

The Feeding Frontline

lincolnfoodbank.org

Fall 2022 Newsletter



Celebrating 40 Years of Feeding

In 1981, Peg Huff visited St. Mary's Food Bank in Phoenix. Peg, who worked at the Cooper Foundation, was inspired by their mission of repurposing large quantities of "waste" food, and upon her return, discussed it with then-president Jack Thompson. Jack rallied others in the community interested in launching a similar endeavor in Lincoln. The Foundation hired Bob Troyer to lead the effort, and on August 16, 1982, the Food Bank of Lincoln opened its doors.

As we celebrate our 40th anniversary, we're grateful to these community-minded individuals who recognized the need and built the foundation for our organization. In this newsletter, we reflect on the friends, supporters, partners and programs who have helped us connect neighbors to more than 146,156,609 meals in our organization's history; offer a look at our newly finished facility; and reaffirm our commitment to providing all neighbors with equitable access to nutritious food. Thank you for being part of our story.

Mission

To alleviate hunger in
Southeast Nebraska.

Vision

Nourishing our
communities to end hunger.

Values

Collaboration,
Compassion, Diversity,
Education, Responsibility

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A Letter from The President & CEO

It's official! We are a 40-year-old organization. It's worth celebrating and asking ...
Where were you 40 years ago?

Some of you reading this were already active in your community and beyond. Perhaps you heard about this idea of a "food bank" and grew curious about what it might mean and how it would function. Maybe you were a person who benefited from a community willing to put differences aside and focus on the essential need for food. Others of you, like me, might have been oblivious to any of that.

To be fair, I was toddling around in diapers 40 years ago, mostly concerned about keeping up with my 10 older siblings and doting on my younger sister. I was clueless about the ways of the world, and some days there is still plenty about the world we live in that absolutely baffles me.

The Food Bank of Lincoln has been an active force from our first baby steps. Caring nurturers stood nearby showing us what can happen with solid support. With confidence came opportunity. Our best teachers—the neighbors we serve—remind us of our greatest responsibility.

This organization has grown up, but we haven't stopped learning. With that in mind, this year we launch a three-year plan focused on the following strategic directions:

- Reach more neighbors.
- Inspire action for food security.
- Engage people who care.
- Connect technology and data.
- Nurture a deep bench of leaders.



Forty years later, we have a more invested, mature perspective about our work. We don't know it all, but that won't stop us from seeking more answers. We'll keep a youthful curiosity that pushes us to ask more questions. We've made a significant difference in our first 40 years, and like many of you, we believe the best is yet to come.

In service,

Michaela Kumke
President & CEO

Collaboration Spotlight Partner Agencies

Alleviating hunger cannot be done alone. That's why, for 40 years, the Food Bank has collaborated with a network of nonprofit agencies to get food to neighbors.

Today, we are proud to work alongside 46 community partners, serving 75 sites across Southeast Nebraska.

Congratulations to our partners celebrating milestone anniversaries this year!

- People's City Mission, Lincoln – 115 years
- Community Pantry, Beatrice – 50 years
- Community Action's Gathering Place, Lincoln – 40 years
- Project Response, Auburn – 35 years
- Matt Talbot Kitchen & Outreach, Lincoln – 30 years
- Bridging Our Community Pantry, David City – 1 year

To learn more about our partner agency network, visit lincolnfoodbank.org.

40 Years

Serving Southeast Nebraska



1980s

1982

The Food Bank of Lincoln, Inc. opened its doors at 3642 Adams Street, a garage-sized building.

1983

First full operating year resulted in about 317,170 meals connected.

1986

Moved to a new location, 57th and Russell Drive, which was approximately 7,000 square feet.

1988

Computerized financial and inventory records, improving speed and accuracy of operations.



1990s

1997

Moved to its third location at 4840 Doris Bair Circle, with nearly triple the space.



2000s

2004-2005

Launched the Backpack Program at Clinton Elementary School, serving 50 children.

2007

Ordered and distributed first semi-truckload of fresh produce from the Feeding America network.



2010s

2010

Hired the first SNAP Outreach worker.

2011

Held the first School Food Market, serving 117 students at Lincoln High School.

2014

With a focus on shortening food lines, added Bridges Out of Poverty to educational outreach.



2019

Launched Lincoln Fresh, distributing 108,647 pounds of fresh produce to 12,985 people in its first year.

Assumed management of Summer Food Service Program and Commodity Supplemental Food Program, accelerating services to get food to children and seniors year-round.

Child Hunger Programs grew to more than 110 schools in 16 counties, serving more than 5,000 families each month.



2020s

2020

Pivoted to a drive-thru food distribution model in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2021

Connected neighbors to 13.3 million meals, the most in a single year in the organization's history.

2022

Following a successful capital campaign, moved to a newly constructed facility at 1221 Kingbird Road, with nearly 1.5 times the space.



