



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

WINTER 2021

Helping Through the Holidays

2020 was a rough year for everyone. Plans had to change on a moment's notice, and we all had to learn new ways to do things. But some things never change. Families need to eat, and holidays are still special. With the help of the Peoria Area Food Bank, other generous sources, a caring community, and loyal volunteers, we tried to keep the "Happy" in Happy Holidays!

We were able to expand our frozen food capabilities by way of a new commercial freezer obtained through a Peoria Area Food Bank grant. That really came in handy with seventeen-pound turkeys to store!

We wore our special tee-shirts to help spread the message of love and show how special our neighborhood really is. Every attempt was made to help our guests feel comfortable at the pantry, especially our new guests that may never have visited a pantry before.

The Peoria Area Food Bank and others made it possible for us to continue to provide food to all who came to the door. Not once did we have to turn anyone away or run out of food to give.

Our tradition of serving dinner on Christmas Day continued. Our friends and neighbors have come to depend on us for a traditional Christmas dinner with a family atmosphere. This past year, it was different. Instead of a sit-down dinner, it was carry-out, but it was prepared with love and served in gratitude.

To the Peoria Area Food Bank and all the donors, we say "Thank you!" We couldn't have done it without you!



2021 Leadership Team

CHAIRPERSON

Cassandra Powell

PRESIDENT/CEO

McFarland A. Bragg II
EDFP, HDFP, CCAP

CSBG (Community Service Block Grant) Manager

Robin Gathers

PROGRAM MANAGER

Wayne W. Cannon

AGENCY RELATIONS SPECIALIST

Jeanette Wennmacher

WAREHOUSE MANAGER

Cornelius Thomas



Our 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.

Connect With Us

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Contact Us

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Words From Wayne



Greetings from the Peoria Area Food Bank! As we transition from winter to spring and from 2020 to 2021, we can both look back to the challenges we have faced and look forward to the coming of spring and all it brings.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our supporters and community partners. Without their help, we would not have been able to feed over 65 thousand families and individuals, distribute more than 3 million pounds of food, and provide over 220,000 meals.

But as we look towards 2021, we as a community must do more. COVID-19 is still here, and it will remain a major driver in the fight against food insecurity. This year, the Peoria Area Food Bank will provide more mobile pantries and pop-up pantries and target areas considered food deserts for distribution. We will continue working with our partners to improve the emergency food system by providing quality, healthy food and grocery products. We will strengthen our commitment to end food insecurity in the urban, suburban, and rural communities we serve.



I ask for your continuing support and prayers. Together we have and will make a difference.

A Note From Pastor Eric Swanson

Despite COVID-19, our pantry has continued to help provide food to those in need. We have transitioned to an efficient drive-up method. We recently received a greeting card from a woman after she received food. The front of the card reads, "Blessed are the givers," and the inside says, "And grateful are the receivers. Thank you so much." There was a handwritten note that says, **"When we needed a meal, you provided, and you did so without question ... I just want you to know you are feeding kids, and we are blessed. God never fails, and my faith remains. Thank you for all you do and continue to do."** Enclosed in the card was a photo of the woman and her beautiful family. We are grateful for the food we receive from PCCEO Food Bank and other sources to help people in need in our community.



**Pastor Eric Swanson
in the food pantry**



The Fight Against Child Hunger Continues

The Peoria Area Food Bank Announces Investment From Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation to Help Fight Food Insecurity for More Than 45,000 Children in Peoria, Tazewell, and Mason Counties

Peoria, IL December 18, 2020 - **Today, the Peoria Area Food Bank announced a \$162,500 grant from the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation to provide food and backpack meals to more than 35,000 children and youth who face hunger in Peoria, Mason, and Tazewell Counties.** A member of the Feeding America network, the Peoria Area Food Bank, is one of eight food banks selected to receive this grant, which helps support children hunger relief efforts.

"Children who face hunger do not have regular access to enough food for a healthy, active life. The Peoria Area Food Bank is thankful to the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation for its commitment to supporting children in need in our community," said Wayne Cannon, manager of the Peoria Area Food Bank.

