MEET JANIE

Throughout her life, Janie has been a leader. Working in the federal government, she held many leadership positions and was appointed to many committees. The walls of her apartment are peppered with certificates for her numerous accolades – all earned while raising two amazing daughters as a single mom. She loved to travel and pick up antiques along the way.

Then one day, while on the job, Janie’s heart stopped. After being revived and stabilized by the University of Michigan Health System, she was diagnosed with a respiratory illness, and later, ovarian cancer. As her health continued to fail, Janie fell on hard times. She lost her home of 24 years, said goodbye to many of her beloved antiques, and moved into a senior living community.

Janie needed help getting groceries, so she contacted Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County (JFS). Food Gatherers provides fresh food to agencies like JFS so they can provide excellent support services to our neighbors. JFS staff helped Janie furnish her new apartment with a new kitchen table and chairs. They check in on her once a week, take notes during her doctors’ appointments, and provide her with monthly food deliveries.

Janie also receives two meals a day through Ann Arbor Meals on Wheels, another one of Food Gatherers’ partner programs. She has always believed in “eating sensibly,” and the fresh fruits and vegetables she receives from Food Gatherers help her continue to do so.

She has been through so much, but she never lost her will to fight. When her daughter was finishing her PhD, she told her doctors, “I’m going to that graduation.” And she did. After surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy, Janie has been cancer-free for 18 months!

We thank you for supporting Janie, and helping thousands of Washtenaw County residents like her receive healthy food with dignity and respect.
HEALTHY PANTRY CONVERSION PROJECT

Food Gatherers works not just to alleviate hunger, but also to improve access to fresh produce, protein, and whole grains for our neighbors in need. We have worked hard to procure healthier food, and are now focused on strategies to help clients make healthier choices.

Last year, in partnership with Washtenaw County Public Health and with funding provided by Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' Building Healthy Communities Program, we designed and piloted the Healthy Pantry Conversion Project at nine food pantries. Reaching a total of 2,426 households each month, this project helped our partner agencies implement sustainable, low and no-cost strategies that encourage clients to select healthy food while shopping.

Our partner sites prioritized changes to their produce displays by redesigning their pantry layout and adding new tables, shelving, baskets, bins, and signage. To aid in these changes, we procured equipment, including double glass-door display refrigerators. We also developed a set of healthy food promotion resources for our partner sites, like shelf tags to highlight healthy food items, pocket-sized hints and tips to encourage clients to cook from scratch, and produce identification cards to help clients learn to store and prepare the produce they receive.

Several months ago, we applied some of these strategies at our own warehouse pantry, where many of our agencies come to select food for their clients. In just a few weeks, we tripled the amount of produce distributed!

Our agencies are already seeing improvements. “With the new pantry setup, we are able to [distribute] produce that, in the past, has been very difficult to get consumers to take,” says the Food Pantry Coordinator for SOS Community Services. “Simply by changing the way it is displayed, people are now selecting beets, turnips, carrots, and other hardy produce that they would not have selected in the past.”

Do you want to highlight your healthy foods at your site? Find a toolkit and other resources on our website that you can use to promote healthy foods! Follow this link: [http://www.foodgatherers.org/?module=Page&ID=partner-program-info---healthy-pantry-conversion-project](http://www.foodgatherers.org/?module=Page&ID=partner-program-info---healthy-pantry-conversion-project)

“It makes me feel like you care about me. You make the food look good and it makes me feel good about the food I pick.”

– an SOS Community Services client.
WASHTENAW READS

What?
The Washtenaw Reads program is a community initiative to promote reading and civic dialogue through the shared experience of reading and discussing a common book. Participating libraries include Ann Arbor, Chelsea, Dexter, Milan, Northfield Township, Saline, and Ypsilanti.

Featured for 2017 is *$2 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America* by Kathryn J Edin, and H Luke Shaefer, Ph.D.

When?
Join us at upcoming library events to discuss the book and learn how Food Gatherers addresses issues of hunger and poverty.

February 16 from 7-8pm: Saline District Library. Food Gatherers Markell Miller presents. 555 N. Maple Road, Saline

All events listed here: [http://aareads.aadl.org/aareads/events](http://aareads.aadl.org/aareads/events)

ORGANIZATIONS SAVE FEDERAL NUTRITION PRORAMS!

There are 42 million people in this country — 13 million of them children and over 5 million of them seniors — living in households struggling with hunger. This problem would be far, far worse if not for the nation’s very effective anti-hunger programs:

- the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps);
- the National School Breakfast and School Lunch programs;
- the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) that provides nutritious meals for children in child care, Head Start, and afterschool programs and shelters;
- the Summer Meals programs;
- the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC);
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which provides commodities to food banks;
- the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations; and
- nutrition programs for the elderly (e.g., the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) and congregate and home-delivered meals).

Demonstrate Your Organization’s Support to Safeguard these Federal Nutrition Programs

This is not for individuals to sign on (only organizations)
Sign Letter to President Trump and Congress by March 1

The National Anti-Hunger Organizations (NAHO) came together in mid-December to issue a [statement](https://www.nahoa.org/) reaffirming our commitment to ensure a strong and effective national nutrition safety net for vulnerable, low-income individuals and families and calling on the incoming Congress and the President to safeguard and support these critically-important programs.

FRAC (Food Research & Action Center) is asking organizations to sign on to this statement! Follow this link to [view and sign your organization](https://www.frac.org/) (organizations only, please) onto this statement. This sign-on letter will be shared with all Members of Congress and the new Administration.

**Deadline:** This letter will be a key advocacy resource for the National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference, March 5th-7th in Washington, DC. Follow this link for [more on the conference](#). Please sign your organization onto this letter by **Wednesday, March 1st** to ensure your organization is listed in the Lobby Day (March 7) materials.

**Questions?** Email Joel Warren, jwarren@frac.org.
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