



# Sack Supper Sentinel

The Newsletter of Kids' Food Basket

Volume 8, Issue 2 • Summer 2011

## Attacking Childhood Hunger

### MISSION STATEMENT:

We exist to ensure that children in our community don't go to bed hungry.

Childhood hunger hurts. It denies dignity, lessens human energy, erodes community stability and impairs the potential of children to achieve. **To break this cycle of hunger, Kids' Food Basket of greater Grand Rapids is committed to providing healthy, tasty, efficient and cost effective sack suppers to children who are nutritionally at-risk.**

As a community based volunteer organization, our volunteers, ages 5 to 95, come from all walks of life to give their time, talent and treasure to end hunger amongst our children. We seek to provide life sustaining meals to those in need and to silence the pain that hunger brings.



## 2010-2011 School Year Success

What a phenomenal end to an amazing school year—both in the growth of the number of children we were feeding and the amount of volunteer participation that made it possible. A huge Thank You to all of you who helped us to achieve what was done!

Along with our increase in daily sack suppers being distributed, in April we added a weekend bag, which we call a Sack Pack. These bags were distributed to four school sites on our waiting list each Friday to help students get through the weekend. We provided 800 of these Sack Packs with the goal of adding these schools to our site list on a daily basis starting next fall.

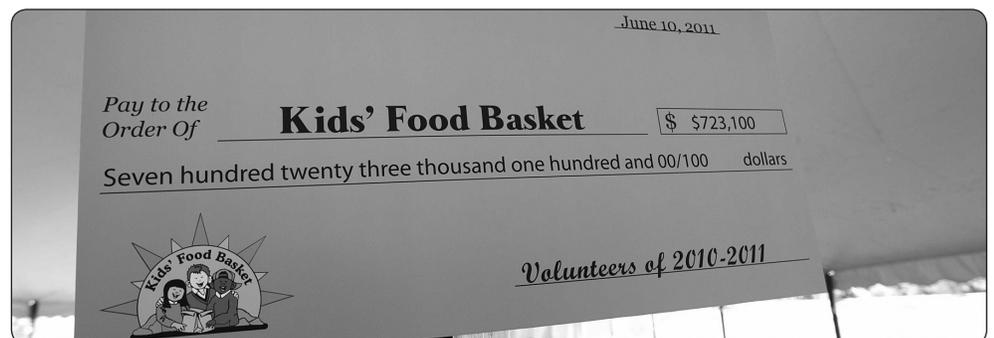
If you are interested in being a Sack Pack sponsor, our cost is approximately \$2.00 per sack each Friday during the school year. Items included provide food for about two meals. For more information contact Jane at [jane@kidsfoodbasket.org](mailto:jane@kidsfoodbasket.org).

## Volunteer Appreciation

Without the thousands of caring volunteers who give of their time, Kids' Food Basket would not be able to accomplish the awesome work we do. Each day more than 150 people, ages 5-95 ensure lunch is not the last meal of the day. On June 10th, we said thank you in our own special way to these great champions of KFB. More than 600 volunteers joined us for breakfast, lunch or dinner at our facility. In addition to a great meal, they also enjoyed a photo booth, tie-dye shirts, face painting and more. Some of the board members and Bridget even dressed in the food mascot costumes to greet our guests. Despite the chilly weather and rain, it turned out to be a wonderful celebration of the engine behind KFB: volunteers! Truly and honestly, the work we do is ONLY possible because of each incredible volunteer. Thank you!



Jane Berkey's extended family dressed up in food costumes.



Check displaying the value of volunteer hours for this year.

# Save the Dates

**July 28th** join KFB at the Whitecaps to raise awareness of childhood hunger. Wear your KFB t-shirt while enjoying some great minor league baseball, \$1 food & drink specials and see Juice Box throw the opening pitch! Tickets are being sold at KFB for a reduced price of \$9 per ticket or can be purchased by calling Dean Exoo at the Whitecaps (616) 726-7071.

