lunch drive all month long	24 Sunbelt Solomon internal employee food drive & coffee	25 All month long donate 2 canned goods receive 25% off Table Lin	26 TODAY ONLY! Donate food items to Sunnigig Valley Cinema and receive a free 32oz popcorn	27 NewTier Bank food collection and postage matching all month long	28 MCFB's Stuff the Bus at Giant Eagle, Hermitage
29 Lock, Stock, & Barrel funds drive all month long	30 HopeCAT's "Orange you grateful for the food bank" produce drive					

**SEPTEMBER 2024**

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## Make a Donation

[Click here to give online!](#)

Mercer County Food Bank, a 501(c)3 charity, is dedicated to addressing hunger in our community. With every dollar you donate, MCFB can provide four meals to our hungry neighbors in Mercer County.