

GREATER LANSING
foodbank

P.O. Box 16224
Lansing MI 48901



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Anything helps....

Jennifer and her husband have a large blended family, including one family member who has disabilities. In part because of their "blended family" status, they've had difficulty getting assistance from various public services.

This makes food distributions from the Greater Lansing Food Bank even more important for families like Jennifer's, who face food insecurity as they work to get back on their feet.

Jennifer is grateful for the food bank and those who give to help their neighbors in need.

"Anything helps," she says.



Off the Shelf

GREATER LANSING
foodbank



The Newsletter of the Greater Lansing Food Bank

Winter 2016

Greater Lansing Food Bank

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**FEEDING
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Holiday 2016 Newsletter

A message from the executive director



Best Gift Ever. I can't think of a better theme for the 2016 Greater Lansing Food Bank Holiday campaign.

By many measures, this past year has been a year of accomplishments for the team at the GLFB. But in my mind, these are the only measures that matter: how many people we served this past year, and how many people in need we identified that we had not previously known about, so that we could help feed them, too.

How were we able to do this? Only through an amazing network and partnership which included every single member of the food bank staff, our caring pantry network, our dedicated volunteers and board members, and countless members of our community who never forgot about the importance of helping those in need.

As I speak to individuals and families, businesses, farmers and retailers, religious and service groups across our region, I hear one constant message: that everyone, without question, is entitled to food. That no one in our community should ever go hungry. And that is the single most important aim of the team at the GLFB.

So what does our theme, *Best Gift Ever*, have to do with this message? It is really very simple. As we approach the holiday season, when families and businesses get together to celebrate, and as each of us takes note of our accomplishments and challenges of the past year, I hope that—if only for a moment—each of us will think about those who are less fortunate, who need our support. There is no better time for giving than over the holiday season. And in my mind, there is no better gift than the gift of hope for those in our community who never planned on being at risk of going hungry. Want to have a "teaching moment" for your kids or co-workers? Give the *Best Gift Ever* to help one of your friends or neighbors.

We truly live in a community that cares. At the Greater Lansing Food Bank, we are only able to feed those in need when the community comes together to support this mission. Thank you for caring. And thank you for considering giving the *Best Gift Ever* to help even one person or one family have nutritious food on their table.

Best wishes for a safe, healthy, peaceful and joyous holiday season from our team at the Greater Lansing Food Bank.

Joe Wald, Executive Director

Give online! www.greaterlansingfoodbank.org

Garden Project and Lansing Roots enjoy bountiful season



The 2016 growing season was a bountiful one for Garden Project and Lansing Roots. If gardeners and farmers were able to keep up with the watering required during this hot, dry summer, they were rewarded with bountiful harvests: tomatoes and summer squash in excess, prolific eggplants and peppers.

Over the last 33 years, Garden Project has gone through many seasons of growth and transition, and 2016 was no exception. After all, if there is one thing that can be counted on in life, it is change! But over time, we have found that our willingness to adapt has not only made us resilient as a program, it has helped Garden Project remain relevant in the lives of our neighbors and friends.

Garden Project is always looking to find balance between growth and expansion, while still honoring the traditions and commitments that have been cornerstones of our work. Here is a glimpse of what that looked like in 2016:

We were able to work with diverse community groups and introduce a new half-acre Hill Community Garden. Twenty-five Burmese and Nepali families gardened at Hill Garden this year, growing everything from greens and eggplant to roselle and corn.

Over the summer, the Roots farm hosted more than 10 farm market booths, spread out over the greater Lansing area. Winter squash and peppers were especially popular. These farm stand sales, along with CSA shares, provided new income to beginning farmers growing in the Roots Program. We are extremely fortunate to have a staff that is not only so capable in their work but genuine in their desire to serve their community and make a difference in others' lives.

The highlight of 2016 was our inaugural growing season at the Hill Center. After renovating a greenhouse on site, Garden Project and Roots now have the capacity to grow our own vegetable plant starts for gardeners and farmers. Through the collective effort of GLFB program staff and interns, as well as our colleagues at South Lansing Community Development Association, we were able to grow more than 20,000 plant starts that were distributed to low-income home and community gardeners and to Lansing Roots incubator farmers.