**August 4th** - Mark your calendar for an exciting announcement! Be sure to join our Facebook group so that you can be the first to hear the exciting news. Visit us at [www.facebook.com/kidsfoodbasket](http://www.facebook.com/kidsfoodbasket).

**September 24th** - Please join Kids' Food Basket at our first ever Kids Helping Kids Celebration. We will have tons of fun and great opportunities for youth to learn what else they can do to "ATTACK CHILDHOOD HUNGER" in greater Grand Rapids. More details will be posted on our website.

## Feast for Kids Sets New Record

This year's Feast For Kids fundraiser was the most successful yet. Another delicious gourmet meal was prepared by the Greater Grand Rapids Chef's Association Grand Culinary Award Chefs of the Year. Over 400 guests attended the event celebrating Kids' Food Basket and the professional accomplishments of the American Culinary Federation - Greater Grand Rapids. We congratulate the following Chefs for winning in the following categories:



- CHEF OF THE YEAR - Kevin Vander Meer
- CHEF PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR - Jamion Brunsting
- PASTRY CHEF OF THE YEAR - Doug Orr
- STUDENT CULINARIAN OF THE YEAR - Jake Allen Warnes
- CHEF EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR - Tom Brents
- PURVEYOR OF THE YEAR - Gordon Food Service

The evening included a great line up of supporters including David Sebastian (pictured at right with Mayor George Heartwell), who entertained the crowd with his enthusiastic and comedic repartee. Bridget Clark Whitney, executive director; Mary K. Hoodhood, KFB founder; & Ryan Anderson, KFB Board President all inspired the audience with their passion for the mission of Kids' Food Basket. The highlight of the evening was a performance



by Sibley Elementary students. Led by teacher Dan Rademacher, the Sibley students sang his original song titled "Thank You". If anyone had been in doubt about the reach of KFB, the children's performance silenced that with voices strong and fed. Feast for Kids raised an amazing \$46,370 to continue KFB's work of attacking childhood hunger in Grand Rapids. We are incredibly grateful for the use of Noto's Old World Italian Dining's facility and the numerous sponsors who contributed to Feast for Kids. Special thanks to the food sponsors who reduced our cost to provide 400 gourmet, four-course meals for only \$100. That's 25 cents each!

## Summer program announcement:

Our 2011 summer program currently includes 23 different sites and will run from June 20th until approximately August 18th.

## Summer volunteering ideas just for kids!

Everyone can make a difference for KFB. Here's a fun idea to cash in on summer activities for KFB and hang out with your friends at the same time. Host a bake sale, lemonade stand, garage sale, flea market, family reunion carnival games, you get the idea—sell something and donate the proceeds to KFB. If you do this in conjunction with a pre-established event, say a neighbor's garage sale, you can help drive traffic to your event. Make a "Did you know...?" sign telling people that it takes less than a dollar to feed a child a sack supper or grab some other fun facts from our website to help your efforts.

## Youth Action Board:

We are now accepting applications for the 2011-2012 Youth Action Board. Please check out [www.kidsfoodbasket.org/yab](http://www.kidsfoodbasket.org/yab) to learn more and apply. All youth grades 9-12 are welcome!

# Kudos From Bridget

Bridget Clark Whitney, Kids' Food Basket Executive Director



Bridget Clark Whitney,  
Executive Director

The Kids' Food Basket community is incredible! In particular, I need to share with you how truly fantastic the staff is here at KFB. It's an honor to serve as a leader here.

Each member of our team inspires me. Furthermore, I am constantly impressed by their tenacity for KFB and their dedication to our mission. Our hard work is appreciated every day by teachers and parents who trust us to provide healthy nutrition for their children and children who count on the 3,800 healthy meals we provide each weekday.

