



# HUNGER CONNECTION

## A Collective Stand Against Hunger

### Promoting Nutrition Programs That Support Local Communities



Supporting Indigenous Families with Culturally Familiar Food



Delivering Stockboxes to Homebound Seniors with DoorDash



Advocating for Policies That Feed Local Kids, Families & Seniors

# A Letter from the CEO



***“Now, more than ever, we stand together to ensure that no one in our community goes hungry. I encourage you to renew your commitment with a gift to our mission if you are able and join our Voices Against Hunger citizen advocacy group to stay up to date...”***

**- Matt King, CEO**

As the first signs of spring emerge from another long Wisconsin winter, we are reminded of the power of renewal and growth. The season brings fresh energy and a sense of purpose—both in nature and in our work to ensure that everyone in our community has access to fresh, healthy food.

At The Farm, soil is being prepared, seeds are being planted and soon locally grown produce will begin making its way to the tables of seniors and families who rely on our network of food pantries. This work is only possible because of your support, and we are deeply grateful.

Yet, alongside the hope of the new season, we are also facing serious challenges. The proposed federal budget includes devastating cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – called FoodShare here in Wisconsin – and school meal programs which are lifelines for so many families and the backbone of our social safety net. Over 700,000 Wisconsinites rely on SNAP to feed their families each month. According to the USDA, 40% of SNAP benefits feed children. These cuts will mean increased hunger for children, seniors and working families already struggling to put food on the table amidst the increased cost of living.

In fact, over the past year visits to our network of food pantries have increased by 35%. Recently, Hunger Task Force learned that several USDA food orders for this summer had been cancelled, leaving us with little time to fill these gaps. Through community support, we have been able to purchase staple items to keep our food pantry network stocked. Now, more than ever, we stand together to ensure that no one in our community goes hungry. I encourage you to renew your commitment with a gift to our mission if you are able and join our Voices Against Hunger citizen advocacy group to stay up to date on these cuts and make your voice heard when we need to take action together.

As you read through this newsletter, you'll see that as we plant the seeds for the growing season ahead, we are also planting seeds of advocacy, generosity and hope. Thank you for being part of this mission. With your partnership, we will continue to cultivate a bright future where access to healthy, nourishing food is accessible for all.

With gratitude,

Matt King, CEO

**SCAN TO JOIN VOICES  
AGAINST HUNGER AND  
MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!**



## Tribal Elder Traditional Food Box Program

Hunger Task Force is proud to provide healthy food that strengthens food sovereignty. Each Tribal Elder Traditional Food Box is filled with 100% Wisconsin-sourced products, including items from Indigenous producers.

**Currently Distributing Tribal Elder Food Boxes at Four Tribal Partner Sites:**

- Gerald L. Ignace Indian Health Center
- Ho-Chunk Milwaukee Branch
- Indian Council of the Elderly
- Southeastern Oneida Tribal Services

Indigenous producers contributing food items include Oneida (ground beef, ground bison, jam, applesauce and tea kits), Potawatomi (maple syrup) and Red Lake Nation Foods (wild rice).



**1,495**  
TOTAL NUMBER OF BOXES  
DISTRIBUTED SINCE LAUNCH

**\$144,825**  
TOTAL AMOUNT INVESTED IN  
CULTURALLY RELEVANT FOOD



## Milwaukee Seniors Zina and Andrew Stretch their Food Budget with Stockbox DoorDash and FoodShare

Zina and Andrew Alexander have become experts at navigating the complexities of living on a fixed income. Both in their early 60s, they depend on essential resources for aging adults including the Stockbox DoorDash program and FoodShare to keep themselves fed. Zina and Andrew's partnership is built on shared experience and echoes their personal belief that, just because you're down, doesn't mean you're out.

Zina, a disabled veteran, faces mobility challenges due to service-related injuries. "I have to send Andrew to the grocery store because my injuries cause me severe hip pain if I'm on my feet too long," she explains. The Stockbox, a monthly food box containing healthy supplemental items, became a lifeline, especially with Hunger Task Force's DoorDash delivery option. "Getting our Stockboxes delivered by DoorDash was a real blessing," she says.

For Andrew, who lives with schizophrenia and the effects of a head injury, the Stockbox's inclusion of cereal and milk is a welcome staple. "When you eat right, you think right," he states, emphasizing the link between nutrition and mental well-being.

Their path to stability wasn't always smooth. Zina, a veteran, educator and author, experienced homelessness after personal hardships. "I was prideful. I didn't want to ask for help," she admits.

At the Salvation Army Emergency Lodge, she met Andrew, her "knight in shining armor." They married in 2017, navigating support programs together.

The couple utilizes the healthy food provided in their Stockboxes as a base for home-cooked meals, supplementing with FoodShare and Senior Farmers' Market Vouchers.

"We have worked really hard to build ourselves up and get to a stable place where we can get by," Zina says. "We are grateful to Hunger Task Force for helping us live a quality life with dignity."

