

The Feeding Frontline



Spring 2023
lincolnfoodbank.org



Hometown Fresh Launches in Rural Communities



As neighbors walk through Hometown Fresh, they add a variety of fresh produce, frozen meat, dairy and shelf-stable items to their bags.

After more than two years in the making and with the generous support of Sandhills Global and Healthy Blue, the Food Bank of Lincoln's newest program launched in February. With an emphasis on alleviating hunger in rural and underserved communities, Hometown Fresh made its debut in Plymouth, Neb., (pop. 359), and travels to eight rural communities each month.

"Hometown Fresh is a reminder that every town in our 16-county service area, regardless of the population, deserves to have access to healthy food," said Michaella Kumke, Food Bank of Lincoln President & CEO.

To determine the pilot sites, the Food Bank created heat maps of food resources in Southeast Nebraska and identified communities furthest from access points. Community members and local grocers collaborated with the Food Bank on how the program would look in their communities. In its first full month of operation, Hometown Fresh served 295 households and connected neighbors to 6,389 pounds of food.

The walk-thru pantry was designed in collaboration with Sandhills Global who helped fund the project, and built by Adams Industries, who ensured each component of the 36-foot-long, 11,000-pound trailer was carefully crafted. Support from Healthy Blue helped purchase the truck that pulls the trailer and helps to stock the trailer's shelves.

"It doesn't happen unless we have partners who care about our work and share in the belief of our mission," Michaella said. "When all these energies come together, we get something like this trailer."

Mission

To alleviate hunger in
Southeast Nebraska.

Vision

Nourishing our
communities to end hunger.

Values

Collaboration,
Compassion, Diversity,
Education, Responsibility

Board of Directors

Paula Hodges, President
Ameritas Life Insurance Corp.

Michelle Sitorius, Vice President
Cline Williams Law Firm

Steph Ledbetter, Past President
Zelle HR

Ron Jester, Treasurer
Labenz & Associates LLC

Dr. Vann Price, Secretary
Lincoln Public Schools

Becky Gould
Nebraska Appleseed

Marc Hausmann
NAI FMA Realty

Mariana Hunt
Union Bank & Trust

Jason Muhleisen
Union Bank & Trust

Dr. Takako Olson
Lincoln Public Schools

Ben Pankonin
Social Assurance

Kayla Pham
Wellness Pharmacy

Nancy Tellez
City of Crete

Dennis Van Horn
Van Horn Custom Homes

David Wilcox
Retired, Union Bank & Trust

A Letter from The President & CEO



Before I saw her, I could hear her. The young girl, who I guessed to be 8 or 9 years old. She was humming loudly as she rode her small bike around the curve of a trail. When I did see her, I noticed the wind blew her long hair behind her in the same way the purple streamers on her handlebars danced. It seemed she didn't have a care in the world. She zipped by me in a purple blur, humming out of key the entire time. It made me smile.

"Lucky kid." I thought to myself. My very next thought was, "Or maybe not."

One in 7 children in Southeast Nebraska is food insecure. The stat almost plays on a loop in my brain ... sometimes even when I'm on a post-workday stroll to clear my head. **Sometimes, even a little kid blazing down a trail who appears to be carefree is shouldering big issues.**

One of my colleagues shared an experience she had when her kindergarten-aged son arrived home one afternoon during the first month of school and said, "Mom, who gets a backpack? My friend gets a backpack on Fridays. The principal says they are just for Friday Friends." She explained the reality of food insecurity in her neighborhood felt heavier when viewed through the eyes of her 5-year-old.

The Food Bank's activity, like Hometown Fresh (pg. 1), takes us to places across Southeast Nebraska to ensure older Americans and individuals who call rural Nebraska home have easier access to nutritious food. It allows us to connect with students during the school year (pg. 3) and through the Summer Food Service Program and Summer Backpack deliveries in the summer months, when school meals aren't available.

Community fundraising days, like Give to Lincoln Day on May 24, and generous giving throughout the year allow us to face hunger. **More importantly, your involvement allows us to see the faces of our neighbors facing hunger and offer a connection that most often results in a pair of carefree smiles, if only for a moment.**

In service,

Michaela Kumke
President & CEO



Food Finder

If you or someone you know needs food, we invite you to visit the Food Finder tool on our website. Here, you can enter your zip code to see a list of drive-thru distributions, Lincoln Fresh stops, pantry locations and hot meal sites in Southeast Nebraska that are closest to you.



