

SPRING 2019

A PEORIA FOOD BANK NEWSLETTER

Mission

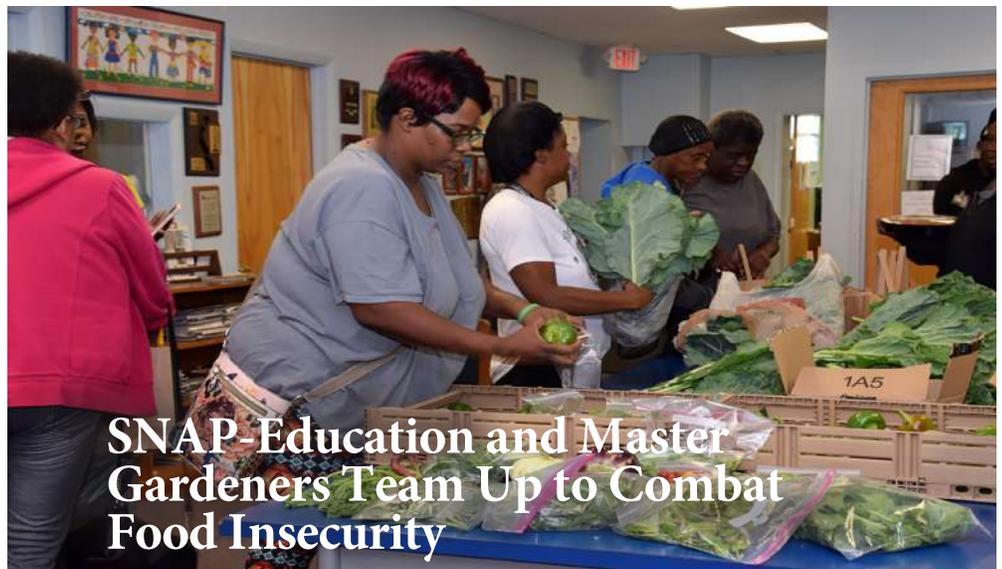
Our mission is to supply food and grocery products to a network of food pantries in a three county area. As HE multiplied the Loaves and Fishes, we can feed the hungry in our area.

Advisory Board Members

Cassandra Powell
Paula LaFond
Rosemary Palmer

Peoria Area Food Bank distributes to approximately 83 partners in 3 counties.

From 2017 to today, we have increased the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables we distributed by at least 20 percent!!!



SNAP-Education and Master Gardeners Team Up to Combat Food Insecurity

Having easy access to healthy foods is not always an option for some residents in Fulton, Mason, Peoria, and Tazewell counties. Staff and volunteers at University of Illinois Extension are working together to provide healthy foods and education about preparing those foods to people in areas considered food insecure.

According to the USDA, food insecure is defined as "a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life and uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods." This is a growing issue in the community as 12-15% of those in our four counties experience food insecurity (Feeding America).

U of I Extension Master Gardeners and SNAP-Education (SNAP-Ed) staff worked together to connect hunger and health by collaborating with two food pantries to deliver fresh produce weekly. Master Gardeners and 4-H volunteers and members worked together to plant, coordinate, and harvest produce which was then donated to Mission of Hope pantry in Havana and Common Place in Peoria. Over 250lbs of produce was donated during the 2018 harvest.

"Food Insecurity closely ties to health," explained SNAP-Ed Educator Kaitlyn Streitmatter. "Research shows us those who are food insecure have a higher risk of developing diabetes, hypertension, and various other health problems." This issue is especially pertinent as food insecure individuals use food pantries as a source for emergency food. Commonly found foods in pantries are high in sodium and added sugars which only exacerbate the challenge to manage one's health when food insecure.

continued on page 2

SNAP-Education and Master Gardeners

continued from page 1

Extension SNAP-Ed staff worked with both pantries to create a more healthful food environment. The process started with an environmental assessment in which SNAP-Ed and pantry staff determined the needs of each pantry. "Because our volunteers provided fresh produce, it was also important to educate pantry goers on how to cook and prepare it," explained Streitmatter. "We provided nutrition education and recipes to encourage people to eat the produce."

Over the course of the summer, seasonal recipes were provided to the pantry, healthful messaging was implemented, and other food safety policies were put into place. Havana's Mission of Hope went from an assessment score of 9 to an assessment score of 24. The pantry made improvements by increasing marketing of healthful produce, providing various types of fruits and/or vegetables, and promoting additional resources for the low-income clientele.

Common Place pantry started with an assessment score of 11 and after the work with SNAP-Ed staff, they reached a score of 27. "At this pantry, volunteers 'bundled' foods together to help guests plan healthier meals," said Streitmatter. "To encourage produce selection, volunteers were trained on how to 'nudge' pantry guest to make the healthier choice."

Want to
Volunteer
or
Donate??

Visit
www.peoriafoodbank.org
and together we can
Make a Difference

Note From Program Manager

Dear Friends & Supporters

The staff of the Food Bank and I have been busy these last few months with mobile pantries, food drives and meeting with our State Senator. We are also anticipating a busy spring and summer. There is a lot of work for all of us to do to help alleviate food insecurities in our community.

Some of the vendors in attendance were OSF, UnityPoint, Molina Healthcare, and Central Illinois Friends of PWA. The Peoria Area Food Bank was on hand to distribute fresh produce and other food items. Those attending this event received information on healthy living, and had the opportunity to get blood pressure checks, glucose checks, HIV screening and other important health related screening done.