They express concern about potential cuts to nutrition programs. "We look at our Stockboxes and FoodShare as income coming into our home. We need it," Zina stresses. "I don't even know what we would do if those weren't available to us."



The couple emphasizes that these programs free up funds for essentials like utilities and medication. "I'm not talking about living this luxurious life, we're not being frivolous. I'm talking about basic necessities," Zina affirms.

Zina and Andrew's story mirrors the struggles of countless seniors, underscoring that dignity and access to healthy food are not privileges, but basic human rights. It's a call to action, reminding us that community support is crucial now more than ever.

# From the Desk of the Advocacy Director



*“We believe these initiatives will not only help give vulnerable people within our state – including working families – access to more healthy and nutritious food but will also stimulate the local economy.”*

- Dr. Reno Wright, Advocacy Director

For more than 50 years, Hunger Task Force has been a vital pillar in the community by providing emergency food for hungry children, families and seniors and advocating for increased access to federal nutrition programs.

As Advocacy Director, I am both humbled and proud to continue that tradition. It is no secret that we are living in challenging times in our nation and our state. Yet, amid threats to cut funding from federal nutrition programs, the Advocacy team at Hunger Task Force has been working diligently to protect programs that feed families. We believe these initiatives will not only help give vulnerable people within our state – including working families – access to more healthy and nutritious food but will also stimulate the local economy.

Hunger Task Force’s two **FoodShare Resource Centers in Milwaukee’s North and South Side** are serviced by knowledgeable and dedicated



FoodShare Advocates who collectively speak more than ten languages and consistently help individuals and families apply for and maintain their SNAP (known as FoodShare in Wisconsin) benefits.

Last year, we served nearly 28,000 people receiving or applying for FoodShare.

We are very passionate about eliminating childhood hunger in Wisconsin and have been working to educate schools and school districts about their eligibility to provide free

meals through the **School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program**.

We also coordinate a Milwaukee Summer Meals Collaborative in partnership with local school districts, community-based organizations and state agencies – including the Department of Public Instruction – and together we ensure children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session and childhood hunger is at its peak. Through this collaboration, along



with a grant from Kohl's Cares, more than 416,000 meals were served to children across Milwaukee County in 2024. Hunger Task Force also worked with No Kid Hungry and the Department of Public Instruction to increase the number of sponsors in the Summer non-congregate program. The program invites qualifying families with children in rural communities to pick up free, grab-and-go meals. Last summer, 30 non-congregate sponsors and 50 providers worked to serve nearly 410,000 non-congregate meals.



Through our **SNAP-Ed team** (nutrition education), we provide resources to families, schools and community groups. Last year we provided nutrition education to more than 60 organizations in our Emergency Food Network, nearly 50,000 seniors each quarter and 650 students in local classrooms. We also offer nutrition education at local senior centers, in our McCarty Education Kitchen at Hunger Task Force's West Milwaukee headquarters and on the Hunger Task Force Farm in Franklin, Wisconsin.

Hunger Task Force is the founding member of the **Hunger Relief Federation**, which is a statewide anti-hunger coalition that engages 168 partners in 64 counties throughout Wisconsin. The Hunger Relief Federation was formed for the express purpose of resource sharing and public policy organizing. Each local member of the Hunger Relief



Federation of Wisconsin works to serve the specific needs in their community and has developed a comprehensive plan to combat hunger in their region.



Lastly, Hunger Task Force revived **Voices Against Hunger** – our citizen advocacy group. It encourages members to advocate together to promote social policies to end future hunger and influence effective anti-hunger public policy. I believe in our mission to work toward ending hunger in our community and state, and our department does this by advocating for fully funded nutrition programs that are accessible to those who need the benefits the most.



*“Central Wisconsin Community Action Council (CWCAC) is proud to partner with the Hunger Relief Federation. We have worked closely with Hunger Task Force to help strengthen our network and provide access to fresh and nutritious food across our region. The Hunger Relief Federation has invested a substantial amount of time identifying and providing opportunities for grants, food and new infrastructure across all five of our service counties. Thanks to these investments, we were able to establish new pantries in our network that provides TEFAP food free of charge. This is crucial as all our pantries are in rural areas, and this food would otherwise not be accessible to our pantry participants.”*

*– Sue Eck  
CWCAC Program Units Manager*



**Voices  
Against  
Hunger**  
HUNGER TASK FORCE

**SCAN TO JOIN VOICES  
AGAINST HUNGER AND MAKE  
YOUR VOICE HEARD!**

# Jim McClure Supports Hunger Task Force Through Volunteering and Legacy Giving

Since 2018, Jim McClure has been volunteering at the Hunger Task Force Farm in Franklin during the growing season and at our warehouse packing senior food boxes in the winter.

