



Family food box assembly at MFB Arizona.

March 2019



A volunteer group serves a meal to distribution volunteers at MFB Bloomington-Normal, Illinois.



AROUND THE TABLE

MOST VOLUNTEERS FIND BLESSINGS IN GIVING

Below is part of an email we received from Sharon:

"A year ago today, I started my new adventure at Midwest Food Bank Peoria. I was hesitant to commit, as since my husband's passing, I felt lost. I really didn't know what to do with my life.

The food bank has changed everything. I have confidence and determination back. Fellow volunteers and employees at Midwest Food Bank have become caring friends. The accomplishment of feeding so many people, as part of the team, is outstanding.

Thank you all for welcoming me. It definitely takes team effort to feed the world!



Sharon at MFB Peoria.

Volunteers are crucial to the MFB mission

In 2018, over \$200 million in food was given to partnering agencies at no cost to them. Over 60 semi loads of disaster relief were sent to support victims of hurricanes, and the California wildfires. Over 99¢ of every dollar donated to MFB goes toward programs and services that feed the hungry.

One common thing makes each of these amazing facts a reality: Volunteers.

Each location of Midwest Food Bank has a team of volunteers that make the impossible happen every day. In Morton, IL, Teresa helps with her exceptional talent for Excel spreadsheets. Scott does an amazing job with the IT needs in Georgia. In Arizona, Gary leads forklift safety training. Bob keeps all fleet vehicles (trucks) up to date with maintenance in Bloomington-Normal, IL.

Each MFB location is a multi-million dollar distribution center, run with a paid staff of 2-6 people. Our generous volunteers allow us to put most of our resources into helping those who are food insecure.

Among other things, volunteers organize distributions, lead volunteer groups in repackaging projects, provide meals for volunteer groups, and answer phones and greet visitors. They do blog writing, grant writing, data entry, carpentry, painting, HVAC maintenance, IT support, and landscaping.



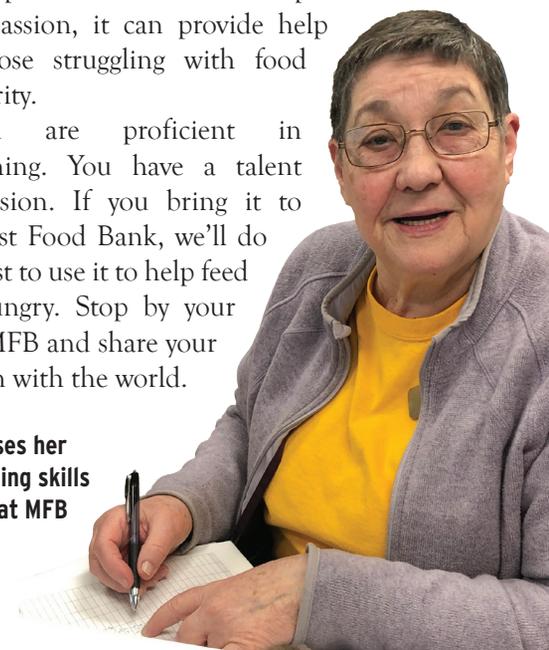
Tender Mercies packaging at MFB Morton, Illinois.

They drive forklifts, semis, box trucks, and lawn mowers.

In truth, the list goes on and on. The point is, if a person has an area of expertise or a passion, it can provide help for those struggling with food insecurity.

You are proficient in something. You have a talent or passion. If you bring it to Midwest Food Bank, we'll do our best to use it to help feed the hungry. Stop by your local MFB and share your passion with the world.

Rosie uses her accounting skills to help at MFB Indiana.



AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

Eastview Food Pantry serving with love

Geneva, pictured with volunteer, Bob, below, was the first client at the new location of the Eastview Christian Church Food Pantry.



“During each visit we pray with each guest and talk about how we can move forward in our lives,” says Charmelle Watkins, Director, Eastview Christian Church Food Pantry. “We believe change happens best in relationships.”

The Bloomington, Illinois, pantry serves about 500 households in McLean County each month. In the last ten years, it has grown to over 6,000 sq. ft.

McLean County residents can visit the food pantry once a month. If a family experiences extreme hardship, weekly visits may be made for a short time. A wide variety of produce, dairy, bread, pastries, and meat are available. The pantry also provides non-food household and hygiene items. Coffee and snacks are available as a means of building community with visitors.

Eastview also supports a Backpack Program and two after school programs. A second food

pantry was opened in January 2019, in a location convenient to a large number of their guests. This move is the first step in a targeted plan to reach more community members.

One woman, while meeting with a host, accepted Christ in her life and decided to be baptized and join the church. Eight years later she volunteers weekly at the pantry – hosting others and doing any other tasks needed.