Many of you know Jane Berkey, our KFB operations manager. Jane has been with KFB practically since day 1, first as a volunteer and then becoming Op Manager in February 2004. Jane personifies dedication and commitment. She works hard but never stops smiling and expressing gratitude to our amazing volunteers. In addition to making sure 3,800 nutritious meals are delivered each day, Jane is always looking for ways to save money (so we can feed more kids!), tends to unexpected situations (day or night!) and does everything with positivity, grace and optimism.

Austin Roelofs, KFB program coordinator, has been a fantastic addition to KFB since October 2008. Austin is a great leader and has a true gift with people. He is committed to ensuring that every person who comes to KFB knows they are making a difference. His cool, charming, friendly and empowering nature is a perfect and essential piece of our KFB team.

Brad Littell has been KFB's office manager since January 2010 and is a rock star. He welcomes new responsibilities that come with organizational growth while bringing dedication, humor and exquisite culinary talent every day. Brad is one of the most trustworthy people I know and a true asset to KFB.

Christine Lentine, fund development and community outreach manager, is made of sunshine. She's been rockin' and rollin' at KFB since February 2010, but it seems like much longer. Chris is smart, caring, funny, dedicated, hard-working, compassionate and is someone

of incredible integrity. Also, her positive attitude is contagious!

Tracy Van Solkema joined our team as a fund development / data rock star in October 2010. Tracy's laid-back, hard-working, positive spirit is such a gift. She's got a great sense of humor, is encouraging and works hard to use her unique skills and abilities to make KFB better each day.

Catrina Harvey is the Kids Helping Kids program coordinator and after volunteering with her awesome children for several years, joined our team in October 2010. Catrina has an unwavering dedication to the mission and works to empower kids to help one another. Her passion for her work is palpable!

Adrienne Wallace joined the KFB staff just one month ago, but it feels like she's been a part of the mission for years. Adri brings organizational leadership and program development savvy while keeping us all laughing with her wit and humor. She is an anti-hunger champion and we're excited she's joined our team!

The hard work of the KFB team has recently been noted by some outstanding organizations as well. I am thrilled to share with you that KFB was the winner of the WoodTV8 Connecting with Community Award and one of three finalists for the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce Nonprofit of the Year EPIC award. Wow! Furthermore, these prestigious honors are coming less than a year after winning the Governor's Service Award for 2010 Michigan Volunteer Program of the Year from the Michigan Community Service Commission. These awards are everyone's awards—the entire KFB community! Congratulations to all of you!

I am tremendously inspired by all of you who work so hard to attack childhood hunger and ensure that children in GR have proper brain development. You are all truly making a significant difference and affecting change in our awesome city. Thank you. Thank you all a million times over.

With warm regards,

*Bridget*



## Getting Close

Guest article from Ryan Anderson, KFB Board President 2009-2011

When I was in college, I remember one of my professors providing the students in our class a warning. She said, "Just remember that the closer you get to any organization that you love, the more you'll be exposed to its ugly side. Don't be surprised by the problems you'll uncover." This was the thought that was on my mind when I was first nominated to be

board chair at Kids' Food Basket several years ago. Was it possible that accepting this role would sour me on everything I loved about KFB? Well, I'm happy to say that as I prepare to wrap up my term in this role that (once again) Kids' Food Basket has defied convention.

Over the course of the last two years I've been fortunate to see the organization accomplish some remarkable things. We've grown the number of kids we serve by 116%, expanded into a new facility, and been recognized with some very impressive awards. But beyond these things, what's mattered most to me has been the people I've gotten to know who tirelessly dedicate themselves to the work of KFB. Bridget and the Kids' Food Basket staff are an immensely talented and likable group of professionals who work very hard and have a lot of fun doing what they do. Likewise, it's been a joy and

privilege to serve with the thoughtful, dedicated team of individuals who make up the board of directors. But perhaps most impressive is the group that you're a part of—the volunteers and donors from our community that power the KFB engine. For all of the ugliness in the world and the troubling things we see on the news, there is great inspiration to be found in what you do. Each school day nearly 150 of you, almost a quarter of whom are under the age of 18, take time out of your personal lives to fill our facility and pack sack suppers. The 3,800 meals you create (that's 7,600 slices of bread each day!) ensure that kids in our community have a stable source of nutritious evening meals to help them grow and learn, and are a daily reminder to them that their community cares about their well-being. Few nonprofit organizations are fortunate to have this kind of grassroots volunteer and donor support to operate at such a scale.

