



**Kids' Food
Basket**

Sack Supper Sentinel

vol. 15 • Issue 2 • March 2018



The work that we do is so important, so critical, and so needed. We all find inspiration from the stories we hear - powerful, real life testament to the impact we are making in West Michigan. Here are just some of the ways you have helped change the world.

Michael is in the 3rd grade. His home life has been very inconsistent, living in foster care for most of his life. He is really responsible but because of a hard life, he has many barriers to his success. His food security has been unstable, and Sack Suppers have provided Michael with consistency, helping him focus and have good behavior in the classroom.

As Kimberly, a student at Godfrey Lee Elementary pulled a baby bell pepper from her bag, she exclaimed, "I'm going to cry!" Our staff member knelt down, unsure how to respond, and asked, "Are these happy tears or sad tears?" "Happy! I've never had a bell pepper before," Kimberly said, excited as she took a big, crunchy bite with a smile on her face.

After providing temporary housing for Holland students who receive Sack Suppers, one woman shared, "I want you to know that you provide so much more than a meal, although that is so very important. The kids that stayed with us had very little stability. This small bag of food was a consistent way to let them know they were loved, cared for, important, and valued. Thank you for what you do."

Ms. Cordle is 93, and physical setbacks have taken away lifelong hobbies. Her daughter introduced her to Kids' Food Basket and suggested she decorate bags. It quickly became her daily ritual - she keeps her decorating supplies next to her recliner, and spends each day drawing. Students will know their bag came from Ms. Cordle if they find "I LOVE YOU" written on the bottom!

Sophia is in fifth grade at Burton Elementary School. Her teachers were surprised she signed up for Sack Suppers, because she hadn't before. They learned that Sophia's father, her sole provider, is struggling with cancer. Her father is not working after having surgery, and Sack Suppers are filling a critical need for Sophia, providing him with a sense of relief.

A Muskegon school shared, "We had some of the lower academic achievements... when we provided Sack Suppers, we went from the lowest to the highest. We can do all the education that we can but if a kid is hungry, he or she will tune out the teacher, so the Sack Suppers played a vital part in how we were able to improve our MEAP scores and some of the other success that we have undertaken."

THOUGHTS ON GIVING

UNDER THE NEW TAX BILL

Dear Friends,

The urgent challenges of poverty and hunger are OUR challenges, and together, we can create a more vibrant West Michigan if we attack these challenges head on. With a new year upon us, these challenges are more real than ever. Our newest tax bill affects all of us, and many of our supporters have asked how it will affect Kids' Food Basket.

Here's the good news: At Kids' Food Basket, we are not in the business of tax advice or transactions. But, we ARE in the business of transforming communities to break down the barriers of poverty. As a charitably funded nonprofit, this transformation is possible with your generosity. Here's how we believe you can maximize that in the year ahead:

- **Corporate Matches:** Does your business match your individual giving? Last year, \$6 billion dollars went unclaimed from corporations willing to match their employee's contributions, simply because employees did not capitalize on the opportunity or make the request. Let us know how we can help you double or even triple your gift in the year ahead through your corporate match.
- **Individual giving:** with the standard deduction increase from \$6,500 to \$12,000, or \$12,000 to \$24,000 per household, a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) may be right for you. There are various fiduciaries that house DAF's both locally and nationally, and we are partnering with three local institutions to host events to share more about this tool for giving. Look for our mailing this spring for more details.
- **Business owners:** Are you aware of our community partner program? We engage businesses of all sizes in meaningful volunteer projects; unique corporate giving opportunities and the ability to simultaneously grow team morale, make an impact, and be recognized in our highly-visible facility (Did you know Kids' Food Basket averages 250 volunteers per day)?
- **Planned Giving:** Gifts come in all shapes and sizes. Join our Brain Development Society by naming Kids' Food Basket in your will or estate plan. Additionally, you can make an immediate impact through a gift of stock or securities, or through an IRA designation. Contact us for more information.

We believe in abundance. We have, within ourselves, the ability to maximize our generosity and truly address the challenges ahead. Thank you for being in this work with us: with your hearts, your hands, and your resources. Our team is inspired every day by YOU.

Warmly,

Afton DeVos
Associate Director



Community Partner Shout Out



Kids' Food Basket was fortunate to be chosen as the 2017 charitable organization of choice by the **Elhart Cares** team responsible for planning a full year of fundraising events. Their team organized nineteen events overall, raising a **grand total of nearly \$17,000 for our Holland location!** In addition to the money raised, all Elhart locations held Wish List Drives and collected decorated bags for Sack Suppers – showing staff and visitors that everybody is able to join the attack on childhood hunger in some way.