Eastview’s partnership with Midwest Food Bank allows them to offer fresh produce, bread, and dairy products on a weekly basis. The monthly distributions allow them to offer a huge selection of items they would never be able to purchase. MFB also provides a significant majority of food for their Backpack Program.

“I am filled with gratitude that someone from our town started the food bank,” says Charmelle. “The gap it has filled in food security has been miraculous.”

Midwest Food Bank is blessed to partner with agencies like the Eastview Christian Church Food Pantry, where people are served with love.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Volunteering ‘makes me a better person’

Some volunteers are almost employees, putting in long hours and being present nearly 6 days a week. Such is the case with Randy Jekel, a volunteer at Midwest Food Bank Indiana.

An Army veteran, retired from US Airlines, Randy felt a nudge from God to seek volunteer work. Seeing the sign while driving by MFB, he stopped in and learned about us. He began volunteering late in 2017.

An early riser, Randy is often at the warehouse at 4 a.m. This is a great help to those making early deliveries to MFB, as he is able to take in donations.

During his day at the warehouse, Randy wears a number of hats. He is able to oversee the distribution of products to partner agencies. Organizing

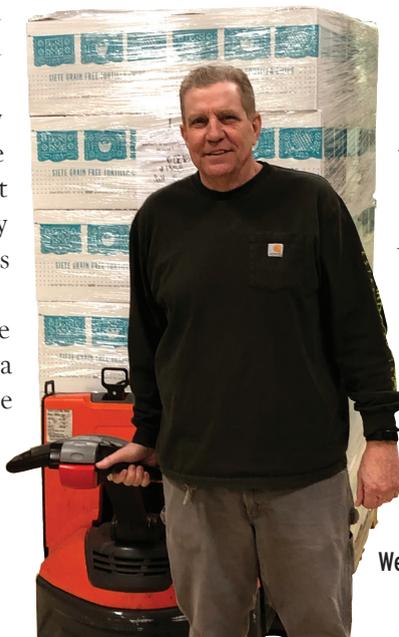
volunteers to help with unusual needs is one of Randy’s specialties. He is constantly on top of the cleanliness of the warehouse. In general, he is a leader and able to get things done.

What Randy likes best about volunteering at MFB is working with the other volunteers and agencies. “I like to help other people – I feel the need to give back,” he says. “I feel like this is exactly where God wants me.”

Randy is married to Leesa, and has two sons and a granddaughter. “I have two dogs that I like, and a cat that I don’t care for,” he says.

“Randy is amazing,” says Debbie Wingate, Volunteer Coordinator at Midwest Food Bank Indiana. “His consistent and hard-working presence is a huge blessing to many.”

We salute Randy and the many other volunteers who make this ministry possible. Their dedication and hard work are inspiring.



We got Randy Jekel to pause for a photo.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

SHARE



>30% OF THE FOOD SUPPLY IN THE UNITED STATES IS WASTED

1. BECOME A FOOD PARTNER
2. START A FOOD DRIVE
3. SPREAD THE WORD

DONATE

99¢ OF EVERY DOLLAR DONATED FEEDS HUNGRY PEOPLE

VOLUNTEER

YOU MAKE IT HAPPEN!

1 HOUR OF VOLUNTEERING PROVIDES 275+ MEALS FOR THOSE IN NEED



UPDATES FROM MFB LOCATIONS

ARIZONA

MFB Arizona finished 2018 strong and is off to an exciting start to 2019. We held our first volunteer appreciation banquet which allowed us time to fellowship with nearly 100 volunteers. Two midday news show segments allowed us to share the MFB mission and inform the audience about AZ Tax Credit donations. January was the official start of our rejected load program. It was rolled out to the industry as MFB Arizona sponsored the AZ Trucking Association clay pigeon shoot.

BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL, IL

In December 2018, 969 volunteers from 70 different groups shared their blessings of time and effort to hand package food - a record number!

To make room for more agencies on the waiting list, we have added additional specialty monthly distribution days. One bulk distribution day was added to better serve our soup kitchen-type agencies. Including Backpack Programs and out-of-state distributions, we serve over 440 agencies throughout Illinois, Tennessee, Missouri and Kentucky.

EAST AFRICA

A U.S. donor contacted MFB Africa to see if they could sponsor food for programs they were supporting in Uganda. It took some work, but we were able to ship 5.5 metric tonnes of Tender Mercies meals to Operation Underground Railroad in Kampala, a ministry which rescues trafficked children. Another 8.5 tonnes went to Love One International, a school and orphanage with 400 abandoned children.

FLORIDA

MFB Florida enjoys participating in community events. It gives us and our volunteers a better sense of the impact MFB has. We distributed shelf-stable food and ready-to-eat meals at the annual Stand Down Event put together by the Lee County Homeless Coalition. We also distributed food at a CPR and Wellness Celebration Cape Coral.