Raising Our Response: A Year in Review

It's been one year since we began operating from our new facility in Northwest Lincoln, and what a year it has been! With more space, we've been able to host community groups, a record number of volunteers and an on-site mobile food distribution that serves 750-1,000 households every other week. The modernized freezer-cooler unit has helped us accept, preserve and distribute more fresh, healthy foods. And closer proximity to major roadways and public transportation has improved efficiency and accessibility.

Thank you for helping make this—and so much more—possible in our first year and the years to come.

Learn more about how you helped Raise Our Response to Hunger. Follow us on social media and visit lincolnfoodbank.org for statistics and testimonials from our first year in the new facility.

Child Hunger Programs Expand to Northwest Lincoln

In partnership with Lincoln Public Schools, the Food Bank of Lincoln launched its newest Food Market at Northwest High School during the 2022-23 school year. Since starting in November, the market has served an average of 104 families (505 individuals) each month. Through the Food Market model, a variety of fresh produce, protein, dairy and shelf-stable items are brought into the schools for students and their families to select the items they want.

As part of our Child Hunger Programs, School Food Markets are held in 30 schools across Southeast Nebraska, serving an estimated 4,000 children and families each month during the school year.

Thank you to the Northwest Falcons and all the school partners, volunteers and supporters who help make these programs possible.



*Most recent numbers available at the time of print.



Food Bank FAQ:

I'm interested in volunteering. How do I get started?

Thank you for your hunger to help! Whether you're looking to volunteer as an individual or group, one-time or on a recurring basis, we have a variety of opportunities that may excite you.

Please visit lincolnfoodbank.org/give-help/volunteer to complete a volunteer application and sign up for available activities. We may also reach out if we have specific needs that align with your interests.

Questions? Please contact Lauren Ritta at lritta@lincolnfoodbank.org.

Staff Spotlight:

Georgann Roth

Georgann Roth is committed to serving her community. It's just part of who she is.

In fact, when asked to describe her hobbies, "helping people" was at the top of her list (followed by reading, garage sale-ing and football fandom).

"I was, at one time, one of the people who needed help, so it makes the most sense to me to give back to the community that helped me get on my feet," she said.

After working in the local nonprofit sector for more than a decade, the opportunity to become the new Community Resource Manager at the Food Bank of Lincoln seemed like a natural fit.

"I love the interactions between the community and nonprofits," Georgann explained. "I envision bringing the community together around the same table. Everybody and anybody."

And Georgann is excited to do just that through her work with Bridges Out of Poverty and Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin' By World, an initiative championed by the Food Bank that is returning in full force this year.

Bridges Out of Poverty is a single, multi-day or ongoing forum for businesses, organizations and individuals to explore the many factors that contribute to poverty. Getting Ahead is a kitchen table-style learning experience for neighbors who are living in or near poverty. Both use a lens of economic class and lived experience to foster a common language and share tools that can alleviate poverty and create opportunities.

"If we can come to an understanding as a community, we can affect change on many different levels."



Learn more at lincolnfoodbank.org or contact Georgann Roth at groth@lincolnfoodbank.org.

Give to Lincoln Day

Wednesday, May 24

When you donate through Give to Lincoln now through May 24, your support will help put even more meals on tables for neighbors in need.

Thanks to the Lincoln Community Foundation and generous community sponsors, nonprofits get a proportional share of a match fund during this event.

Your support has helped make this community-wide event a success since 2012, and we are grateful.

To donate or learn more, visit givetolincoln.com or contact John Mabry at jmabry@lincolnfoodbank.org or (402) 819-6861.



Empty Bowls

A fundraiser benefiting the Food Bank of Lincoln

Empty Bowls

Tuesday, May 30 | 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Embassy Suites, 1040 P Street, Lincoln, Neb.

Spoons up! We hope you'll join us for the 21st annual Empty Bowls luncheon. Event attendees will select a handcrafted stoneware bowl from Down Under Pottery studio and enjoy a variety of soups from Lincoln's culinary greats—all while fighting hunger in Southeast Nebraska. Tickets are \$25 each and available for purchase while supplies last at lincolnfoodbank.org.



This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Address

1221 Kingbird Road
Lincoln, NE 68521
www.lincolnfoodbank.org
402.466.8170

Hours

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

Connect On Social Media



/FoodBankofLincoln



@FoodBankofLincoln



@FoodBankLincoln