The National Mail Carriers Food Drive to Stamp Out Hunger was held on May 12th. The Food Bank coordinated local efforts with Scott Haney from the US Post Office. Mail carriers all across the country collected food as they delivered the mail. The local post office has been partnering with the Peoria Area Food Bank for the last 27 years on this event. This year the local postal workers collected 37,881 pounds of food! This was the most food collected in our area in several years. I want to send a big shout out to the post office workers who collected the food, the residents of our community who donated the food and the many volunteers, including Troop 219, who helped sort the food.

I met with Senator Dave Koehler to discuss legislation relating to the emergency food system in our community. The Senator is a supporter of the Food Bank and the causes we serve. We talked about food insecurities, local food deserts and bills that relate to emergency food. I thanked Senator Koehler for all the work he has done to assist the Food Bank and the community we serve.

Over the next several months the Food Bank is planning several fundraising campaigns, volunteer opportunities, and mobile pantries. One mobile pantry collaboration we are working on is with the Illinois College of Medicine to set up a mobile produce pantry at the Heartland Health Services Facility.

As I close this note, I'd like to remind you that we are in this together. Reducing food insecurities, improving the quality of the food we distribute and empowering our participants to make better life-style choices impacts us all. Our community is in the midst of a healthcare crisis. Diabetes, heart disease and high rates of obesity are having a devastating effect on the quality of life for many of our neighbors. This is the fight in which we all must do our part. I look forward for your continuing support.

Wayne Cannon, Peoria Area Food Bank Program Manager

www.peoriafoodbank.org



2019 Illinois "End Hunger Now" Annual Lobby Day

Key staff members of the Peoria Area Food Bank attended the 2019 Illinois "End Hunger Now" Annual Lobby Day on Wednesday, May 15th, 2019. They were joined with other key staff and volunteers from the other seven food banks in Illinois creating a large and enthusiastic group of advocates both young and old.

The day began with a rally in the rotunda of the capital building. Nicole Robinson from Greater Chicago Food Depository roused the troops with words of inspiration and encouraged chanting of "End Hunger Now!!!"

Peoria Area Food Bank Program Manager, Wayne Cannon, also spoke to the crowd thanking them for their time and energy in advocating for hunger relief throughout the state.

After the rally the crowd was divided into groups according to the districts they serve and were given a list of Senators/Representatives in their district to speak to about key issues.

Wayne Cannon and Jeanette Wennmacher of the Peoria Area Food Bank were joined with three other advocates (and two junior advocates, one 13 years old and one 4 years) from Chicago for support in speaking with Senator David Koehler, Representative Michael Unes, and Representative Jehan Gordon-Booth to discuss the following issues:

- **HB 3343: SNAP PREPARED MEALS PROGRAM FOR THE ELDERLY, DISABLED, AND HOMELESS**
- **HB 2118: EXTEND SUPPORT FOR IMMIGRANT SURVIVORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING**
- **SB 1791: BUILDING A STRONG AND EFFECTIVE SNAP E&T PROGRAM**
- **SB 1641: END HUNGER ON CAMPUS**

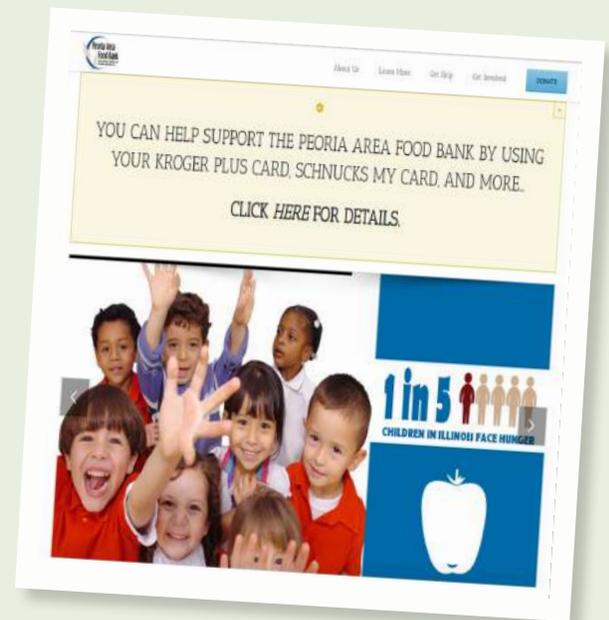
If you would like to be a part of this lobbying campaign next year, please contact Jeanette Wennmacher at 309-671-3906 or foodbank@pccceo.org.



"Right Store, Right Price"

In February, the Peoria Area Food Bank announced a new fundraising initiative through Kroger Community Rewards. You can now support the Food Bank just from shopping and using your Kroger Plus Card!!!

1. GO TO WWW.KROGER.COM
2. CLICK SIGN IN
3. CREATE A NEW ACCOUNT OR SIGN IN
4. CLICK ON COMMUNITY REWARDS
5. TYPE ER367 OR PEORIA AREA FOOD BANK IN THE SEARCH FIELD
6. CLICK ENROLL



Have you seen our website?

We have recently updated our website at www.peoriafoodbank.org. The site is tailor-made to fit the needs of you, our clients, partners, volunteers, and supporters. When you visit, be sure to explore our new agency locator map (click on "Get Help"), leave a donation or sign up to volunteer!



Heart of Illinois Jeeps Organization held a "Fill Your Jeep" food drive on May 11th for the Peoria Area Food Bank. The food drive collected over 424 pounds of food!!! Food drives during the summer are critical. We would like to thank Heart of Illinois Jeeps for their willingness to assist in combating hunger.

..... VISIT PEORIAFOODBANK.ORG FOR INFO ON ALL OUR EVENTS



You can now donate to the Food Bank by shopping. Amazon donates 0.5% of the price when you shop through Amazon. To donate while shopping visit smile.amazon.com/ch/37-6058636.



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