

PLENTY

Fall 2025

food gatherers®
fighting hunger where we live

PARTNER
FOOD BANK OF
FEEDING
AMERICA

Local Officials Roll Up Their Sleeves

Walking through Food Gatherers, I could feel the care in every corner: shelves of nutritious fresh food, volunteers moving with purpose, and staff determined to meet the need. Food Gatherers is more than a warehouse. It's a heartbeat. It's a lifeline powered by people who believe no one in our community should go hungry. We must do everything we can to support them.

-Katie Scott, Chair of Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners

As part of Hunger Action Month, the staff and board of Food Gatherers hosted members of Ann Arbor City Council, Washtenaw County Commissioners, and representatives from Michigan's House and Senate offices for a warehouse tour to see the impact of their public investments.

While local elected officials sorted donated dry goods and bread and packed food boxes for redistribution, staff shared details about what we are learning from our network of 140 pantries and meal programs.

In Washtenaw County, 1 in 7 of our neighbors are food insecure. Of them, 45% are likely ineligible for SNAP benefits, making the charitable food system an essential resource. The number of people visiting pantries and the frequency with which they visit have both been on the rise for the past five years, and the trend continues.



In the recently released "Elevating Voices: Insights Report," Feeding America surveyed 1,500 individuals from diverse backgrounds and demographics who are experiencing food insecurity. Neighbors who participated say that high food costs and high inflation are the primary drivers of food insecurity and are contributing to physical and mental health symptoms. Neighbors also agreed that the collective efforts to end food insecurity must include improving health, expanding opportunity, increasing access, and prioritizing dignity.

We are so grateful to have local elected officials who understand and support the critical infrastructure of support that Food Gatherers provides throughout Washtenaw County.

Top photo: (left to right): Emma Heaton, Legislative Director to State Representative Jennifer Conlin, Chris Watson, Ann Arbor City Council Member, Katie Scott, Chair of Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners, Susan Aaronson, Food Gatherers' Board of Directors, Tony Denton, Food Gatherers' Board of Directors, State Senator Jeff Irwin, Travis Radina, Ann Arbor City Council Member

Bottom photo: (left to right): The sun shone brightly on Derrick Jackson, Racial Equity Officer, Toni Kayumi, Director of Community & Economic Development, and Commissioner Caroline Sanders.

Your support matters. Give now to fight rising hunger: www.foodgatherers.org/Fall25

Celebrating Three Community Food Leaders



A²ZERO is celebrating local food leaders with the release of the A²ZERO Community Cookbook. The efforts of our amazing team at Food Gatherers Community Kitchen (FGCK), including Scott Roubek, Amy Diehl, Chris Roberts, and thousands of volunteers, are featured. The FGCK, in partnership with the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County, provides meals 365 days a year at the Delonis Center.

“Most of the ingredients that we use in the kitchen are donated by local farms, grocery stores, and businesses,” says Chris, adding, “We have an inventory of basic staples, but for fresh ingredients, we rarely know what our truck will be delivering before it arrives. Opening the boxes is like Christmas morning meets an episode of the show Chopped! For example, one delivery brought us dozens of pounds of lamb, while another contained over \$1,000 worth of lobster.”

It takes a lot of ingenuity to create and serve 63,000 plates of delicious and nutritious food in a year, so we take our chef hats off to the FGCK team!

You can find the free digital version of the A²ZERO cookbook at osi.a2gov.org/cookbook! Be sure to check out the FGCK article and recipe (pages 90 - 94).

Fighting Summer Hunger

Each summer, when free and reduced-price school meals are no longer available, Food Gatherers provides no-cost food to kids in our community who are facing hunger.

In partnership with the Ypsilanti District Library, we hosted weekly Eat & Play events at each branch with activities like book readings and food tastings. We also offered a Grab & Go option for families to bring multiple meals home for their children. This model offered proxy pickups, where individuals could pick up on behalf of another family to improve food access when transportation barriers existed.