I'd like to personally thank you for your dedication to Kids' Food Basket. I'd encourage you to consider how you can become even more invested in our organization, whether that's through volunteering, throwing a fundraiser, or getting involved in a committee that puts your talents to work in new ways. I can assure you from my own experience over the past few years that the closer you get to KFB, the more inspired you'll become.

# Kids Helping Kids

We would like to thank all the youth who contributed to Kids Helping Kids, making this our most successful year! Here are a few of the many wonderful projects completed this year.

- Kenowa Hills Central Elementary's fifth grade students conducted a Read-A-Thon, created a wax museum and turned a writing assignment into a KFB campaign to raise money and awareness about childhood hunger in our community. The students' passion for Kids' Food Basket raised over \$16,000.
- Godfrey Lee Early Childhood Center, a Sack Supper recipient site, had more than 60 youth involved in 5 volunteer projects this school year. The gift of their time adds up to thousands of dollars in volunteer hours!
- Lakeside Elementary did their annual Hike for Hunger which raised over \$4,000.
- Northern Trails students made a gift of over \$2,500.00 with their spring project.
- Meadowbrook Elementary students raised more than \$1,700.00 with their change drive.

These are only five of the sixty schools contributing to the success of Kids Helping Kids.

It's amazing how much our youth give of their time and resources to help Kids' Food Basket. We average 25% of our volunteer hours from youth, and in April it was more than 35%!!! What remarkable young people!

Thank you so much to Dr. Vas Janardan for his six years of service to the KFB Board of Directors. Vas most recently served as our board treasurer and chief financial officer, and has been a huge asset to the organization. Although he has retired from the board after two terms, we will continue to value his friendship and support.

*Did you know Kids' Food Basket accepts gifts in honor of volunteers? What a great way to show you care to someone who is investing their time in our mission! We will send a card to let the volunteer know you made a gift in his/her honor.*

## KFB Updates



Brad Littell,  
office manager

### Supporting KFB

We are very fortunate to have incredibly talented volunteers who assist KFB in creating recognition boards. I'd like to thank everyone who has helped, and a special thanks to our weekly volunteers that make these boards: Linda Damstra, Jackie Egan, Laura Vogelzang, Barb Wadell and Cindy Williams.

These boards are a unique way that KFB is able to say thank you to corporations, service groups, faith communities and other supporters who help financially or with gifts of food. They include pictures and priceless thank you notes from the kids we serve, along with some facts about what KFB does. Many times you'll see them displayed in lobbies and break rooms!

A special thank you is also extended to Dan Poortenga who regularly delivers these recognition boards. While Dan does an excellent job, sometimes I have more to deliver than he can handle. If you are interested in assisting us with these recognition board deliveries, please contact me. THANK YOU!



CONTACT: [brad@kidsfoodbasket.org](mailto:brad@kidsfoodbasket.org) or 616-235-4532



Jane Berkey,  
operations  
manager

### Ways To Help

Finding new food sources and bringing in more food drives is becoming even more vital as we continue to attack the list of schools on our waiting list. If you have any contacts in the food business who might be able to help out, please let us know. The types of foods that we use can be found on our website at [www.kidsfoodbasket.org](http://www.kidsfoodbasket.org). If you are interested in doing a food drive, contact us and we can provide you with the top items we happen to be low on at that time.

The two winners of the business card sweatshirt drawing are Mary Jo Smith from Surefil and John Horton from Greystone Print Solutions. Congratulations!! Next time you are in, drop your business card in the container and you may be the next winner.