Total Meals Connected

1982-1991: 4,118,399

1992-2001: 10,247,134

2002-2011: 33,865,078

2012-2022: 97,925,998

Food Bank of Lincoln History

146,156,609

Food Bank of Lincoln Leadership

1982: Bob Troyer, General Manager

1984: Wende Baker, General Manager

2001: Scott Young, Executive Director

2021: Michaela Kumke, President & CEO



From left to right: Scott Young, Michaela Kumke, Wende Baker

By design, Bavitz puts heartfelt touch on new facility



Liz Bavitz, project architect and principal at Sinclair Hille, has 31 years of experience at the practice. She has spent roughly half of that time helping the Food Bank of Lincoln alleviate hunger in Southeast Nebraska.

It was important to John Sinclair, one of the firm's founding members. And it is important to her.

"John asked if I would like to be on the Board as his term was coming to an end," Liz said. "He said the Food Bank was in need of more women on the Board and thought I would enjoy the work. In 2006, I began my nine years of service. I had the honor of serving as president of the Board for two years and as a member of the Food Bank Foundation Board for four years."

Five years ago, when the Food Bank decided to get serious about a new facility, it was not hard to identify an architect to lead the design effort. Liz was a natural.

"From my first Board orientation meeting with Scott Young, I realized how critical the work is and wanted to help make a difference. The impact of the Backpack Program on our young students at that time was especially meaningful to me as I had elementary school kids. The heartbreaking stories of hungry kids spurred me to help the cause."



The Scott Young Hunger Solutions Center was designed to increase safety and efficiency and to increase access to healthy food.

In 2017, the Food Bank was considering its options; to remodel or build new. "When Scott asked if I would help with the project on a professional level, I jumped again at the chance to assist."

The project was completed earlier this year, and on May 2, Food Bank of Lincoln operations moved to a 60,000 square-foot space at 1221 Kingbird Road in northwest Lincoln.

"Working closely with Scott and the amazing team at the Food Bank, from initial discussions about the project through to the completed building, has been a highlight of my career," Liz said. "I so look forward to seeing the impact the new space has on their operations and how it helps to expand service and serve the need. It means the world to me to have been included on their journey. Thank you."

And thank you, Liz, for designing a beautiful new facility, along with your team, and more than 15 years of heartfelt support for our mission.



Surrounded by natural light, the reception area offers a warm welcome to the Food Bank.



The Wende Baker Community Room is an inviting space to engage in meaningful conversation.

Pantry provides food and friendship

"A household of five? That's up to 35 pounds," Midge says after welcoming a visitor to the LPS Emergency Pantry on a Wednesday afternoon in late May.

As a collaborative effort between the Food Bank, Leadership Lincoln and Lincoln Public Schools (LPS), the Emergency Pantry opened in 2008 to serve students and their families in need of food.

Midge Dance and Jani Gentry have volunteered at the Pantry every other Wednesday for the last 10 years. In that time, they've developed a routine. Midge greets guests, verifies household size and ensures neighbors know how many pounds of food they are welcome to take home.

Jani's role is to weigh the selection and record how much food goes out the door. She also checks the baked goods for signs of spoilage—disposing of items as needed.

In-between visitors, the two scan the shelves and report back to Food Bank staff when items are low. They make note of which items move quickly—like "juice!" they both exclaim—and which items tend to stick around a bit longer. They concoct recipes from the available goods, trying to see if they can make a nutritious meal solely from the items on the shelves.

"Some people apologize for coming here, but we remind them 'that's why we're here,'" Jani says. "We try to be welcoming and make it as non-threatening as possible," Midge adds. And they do.



"It's kind of been my mission the last 10 years," Midge says, who also helps coordinate her church's involvement with the Backpack program. "It could be my neighbors (experiencing food insecurity)," Jani adds.

We're grateful to Midge, Jani and all the volunteers and partners who make our Child Hunger Programs possible.

The LPS Emergency Pantry (located at Bryan Community School, 300 S. 48th) is back in action for the 2022-23 school year. It is open from 3-5:30 p.m. every Monday, Wednesday and Friday when school is in session. To learn more about the Pantry and our other Child Hunger Programs, visit lincolnfoodbank.org.

Hunger Action Month

No one should have to choose between paying for groceries or paying for medicine, utilities, fuel, childcare or other basic necessities.

September is Hunger Action Month, a dedicated time to increase awareness about food insecurity and take action to end hunger. Join us by wearing orange—the color of hunger—on **Sept. 23 for Hunger Action Day**, visit our educational display in the rotunda at the Nebraska Capitol between Sept. 1-15, and stay connected to our social media for more ways you can advocate and engage to help alleviate hunger in Southeast Nebraska and beyond.



Address

1221 Kingbird Road
Lincoln, NE 68521

www.lincolnfoodbank.org
402.466.8170

Hours

8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Monday-Friday

Connect On Social Media



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