Want to get your company involved in the attack on childhood hunger? We can help – contact Kim.Magoon@kidsfoodbasket.org

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY!

Are you interested in making our community a better place? Our Youth Action Board (YAB) is a unique "learn and serve" experience unlike any other in our region!

If you are interested in learning more about the YAB, email Troy.Vos@kidsfoodbasket.org and keep an eye out for application dates. Membership applications for the 2018-19 school year open in late Spring!



KUDOS FROM

BRIDGET

Kids' Food Basket Executive Director



When our staff gathers for meetings, one of the highlights for us is the very first item on our agenda: Mission Moments. We open the floor for team members to share stories they've heard recently that embody our mission: **empowering communities to attack childhood hunger so that young people can learn and live well.**

The last few months of 2017 were an incredible, powerful, transformative time not only for Kids' Food Basket but for all of West Michigan. When I think of how the year ended I know that, even with the greatest team ever, none of our successes would have been possible without one thing: an empowered community. Our communities endlessly amaze me, and I can't thank you all enough for coming together time and time again to join us in the attack on childhood hunger.

Last September, we publicly launched **Feeding Our Future: A Campaign for West Michigan Children.** We're so incredibly excited about what this new, dynamic space means for the future: significant growth in our Sack Supper service capacity in Grand Rapids, new and innovative volunteer and educational opportunities, and growing an abundance of fresh produce to nourish our children in all three locations. Since the day of public launch, it has been clear that you are all as excited as we are, and your response has been incredible. We are excited to soon be sharing updates with the next steps, and know that this is going to be a big year at 1919 Leonard- our Kent County location's new home, made possible by an empowered community.

Then, in October, we held our annual **Brown Bag Decorating Day.** We asked our community to help us achieve a goal of donating 75,000 decorated bags and to join us for Pop-Up Volunteer Projects at all three Kids' Food Basket locations. Simply put, **you all CRUSHED IT - 107,200 decorated bags were donated!** Decorated bags make a world of difference by adding a touch of love to the Sack Supper - a difference made an incredible 107,200 times, again made possible by an empowered community.

We came to you again in November with an opportunity to make a huge impact on **Giving Tuesday.** Our goal was to raise enough to serve new schools, and yet again our community responded, helping us hit our goal. More importantly, hitting that goal meant **because of you, Kids' Food Basket was able to take THREE schools off our waiting list - one each in Grand Rapids, Muskegon and Holland!** This January, we started Sack Supper service at West Elementary in Wyoming, Orchard View Cardinal Elementary in Muskegon and Pine Creek Elementary in Holland. Hundreds more kids are now receiving the nutrition they need each and every weekday, all made possible by an empowered community.

I really can't say it enough - thank you, thank you, thank you. Kids' Food Basket is so fortunate to have the support of the West Michigan community. You amaze us every single day, whether it is decorating bags, donating food items, volunteering your time, providing financial support or simply being vocal community advocates. You have also shown, time and time again, how willing you are to **come together as an empowered community, working together to make massive impact,** and that's incredible.

We have a lot of big things planned for 2018, and I hope you are as excited as I am. Thank you for all that you do, and I hope to see you by our side as we continue to nourish children to be their best in school and in life.

Peace,
Bridget

Bridget Clark Whitney
Executive Director

P.S. Go Orange is coming up quickly, and I hope you will join us at our Pop-Up Volunteer Event on Sunday, March 18 at the Grand Rapids Christian High School Quest Center. RSVP at vhub.at/pop-up - see you there!

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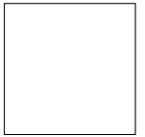
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Go Orange

WITH KIDS' FOOD BASKET



Can you raise awareness for the 11,400 children in Ottawa County who are living with the barrier of food insecurity? There is nothing fun about childhood hunger, but changing the world can be fun. Here are a few ways you can make impact and change the world for local children:

WEAR ORANGE! Join us on Friday, March 23 by wearing orange, the color of childhood hunger awareness, to attack childhood hunger in our community.

SMILE AND SPREAD THE WORD! You can make life just a little brighter with an orange smile. Use #KFBGoOrange to share your orange smile picture via Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, and share why the issue of childhood hunger is important to you.

DINE OUT. Make an impact with dozens of West Michigan restaurants by dining out during March. Participating restaurants will donate a portion of their proceeds back to Kids' Food Basket.

To learn more about Go Orange week, visit www.KidsFoodBasket.org/GoOrange.

Presented By:

