

Healthy foods and expanding horizons

You came through for Melissa and her grandkids

“This is my wild one,” Melissa laughs as her young grandson speeds across the room, pomegranate in hand.

Melissa, a loving grandmother, is barely able to afford rent each month. Making sure her grandkids get the nutritious food they need is a challenge. Today she’s brought them to a Freestore Foodbank community partner. Here, she knows they’ll be well fed.

“When I used to run low on food, I would wonder what I was going to do,” Melissa remembers. “Now I know I can stop here for basics like milk or a loaf of bread. It’s just what we need to get through.”

Melissa’s grandkids, ages 9, 6 and 5, look forward to their outings to the pantry. Melissa says it gives them the opportunity to try healthy foods that might be too expensive at the grocery store—and even some foods she’d never think to serve.

“They’re eating zucchini and pomegranate right now,” Melissa says with wonder. “I love to see them try new things and expand their horizons.”

Melissa’s eyes light up when she’s asked about the staff and volunteers. “They care,” she says. “They welcome you with open arms.”

That’s exactly what happened last holiday season when the pantry—and you!—came through in a big



“Without you, my grandkids wouldn’t have a well-rounded dinner.” –MELISSA

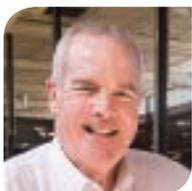
way by providing the wholesome meals her grandkids crave that freed up enough money for Melissa to buy presents for each of her grandchildren.

Here’s a special message from Melissa, relayed at her request to Freestore Foodbank donors:

“I really appreciate the help you give because without you, my grandkids wouldn’t have a well-rounded dinner. Thank you for caring about us enough to help!”

Your generosity helps families like Melissa’s when they need it most. Please continue your support today!

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A message from our President & CEO

Kurt's Corner

I'm often asked, "What does the face of hunger in our community look like?"

My reply is simple: "Look in the mirror."

You see, hunger doesn't just affect nameless, faceless strangers on the street. It hits much closer to home, hurting our neighbors, friends and even family members. Hunger caught up to Ola, a hardworking nurse of 30 years, whose story you'll find on page 4. It continues to haunt grandmother Melissa, the subject of this issue's cover story.

Your steadfast support of Freestore Foodbank works to keep hunger in check across this community. The impact doesn't end there, however.

Right now, your generosity is helping a select group of hungry neighbors discover self-sufficiency through our new client stabilization program. Using intensive case management, along with our extensive list of collaborative partners in the area, we help clients solve the core problems that lead to hunger. We aid their job search, help locate long-term housing and refer them to a medical care provider.

By the end, it's an incredible transformation to behold—all thanks to your dedicated support. Thank you for helping to move our clients out of the food line and toward a better life.

Kurt Reiber, President & CEO

Program Spotlight

A Children's Clinic that's a food pantry too



Stephanie, Emilee and Mary standing in the Hopples Street Neighborhood Health Center food pantry.

At Hopples Street Neighborhood Health Center, patients find more than just top-notch medical care. Tucked away in a closet, a neatly organized food pantry offers the best sustenance they're likely to get all day. Welcome to Rubber Duck FAMILY Market.

The idea began when three of the family clinic's employees and volunteers noticed a concerning trend. During their in-patient visits, parent after parent reported that their kids regularly experience hunger. One mother even broke down in the waiting room. "I literally have nothing," she sobbed.

Although the clinic already provided snacks to sustain children during prolonged wait times, this temporary fix didn't address the core problem: Families, and especially toddlers, weren't getting the nutrition they needed to live healthy lives.

"I could feel the desperation," one staff member says. "We're in a food desert here with no groceries within three miles."

Stephanie Coffey, a social worker, Emilee Gubeno, the clinical manager, and Mary Burkhardt, the medical director, decided to take action. They met with representatives from Freestore Foodbank and Cincinnati Children's Hospital medical center in an effort to create a client-choice pantry right inside the clinic. After applying for a grant from Freestore Foodbank's Bob Edwards Feed a Child Fund, their dream became a reality.

The pantry opened in July, and it receives regular deliveries from Freestore Foodbank. Parents fill out a "shopping card" to choose from food items available in the pantry, then a staff member shops for them. Twice a month, Freestore Foodbank operates a free fresh produce market outside the clinic.

"We have really great families here," another staff member says. "In fact we let one dad know that we had food here now if that would be helpful to his family. He responded, 'thank you, we're fine right now so save that for somebody who really needs it. I'll let you know if it's a problem again in the future.' I just really think that's neat."

As word spreads, Rubber Duck FAMILY Market's founders are encouraged to see the community rallying around their new pantry and especially grateful for the support of Freestore Foodbank and their donors.

Your support keeps the Rubber Duck FAMILY Market stocked with nutritious food for hungry young patients. Please give generously to help expand our choice pantry services to other community partners.

Serving up hope with a smile

In her eight years as a cook at the Henry Hosea House in Newport, Kentucky, Angie has seen a lot of smiling faces.

"The people we serve are so hungry and always appreciative," she says. "They often say I make their day, but they definitely make mine."

Recently, Angie has been impressed by an uptick in healthy foods provided to Hosea House by Freestore Foodbank. The improvement in quality hasn't escaped her clients' notice, either. "They seem to love it, especially the cabbage and green beans."

For families struggling with hunger in Newport, that humble serving of vegetables could be the healthiest food they enjoy all day. That's the difference you're making through your support of Freestore Foodbank. You're helping us distribute 24 million meals each year through our network of 400 community partner agencies—places just like Hosea House.

"This wouldn't be possible without our donors," Angie confirms.

"I love helping so many people. Cooking probably helps me even more than the people I serve," Angie says with a smile. The joy must be catching.



Thanks to all the volunteers at Hosea House.

Your generosity inspires people like Angie to feed hungry neighbors across our community. Thank you for playing a crucial part in this life-sustaining work. If you're able to give again today, please do so using the form on page 4.

Donor Spotlight

Monthly supporter happiest when able to help others

Greg Peters has been a monthly supporter of Freestore Foodbank as a Full Plate Partner for years.

"The mission of Freestore Foodbank is important to me," Greg says. "I don't think that anyone should go hungry. The fact that they help poor

and less-fortunate neighbors pulls at my heartstrings."

Greg first saw Freestore Foodbank's outreach efforts on the news during the holidays and decided to get involved, "Life is tough. I am happiest when I am able to help others."

Born and raised in Ohio, Greg owns a deck restoration business in Cincinnati. As a business owner, Greg appreciates the buying power of Freestore Foodbank, where each dollar secures three meals for hungry neighbors. Every month Greg makes a donation through his company.

"The credibility of the organization is very important," he says. "With Freestore Foodbank, I don't have to worry about where my money is going. I know it's being put to a very good use."

"Life is tough. I am happiest when I am able to help others."

—GREG PETERS

Greg, and other Full Plate Partners, are making a difference in the lives of others every month. Their year-round support allows

us to offer assistance to families in need and provide the tools to build self-sufficiency and stability. Full Plate Partners are invited to join us for monthly Cincinnati COOKS! lunch and learns, as well as an annual volunteer day.



To become a Full Plate Partner, click the Monthly Gift button on our website, freestorefoodbank.org or please contact Rachel Lampkin, Donor Relations Officer, at 513.482.7090 or RLampkin@freestorefoodbank.org

It's a peaceful feeling to know you care

I know what it's like to lose the safety and security I once took for granted. It can happen to anyone.

Hi, I'm Ola. I worked almost 30 years as a nurse, making good money. It wasn't enough to save, though. When the arthritis in my knees got really bad, I had to stop working. If you can't take care of yourself, you can't care for others. I would never dream of putting my patients at risk.

That left me with one monthly check that didn't stretch the whole month. At my lowest point, I skipped meals just to pay my medical bills. Then a friend told me about The Healing Center in Springdale, Ohio. I call it my pantry in the woods. The food supplied by Freestore Foodbank has been a real blessing.

I stop by every two weeks just to get the items I need. To me, this place represents a safety net that's crucial to my sanity, health and wellbeing. It's a peaceful feeling to know you care.

Thank you for making sure I have enough to eat. You've helped so many people—more than you'll ever know. That's an incredible act of kindness. I wish there were more people just like you in this world.



“The food supplied by Freestore Foodbank has been a real blessing.” —OLA

When people like Ola fall on hard times, you're there to help them back on their feet. Thank you for providing the food they need to survive and thrive. Please give again today to help even more children, women and men through our community partners.

Stay connected to the work you support! Visit us at freestorefoodbank.org



Yes, I want to provide nutritious meals for hungry families this spring.

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of:

\$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 Other \$_____

I would like to be a Full Plate Partner and commit to a monthly gift of \$_____. My first gift is enclosed.

I would like more information on including Freestore Foodbank in my will, trust, retirement account or life insurance policy.

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Questions? Please call our Donor Relations Department at 513-482-FOOD(3663).

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