After relocating from Illinois, Jim was eager to roll up his sleeves and help his new neighbors in need. Moving around the corner from The Farm, he applied to help harvest fruits and vegetables due to his proximity to the rewarding volunteer opportunity. What's more, during the winter months, Jim volunteers to pack senior food boxes once per week in our Volunteer Action Center at our headquarters in West Milwaukee. What started as an opportunity to fill his time with meaningful work in retirement quickly turned into more.

Jim increased his volunteer commitment to support our annual Drive-Thru Food Drive right before Thanksgiving, helped distribute fresh salmon to our emergency food network through the annual Brew City Fishing Tournament and assisted with community food drives at summer festivals throughout Milwaukee.

"I've grown to love the caring staff at Hunger Task Force and consider them dear friends," said Jim. "Many hands make for light work and it's a pleasure to roll up my sleeves and serve my community with like-minded volunteers."

Recently, Jim joined the Hunger Task Force Legacy Society because he and his wife have graciously decided to include Hunger Task Force in their estate plans. Jim joining the Legacy Society is a demonstration of his continued support now and his strong support of Hunger Task Force's mission of ending hunger well into the future.



***"Many hands make for light work and it's a pleasure to roll up my sleeves and serve my community with like-minded volunteers."***

- Jim McClure, Volunteer and Hunger Task Force Legacy Society Member

## Planned Giving: Provides A Lasting Gift to End Hunger

Making a planned gift is a generous way to help Hunger Task Force feed our community into the future. The Hunger Task Force Legacy Society was created to honor and recognize donors who support our Free & Local mission through a planned gift – a bequest in your will or a beneficiary designation.

Your philanthropic giving supports the mission that every person has the right to healthy food obtained with dignity. By documenting your estate intentions with Hunger Task Force, you ensure your philanthropic goals are met and provide Hunger Task Force the opportunity to celebrate your commitment.

***"The impact Hunger Task Force has on our community is truly remarkable. To ensure their invaluable work continues, I decided to include a portion of my estate for Hunger Task Force. This way, I can help sustain the good work they put forth every day."***

- John Wierschem, Hunger Task Force Legacy Society Member



HUNGER TASK FORCE  
**LEGACY  
SOCIETY**

For more information on legacy gifts, visit [www.HungerTaskForce.org/planned-giving](http://www.HungerTaskForce.org/planned-giving).

# Event Highlights & Memorable Moments



5000 W. Electric Avenue  
West Milwaukee, WI 53219  
Phone 414.777.0483

Hunger Task Force believes that every person has a right to healthy food obtained with dignity. We work to prevent hunger and malnutrition by providing food to people in need today and by promoting social policies to achieve a hunger free community tomorrow.

## OUR CORE VALUES

DIGNITY | JUSTICE | EQUITY  
COMPASSION | STEWARDSHIP

Hunger Task Force, Inc. is a charitable, 501(c)3 organization. Our Tax ID is 39-1345847.

Thanks to Burton & Mayer who donated printing to offset the cost of creating this newsletter.



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1. Hunger Task Force has moved our Southside Community Resource Center to a brand-new, expanded location at 802 W. Historic Mitchell Street. With double the space, we're making it easier than ever for families, seniors and individuals to access FoodShare assistance and essential resources.
2. Our Chief Operating Officer Jess Pontious shared the importance of fostering a workplace culture in which your team has the courage to bring their true selves to the job every day with Authority Magazine.
3. For the 17th consecutive year, Palermo's Pizza employees rolled up their sleeves and joined forces with Hunger Task Force to pack and distribute 600 "Easter Baskets for the Hungry" for local families in need.
4. Hunger Task Force staff volunteered with the Ronald McDonald House Lunch-2-Go program, preparing lunches for families with sick children. This program eases meal costs, ensuring families have a convenient, nutritious lunch while focusing on their child's care.
5. Match Madness was a slam dunk success! Thanks to the incredible generosity of our community and matching pool donors, nearly \$600,000 was raised to help feed local kids, families and seniors.

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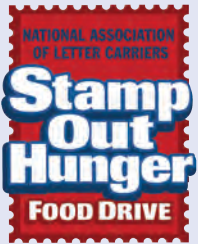


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## Stamp Out Hunger



Stamp Out Hunger is the largest, single-day food drive in the nation and one of the easiest ways to make a difference in your community! Fill a bag with healthy food donations and leave it for your letter carrier on Saturday, May 10.

All local food collected through Stamp Out Hunger is provided absolutely free of charge to families in need by Hunger Task Force. Online donations help stretch resources even further and buy healthy food by the truckload.

### Not sure what to donate?

Don't just reach into the dusty realms of your cupboard! Plan ahead and have some healthy food donations ready for your Stamp Out Hunger bag like infant formula, healthy breakfast cereals, low-sugar canned fruit, low-sodium canned vegetables, peanut butter and whole grain rice or pasta.



**Save a Bag and  
Donate Online!**