The Peoria Area Food Bank's service area includes Peoria, Tazewell, and Mason Counties. In those three counties, there are 40,860 people who face food insecurity; 13,830 of them are children. This includes 17.7% of children in Peoria County, 14.6% in Tazewell County, and 18.9% in Mason County (Feeding America, Map the Meal 2019).

The PAFB has been providing food to qualified area residents since 1984. Its 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. The PAFB serves over 80 pantries, soup kitchens, and other CBO's. For more information about the Peoria Area Food Bank, visit www.peoriafoodbank.org.

ILCHF was created in December 2002 through an action of then Attorney General Jim Ryan and an Illinois insurance carrier. This action and a settlement of approximately \$125 million established Illinois' only private foundation focused solely on children's health needs across the state.

The Foundation awarded its first grants in December of 2004. Approximately \$5.9 million funded 32 programs from throughout the state designed to improve access to pediatric health care, screen children for developmental delays, enhance the quality and accessibility of children's mental health services, and improve the oral health of Illinois children. In 2005 and 2006, giving focused

primarily on strengthening the safety net system that delivers health care throughout Illinois to mostly underserved populations.

ILCHF announced its first significant initiative in its grant-making efforts to more directly target oral health improvement. The Foundation committed to invest in efforts related to three overall oral health strategies: Building the capacity of the safety-net system, increasing the number of oral health professionals caring for underserved children, and creating a greater awareness of the role oral health plays in the overall health of a child. To date, ILCHF has invested more than \$31 million to support its oral health strategies.

Loaves and Fish Serves Community for 26 Years

Loaves and Fish, our feeding and community needs ministry, has served our neighbors in need for 26 years, never missing a Saturday.

"It is because of great partners like the Peoria Area Food Bank that we have been able to do this week in and week out.

Before COVID-19, we served a hot meal to about 300 people each week and offered perishable and non-perishable supplemental food to our neighbors. In March, we changed how we serve those in need since we could no longer welcome our guests inside due to COVID-19 guidelines. At that point, we transitioned to a to-go format offering a big bag lunch and a bag of groceries, including fresh produce, dairy, and other items supplied by PAFB and MFB. We now average 150-250 bags each Saturday, and because of the new format, we have had to change a number of logistics to prepare the bags each week.

PAFB has offered two equipment grants that have helped us work smarter, not harder. They've made it easier to reach out to those in need.

The need is not going away, and we will be there to meet the need tomorrow and in the future. We are thankful the Peoria Area Food Bank is standing with us as a strong community partner, and we thank them for all they do."

Gratefully,

Dan Philips

Loaves and Fish

First United Methodist Church



Thank You, Sorce Freshwater Co., for Your Support!

The Sorce family business has been owned and operated by three generations of Sorges in the East Peoria area. Allen Sorce and his son Roy ran Sorce Enterprises, Inc — a food and supply distributor to quick-service restaurants — for 49 years before making the transition to food production and distribution as Sorce Freshwater Co. Now, Roy Sorce and his children are working together with the Midwest Fish Coop to harvest a sustainable resource, restore our Illinois River, and feed the community.



Asian carp, the chameleon of cooking and an invasive fish, is in fact tasty and healthy. This fish has some of the highest counts of Omega-3, protein, all nine essential amino acids, and iron, as well as a very mild flavor. Not to mention, it is one of the easiest foods to cook. Due to its versatility in the kitchen and in taste, this white fish will taste just like however you season it and has been tried in a variety of dishes, including: burgers, tacos, sloppy joes, chilis, pan sautes, pastas, wontons, dumplings, stir-frys, cajun rices, greek sandwiches, fish cakes, and chowders.

Sorce Freshwater Company currently supplies the Peoria Area Food Bank with this minced fish. Due to the natural abundance of this species, the price of the fish is very economical. Sorce Freshwater is located near 2 marinas, so these locally caught fish are received fresh daily. Our fish will not disappoint — whether you are creating a fun, elaborate dish or looking for a 3-step dinner to be eating in 15 minutes. Please visit your local food pantry and let us know what you think.