To meet the increased demand this summer, we expanded our Grab & Go distributions, providing more summer meals than ever before and 55% more than the previous summer. It wouldn't have been possible without hardworking volunteers who showed up week after week. Food Gatherers recognizes and appreciates all the volunteers, along with program sponsors Toyota and Kroger, whose generosity fueled the success of our 2025 Summer Food Service Program.

“What truly stands out is the difference we’re able to make together. Every meal provided, every child nourished, and every neighbor supported is a reminder of the power of partnership”

-Cam Barrett, Kroger Co. of Michigan

**7
SITES**

**112K
MEALS**

**1,100
KIDS**

Creating a lasting legacy



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Having a planned gift gives us a sense of purpose and a satisfaction that we can contribute to something meaningful.

Gary Steltzer and Nancy Frushour spent much of their lives working with students with special needs. Their connection to Food Gatherers is deep and long-lasting.

More than 30 years ago, Gary arrived at our old warehouse, a former meat-packing facility, with his student and trainee, Alex Bloom. Both Alex and Gary became beloved weekly volunteers. Alex even received the Volunteer of the Year Award from Feeding America in 2012, which recognizes one volunteer each year from more than 200 food banks across the nation.

“Food Gatherers has supported education so openly for people with disabilities,” shared Nancy. “Now we’d like to help you because you helped us with our work and with our students.”

Grateful for their own success in having steady jobs over the years, Nancy and Gary decided to make Food Gatherers a beneficiary in their trust.

“Having a planned gift gives us a sense of purpose and a satisfaction that we can contribute to something meaningful,” shared Nancy.

Nancy, now volunteering at Faith in Action’s food pantry in Dexter, sees the impact up close. She receives such gratitude from her neighbors when they receive food, and she wants them to know that the community truly cares and wants to be there to help out.

With their firsthand experiences and considering the current challenges around food insecurity in our community, Gary and Nancy want to ensure that Food Gatherers’ work will endure.

With the support of the community, there can be reliable access to nourishing food for generations to come. **October 20th - 26th is Estate Planning Awareness Week**, and we encourage you to join Gary and Nancy in making a planned gift and becoming a member of Food Gatherers Forever Gathering Society.

Including a gift to Food Gatherers in your estate plan is simple, and we’re here to help! **Reach out to our Chief Development Officer, Charlotte Csicsila, by email at Charlotte@FoodGatherers.org or by phone at (734)761-2796. Or, scan the QR below and we’ll be in touch!**



*Top photo: Gary Steltzer and Nancy Frushour at Food Gatherers’ warehouse
Bottom photo: Alex Bloom holding a Food Gatherers plaque*

Current & Upcoming Events

Busch's Season of Sharing

November 17th - November 30th

Fight hunger with Busch's annual holiday food drive! Donate at the register of any Washtenaw County Busch's Fresh Market location to support Food Gatherers.

How to help meet the increased need:

Donate! Monetary donations are the most efficient way to help. Give now at FoodGatherers.org/Fall25, over the phone, or by check.

Volunteer! Sign up for a volunteer shift at our warehouse or community kitchen at FoodGatherers.org/Volunteer.

Advocate! Learn more about how you can help ensure our lawmakers prioritize ending hunger and sign up for our advocacy email list to stay up to date.

Spread the word! In Washtenaw County, food assistance is available to anyone who needs it. If you or someone you know needs food, visit FoodGatherers.org/FoodResources to find a pantry or meal program near you.

Join us for Rockin' for the Hungry!

December 2nd - December 6th

Each year, Food Gatherers joins forces with Kroger and Ann Arbor's 107one to raise one million meals for people in our community who are experiencing hunger.

Families and businesses who want to help can sponsor a Rockin' Power Hour, an hour of live radio broadcast during which the community is challenged to match your gift of \$5,000 or \$10,000.

It's a great opportunity to get on the radio and let Washtenaw County know why you're dedicated to hunger relief where we live. For more information, contact Charlotte@FoodGatherers.org or give us a call at (734)761-2796.



Stay in Touch

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