Kids' Food Basket is in the market for a generator for our two coolers. After losing all the food in them after a power outage over the last holiday weekend, we have decided that it is time to have a backup power source. If you or anyone you know might have a lead on one, please contact me.

\*\*\*If not claimed before July 20th, winter items (hats, mittens, jackets) that have been left here will be donated to charity.\*\*\*

CONTACT: [jane@kidsfoodbasket.org](mailto:jane@kidsfoodbasket.org) or 616-617-3318 (cell)

# KFB Updates



## Ways to Give

Kids' Food Basket is very fortunate to have the support of so many wonderful individuals. We often speak about how KFB is a lot like a family! Some of our volunteers have been around since day one of Sack Supper delivery. Regardless of if you are a veteran or rookie to the "Basket", YOU are an important member of the KFB family! Because of this close connection, over the past few years we've had more and more individuals ask about ways to make planned gifts to KFB, like stock or writing KFB into their will. We are able to accept gifts in all forms, and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have. Whether the gift is small or large it is guaranteed to make a significant impact on a child.

*Christine Lentine, fund development and community outreach manager*

**CONTACT: christine@kidsfoodbasket.org or 616-235-4532**

*Welcome to Adrienne Wallace, manager of volunteer services who joined our team in May!*



## Volunteer

If you have been a volunteer at KFB for a while, you know that Sack Suppers do not take a summer vacation! Our volunteers are our greatest advocates and can help spread the word in the community that, while we serve a reduced number of children in the summer months through parks and recreation programs, volunteers still work late June through early August in an effort to make sure lunch is not the last meal of the day. Being a KFB volunteer encompasses all sorts of activities including advocacy and off-site projects. Of course we love to see you in the building working in person, but we also have great need in the food drive and collection areas to satisfy summer demands and to get a jump on our fall needs, which are forecast to surpass our current average of 3,800 sack suppers per day. Smaller projects help us in so many ways. Before you visit us, consider staging a mini-drive for juice boxes or granola bars with your neighborhood or interest group, or go for a sack supper décor-a-thon at your family reunion or BBQ, effectively multiplying your attack on childhood hunger. For a more complete list of off-site activities to stay involved in the summertime, please visit our website at [www.kidsfoodbasket.org](http://www.kidsfoodbasket.org) and click on "get involved" to broaden the impact you make on childhood hunger. Thank you for all that you do and for your future volunteer efforts. We could NOT do this without your help, period.

*Adrienne Wallace, manager of volunteer services*

**CONTACT: adrienne@kidsfoodbasket.org or 616-235-4532**



## Driving out Hunger

Thanks to everyone who helped deliver more than 600,000 sack suppers this school year! You committed over 3,200 hours of driving which equates to a \$72,000 savings for KFB! Your hard work and dependability are appreciated by the entire KFB staff and by the kids we serve. For more information about driving opportunities, please call or email.

*Austin Roelofs, program coordinator*

**CONTACT: austin@kidsfoodbasket.org or 616-235-4532**



## Thank YOUth!

I would like to thank all of the youth who have raised awareness about childhood hunger through projects, time, and donations this school year. I have enjoyed your creativity and willingness to help KFB. Remember, childhood hunger doesn't end when school gets out in June. Kids' Food Basket has plenty of opportunities for you to volunteer with us this summer. I encourage you to create awareness with family and friends, as well as call them to action.

*Catrina Harvey, Kids Helping Kids program coordinator*

To find out more about our summer volunteer opportunities, please feel free to contact me. Thanks again.

**CONTACT: catrina@kidsfoodbasket.org or 616-350-6285 (cell)**

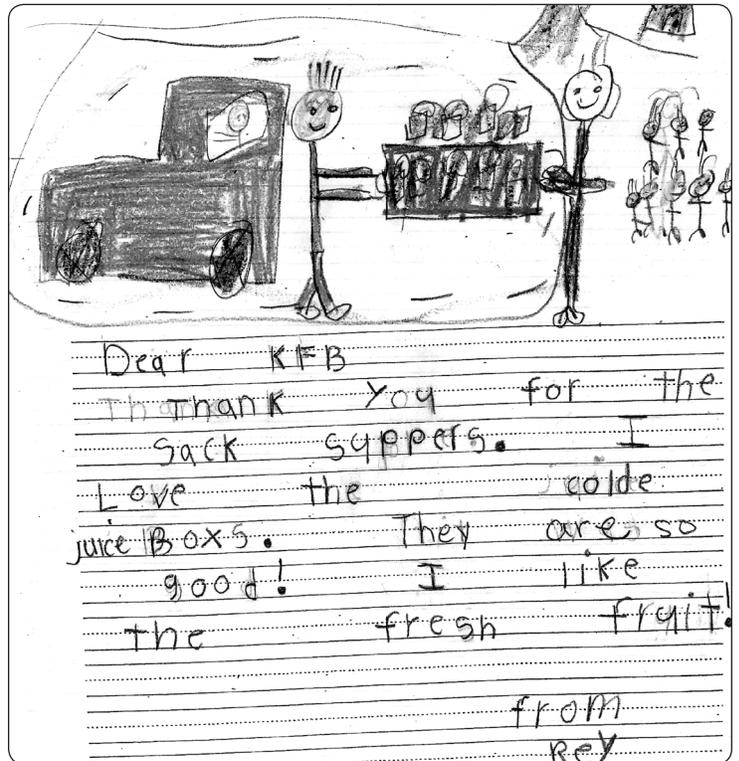


## Kudos to Corporate Giving

*Tracy VanSolkema, fund development coordinator*

After nine years, we know that it takes an incredibly caring community to attack childhood hunger. KFB is fortunate to have collaborated with various corporations over the years that have made feeding thousands of children a reality. Corporate giving to KFB comes in many forms, including teams of volunteers, in-kind food donations, and financial support. This year we will roll out a brand new corporate giving program, which will offer various levels of support that a business or corporation can choose to join. This allows us to sustain and grow our Sack Supper program and provides businesses an outlet for corporate volunteering and recognition in the community. If you would like to explore how your business can assist in the attack on childhood hunger, I would be happy to meet with you to share ideas and discuss our program.

**CONTACT: tracy@kidsfoodbasket.org or 616-235-4532**





Kids' Food Basket  
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**ANNOUNCING THE  
KIDS' FOOD BASKET  
2011-2012  
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**VICE-PRESIDENT**

Bill Jack

**SECRETARY**

Cindi Welton

**TREASURER/  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

Tony Payne

**KFB FOUNDER**

Mary K. Hoodhood

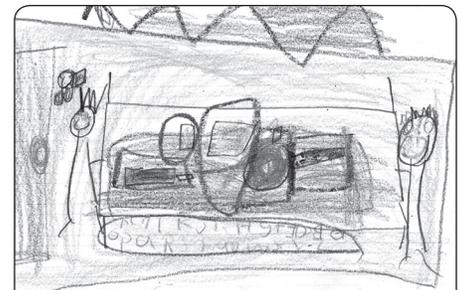
**BOARD MEMBERS**

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Lesla Dion  
Mike Goorhouse  
Mark Hoogterp  
MaryAnn Prisichenko  
Jason Wheeler  
Danielle Williams  
Dr. Mike Williams

**GO GREEN!**

*Save paper and valuable resources. Sign up to receive our newsletter online instead of by post.*

Please email [christine@kidsfoodbasket.org](mailto:christine@kidsfoodbasket.org) to make the switch!



Dear KFB,  
Thank you for the sack  
suppers. I like the  
yummy juice and apples.  
I like the yummy Jamba.  
I like the soft tasty  
sandwich. I like the  
tasty fruit. I like the  
granola bar. I wish I could  
give you more back to mak  
more.  
LOVE, DONAVIN