GEORGIA

MFB Georgia was recognized by the Fayette Chamber of Commerce with the 2018 Nonprofit Award of Excellence. This award recognizes and honors a nonprofit organization that demonstrates enhancement of the quality of life and betterment of the community, contributes a balance of time, expertise and funding, and serves locally, regionally or nationally with a local or regional presence.

HAITI

Our first forty-foot sea container in 2019 shipped in February with two more anticipated to ship in March. Other key priorities for 2019 include doubling the amount of food distributed in 2018 and researching the ability to source and package Tender Mercies in country.

INDIANA

God has been growing this ministry, and for the Indiana location it has been steady and nonstop. We hit the one million mark for cases distributed in 2018. As one of the smallest locations in physical size it is a challenge, but God takes the small things of this world to make a big impact for His Kingdom. We say, "We do more with less so people with less can have more." It's amazing to see so many working together with the blessings God sends our way.

MORTON, IL

It was a record year for the Tender Mercies meal program at Midwest Food Bank Morton. Volunteers produced over 1.5 millions meals. Eight events were organized at other locations where the meals were assembled, engaging over 1,000 volunteers and producing 220,000 meals. These events were sponsored by corporations, churches and universities. To learn more about Tender Mercies, please call 309-291-0900.

PEORIA, IL

Office renovations are complete and staff and volunteers are settling into the new community space and offices. We are ready to expand the warehouse space and start the drive-thru in the spring. Thanks to all who have supported this expansion.

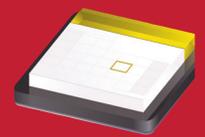
Specific volunteer roles we need:

- Grocery route drivers (no special license needed)
- Forklift drivers and CDL licensed semi-drivers
- Office support staff for phones and data entry
- Grant writing help

Please call 309-691-5270 or stop by to learn more.

TEXAS

The Pantego Bible Church has gifted us with some land in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex area. It is our hope to build a structure on this land that will allow us to expand our service to North Texas. We have established a twice-monthly distribution schedule and are currently serving 32 agencies in 21 counties. It is exciting to have the support of the local community and MFB Texas looks forward to a year of growing to serve.



Donated food can be labeled with dates which some may find confusing. Here is a look at the meaning behind some of the wording:

Best Before Date

The last date by which a product's flavor or quality is best. The product may still be enjoyed after the "best before date." May also be called "Best if Used By" date or the "Best By" date.

Use By Date

The last day that the manufacturer vouches for the product's quality. You may eat the food after the use by date, but it likely is not going to be at peak quality.

Sell By Date

The last date stores are supposed to display the product for sale. The food product may be used and enjoyed past this date.

Other notes:

- Food dates are not required by law.
- Food can legally be sold after the "by" date.
- Food Dates are not intended for safety.



To receive email updates, please visit our website and go to the "News" button. Select "Newsletter" and then choose "eNewsletter."

MidwestFoodBank.org



Midwest Food Bank

2031 Warehouse Road

Normal, IL 61761

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“I’m a little pencil in the hand of a writing God, who is sending a love letter to the world.”—Morther Teresa

CONNECT

Follow us on Facebook



ENGAGE

Contact your local Midwest Food Bank to learn more about our volunteer opportunities.

SUPPORT

We are thankful for your support in prayer. If you are led to contribute financially, we have enclosed an envelope for your convenience. On behalf of those we serve, thank you.

Produced by Midwest Food Bank
2031 Warehouse Road, Normal, IL 61761

Charity Navigator rating

Charity Navigator (charitynavigator.org) is America’s premier charity evaluating service. They evaluate a charity’s financial health, as well as its accountability and transparency. A 4-star rating indicates a charity which “exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in its cause.”

Midwest Food Bank is thankful to have earned the 4-star rating for a seventh consecutive year. We strive to be good stewards over the donations entrusted to us. To all of the volunteers and donors who make this possible, we offer our humble and sincere, “thank you.”



Visit to MFB East Africa

MFB East Africa continues to support partner schools, churches and orphanages with the distribution of Tender Mercies and fresh produce. MFB board members, staff and supporters, and Illinois State University leaders visited operations in Kenya in two groups in late January and early February. Both trips included visits to partner

agencies.

The teams also toured Soy Afric, the company that packages Tender Mercies meals, and observed the process. It was a blessing to see in person the jobs created through Tender Mercies packaging. MFB staff in Kenya continue to identify and review new agency partners to further our reach.

The ISU team met with university leaders and educators in Kenya and Tanzania to evaluate the effectiveness of nutrition education in East Africa. The goal was to identify ways to improve the nutritional knowledge of the general population.



Students at one of the MFB East Africa partner schools.