Collaborations and deep community ties have been vital in allowing Garden Project to strategically expand and offer services that are gardener and grower driven. It was gardeners who asked for an expansion of vegetable plant varieties that would be reflective of the foods their children wanted to eat and were also mainstays in their traditional diets. They also asked for seedlings that would come earlier in the season, allowing them to plant early in spring and extend their harvest. One of our gardeners said it best: "I appreciate the support and provision of seeds and seedlings, which happen to be very expensive at the stores. I like meeting fellow gardeners and having chats with them. Fresh vegetables and fruits are something I will always cherish, especially the chance to grow my traditional vegetables."

Garden Project's longevity and success would not be possible without dedicated staff, volunteers and gardeners. So we thank our community, because by planting the seeds of self-sufficiency today, the Garden Project is able to help families provide for themselves tomorrow.



Join the Greater Lansing Food Bank LEGACY SOCIETY

Planned gifts help support the mission of the Greater Lansing Food Bank and help ensure that we can feed the hungry in our community now and for years to come.

Planned gifts may allow you to take sizeable income, gift, and estate tax deductions, provide favorable capital gains tax treatment, or provide income for you and your loved ones for life. And planned gifts allow you to leave a legacy that fits your philanthropic goals.

Gift of Retirement Assets

A gift from your retirement assets is an excellent way to give to the Greater Lansing Food Bank.

If you are like most people, you probably will not use all of your retirement assets—such as your IRA, 401k, 403b, pension or other tax-deferred plan—during your lifetime. But did you know that 50 to 60 percent of your retirement assets may be taxed if you leave them to your heirs at your death?

An alternative is to leave your heirs assets that receive a step-up in basis (such as real estate and stock) and give the retirement assets to the GLFB. If you designate the Greater Lansing Food Bank as beneficiary, we will benefit from the full value of your gift because it will not be taxed at your death, and your estate will benefit from a charitable deduction for the gift. You can transfer retirement assets to the Greater Lansing Food Bank by completing a beneficiary designation form available from your plan administrator.

Gift of Insurance

If your life insurance policy is no longer needed or will no longer benefit your survivors, there are two excellent ways to use your policy to make a gift to the Greater Lansing Food Bank:

— You can give your life insurance policy to the GLFB today and receive a charitable income tax deduction. You can then make deductible contributions to the GLFB each year which we can use to pay the premiums. The Greater Lansing Food Bank will then benefit from the proceeds of your policy.

— You can also designate the Greater Lansing Food Bank as the beneficiary of your life insurance policy. You will continue to own and can make use of the policy during your lifetime. The policy will be included in your taxable estate when you pass away, but your estate will benefit from an estate tax charitable deduction for the value of the gift to us.

Please consider making a planned gift to the Greater Lansing Food Bank. Your tax advisor can guide you in making a planned gift that fits your financial goals.

Thank you to our volunteers!

As we end the year, we'd like to say a big "Thank you" to all the volunteers we relied on to help us feed our communities. Throughout 2016, GLFB volunteers:

- Sorted and boxed up donated food
- Pulled orders for our agencies
- Drove trucks to pick up and deliver food
- Rode along with our Food Movers drivers to rescue donated prepared foods
- Bagged peppers, apples, eggplant, grapefruit and more!
- Picked apples and peaches
- Helped distribute food at locations throughout our 7-county region
- Assisted with office tasks
- Sorted donated seeds for the Garden Project
- Staffed our Resource Center, lending out tools and seeds to community gardens
- Assisted with garden preparation, maintenance and cleanup
- Worked on our Lansing Roots farm
- Staffed major fundraisers, including Empty Bowls and Empty Plate
- ...and so much more!

We absolutely depend on this support, day in and day out, to get the job done and work to alleviate hunger one meal at a time. Members from the community donated nearly 27,500 hours of their time to assist with our mission—a truly remarkable number! We are endlessly grateful for your generous support and look forward to working with all of you again in 2017.

For more information on volunteering with the GLFB, please contact Sarah Szejda at volunteers@glfoodbank.org, or call (517) 908-3698. You can also fill out an online application on our website at greaterlansingfoodbank.org.

GIVE BY MAIL!

Mail your check to:
Greater Lansing Food Bank
P.O. Box 16224
Lansing, MI 48901-1065



GIVE ONLINE! greaterlansingfoodbank.org

