



The mission of the Food Bank of Lincoln is to alleviate hunger in Southeast Nebraska.

Condello a volunteer for the decades

A radio interview in 1982 started it all for longtime volunteer Frank Condello, who was intrigued by a request for food donations to the local food bank. Having recently moved from New Jersey, Frank was unfamiliar with the concept of food banking. To be fair, most of Southeast Nebraska was, too. The organization was new to the area and calling community members to help.

A call to which Frank quickly responded.

“My wife and I looked at all the food in our pantry, threw away the expired foods and took a bunch of things ... I called the food bank to donate it and they said to bring it out.”

Out, as in its location at 36th and Adams—a facility about the size of a small garage.

He came to deliver his donation and tour the operation. He left a Food Bank advocate.

“At the time, nobody really knew about food insecurity,” Frank said. “Once you get involved with the Food Bank you realize how much good it’s doing, how important it is, and try to do as much as you can.”

Returning to Nebraska Book Company, where he worked for 45 years before retiring in 2009, Frank taught his coworkers about the Food Bank and held frequent workplace food drives. He collected personal care items, such as toothpaste and toothbrushes, from his son who was a dentist. And he volunteered on-site at the Food Bank, assisting the small staff when he could.

He was there for the move to the Food Bank’s second location, a space at 57th and Russell Drive, and again for the move in 1997 to our current location at 4840 Doris Bair Circle.

He’s been there after hours, too. On weeknights and weekends, Frank used to fold paper bags that were inserted in the Lincoln Journal Star. These bags collected food and were dropped in donation barrels at grocery stores. The folding had to be just right to fit the bag in the newspaper, a skill Frank perfected by creating his own custom tool. The first year, he folded 500 bags. The second, he doubled that. One year, Frank folded more than 2,500 bags himself—a hefty task for a man who claims he hasn’t “done all that much.”



For years, Frank helped prepare paper bags used to collect food donations during the holidays. Now, he picks-up holiday donations from stores and delivers them to the Food Bank.



As the vice president of marketing and communications at Nebraska Book Company, Frank used his marketing know-how to collaborate with the Food Bank for promotions and outreach—the effects of which are still seen today. Frank’s wife, Nadine, was the executive vice president of the Home Builders Association of Lincoln, and together, the two developed the idea of the “Food Bank House.” At the annual Home and Garden Show, attendees bring a canned food item to donate in exchange for a reduced admission price. Since its origination in 2003, the Food Bank House has collected more than 87,400 pounds of food for the Food Bank. Again, a lot of meals for a man who claims he hasn’t “done all that much.”

This year, Frank celebrates his 80th birthday, 60th wedding anniversary and a 40-year partnership with the Food Bank. Thank you, Frank, for all you have done, and for answering the call 40 years ago.