

# The Feeding Frontline



Winter 2024  
lincolnfoodbank.org

## Knights Helping Knights

Steven and Doug graduated from Lincoln Southeast High School in the 1970s, yet on the third Wednesday of each month, these LSE Knights still find themselves at school.

But this time, they aren't studying for exams or participating in athletics. Instead, they—along with about eight other LSE alumni—are helping connect an average of 70 students, staff and their families to meals at a monthly School Food Market.

When the call for volunteers to help with the Market went out, this LSE alumni group answered.

**"To come back and serve my school? That's huge," said alumni volunteer Steven Moore. "I loved high school, and I just want to give back to the school that gave me so much."**

In addition to connecting food, the alumni have enjoyed reconnecting with their school and learning how things have evolved.

"I'm glad we can come back and see what's going on at Southeast and help at the Food Market. We're still proud Knights," said alumni volunteer Doug Ganz. "When I grew up in the mid-70s at Southeast we had different sets of challenges, and I don't recall food insecurity being one of them. The community has grown a lot, and we face more challenges. Now, food insecurity is a very serious one."

Gretchen Baker is a social worker at LSE and has helped coordinate this Market since it began in 2014. During this time, she's seen more staff visit the Market and encourage their students to attend. Sometimes, staff even walk students to the distribution to help alleviate nerves or uncertainty, creating an atmosphere of welcome that is reinforced by the alumni Knights who interact with the students, share stories from their time at LSE, and are often heard saying, "Take this" or "Let me help you with that."

**"There is a huge need, and many families are struggling right now," Gretchen explains. "There are so many families where parents are working, and you'd think they are fine but are just not able to make ends meet. We're lucky to partner with the Food Bank."**

And while the students get especially excited about the baked goods, Steven shares the gratitude he hears for the entire menu, citing full grocery bags and students who say, "Thank you so much for being here."



## Mission

To alleviate hunger in  
Southeast Nebraska.

## Vision

Nourishing our  
communities to end hunger.

## Values

Collaboration,  
Compassion, Diversity,  
Education, Responsibility

## Board of Directors

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# A Letter from The President & CEO



In middle school, I played on a traveling basketball team. Then, it seemed like an opportunity to hone athletic skills alongside my pals. In retrospect, Big Gene's coaching offered lessons beyond three-point shooting form. The importance of anticipating the next move is an example. He meant the next pass or shot, but it can be applied off-court, too.

As we consider opposition and opportunities facing food insecurity in 2024, we anticipate momentum shifts.

Last fiscal year, we purchased 46 percent of the more than 11 million pounds of food we connected. Compare that to the 13 percent we purchased in 2019. **Thanks to your generosity and our focus on supporting healthier communities, the quality of food we put into our neighbors' hands is the best in our organization's history.** Continued long lines at mobile food distributions, increased partnership requests, and existing partners' stress related to the demand they continue to see inform us that our purchased product amounts will remain high. Unfortunately, state and federal funding to help meet those feeding needs is less reliable.

The average cost of a meal in Nebraska is \$3.38\*. The Food Bank spends about 50 cents per meal. This efficiency is key to our operation and trustworthy reputation. Our organizational performance is strong and responsible as ever. Still, you will read the Food Bank's ability to stretch a dollar has changed (Page 4). The Food Bank is not immune to economics or policymakers' decisions. Yet, our last audit revealed 92 cents of every dollar raised goes directly to our programs. We anticipate changes and remain stalwart about feeding.

Our team is creating new ways to engage the community and elevate awareness about neighbors who are most vulnerable to food insecurity. We're also joining forces with other area leaders to prioritize addressing hunger among older neighbors and senior citizens.

We'll continue to anticipate the changes that impact our work, then we'll adapt. The great ones always do.

With gratitude,

Michaela Kumke  
President & CEO

\*Source: Gundersen, C., Strayer, M., Dewey, A., Hake, M., & Engelhard, E. (2023). Map the Meal Gap 2023: An Analysis of County and Congressional District Food Insecurity and County Food Cost in the United States in 2021.

## Farm Bill Update

In November 2023, a Continuing Resolution was signed into law that temporarily extended government funding through early 2024. This legislation also extended the 2018 Farm Bill through Sept. 30. As lawmakers negotiate a new Farm Bill, we're continuing to advocate for strong anti-hunger programs. Learn more about how the Farm Bill impacts Food Banks and how you can become an advocate at [lincolnfoodbank.org/advocate](https://lincolnfoodbank.org/advocate).





# Meet Tiffany Chief Operating Officer

## Why were you interested in joining the Food Bank of Lincoln as COO?

I had the privilege of working most of my professional career at a company that was highly involved in giving back to the community. I was lucky enough to work with the Food Bank on several occasions during this time and know how impactful and necessary the work is to our community. I feel strongly about the importance of breaking down barriers that exist in a person's life. The Food Bank truly allows me to serve my neighbors in a way that can impact their lives and help them overcome such barriers.

## How have your previous experiences prepared you for this role?

I spent close to 14 years in the service industry where we did everything possible to create an experience that was truly special for our customers. This is no different. Each neighbor who comes to one of our distributions, pantries, markets, etc. should feel valued and worthy of our services. I also have an extensive background in purchasing and inventory management that will be helpful as we do our best to have the correct quantity and the highest quality of products that we can to best serve our neighbors.



Tiffany Murray joined the Food Bank team in November as COO.

## What has been an impactful moment during your first few months?

There have been several. I think it can be easy to ignore, misjudge or misunderstand the need in our community. The need is great. Life is full of many circumstances and one "event" can truly change a person's life and their need for additional resources. We are here to make sure that neighbors know they have support if/when they need it most.

## When you're not fighting hunger, how do you like to spend your time?

My family is my whole world. Right now, everything revolves around a spunky little 3-year-old and her 9-month-old triplet sisters and brother. I love to run and really enjoy the challenge of training for an event and forcing myself to "stretch" a bit out of my comfort zone. Up next, Boston!

## What do you most want to achieve with your team this year?

We continue to see an increased need in our schools, neighborhoods and communities. A great goal for this team is to continue to find ways to meet the need and to meet the need in a way that puts our neighbors first.

# Lincoln Fresh 2023 Season Starts



**262,759**  
Pounds of Fresh  
Produce Distributed



**31,090**  
Visitors Served  
18% increase from  
2022 season



**14**  
Distribution Sites



**228**  
Stops Hosted



**48**  
Different Types of  
Produce Offered  
Such as tomatoes, apples,  
eggplant, daikon, hami  
melon, red peppers and  
oranges!

## Foundation of the Year

Congratulations to our friends at the Acklie Charitable Foundation, winners of the AFP Outstanding Private Foundation Award for 2023. The Acklie Foundation has provided hundreds of thousands of meals for children and families through their generous contributions over the last several years. In addition, the Foundation gave \$1 million to provide a major boost to our facility campaign. The award was presented in November by the Association of Fundraising Professionals Nebraska Chapter. **Thank you and congratulations, Acklies!**

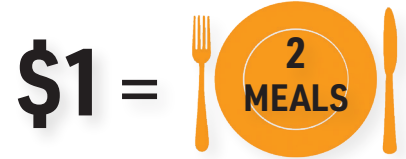
# A Message from the CFO: An Update to Our Meals Claim



Each year, as part of our contract with Feeding America, the Food Bank of Lincoln calculates how many meals are provided to neighbors per dollar spent by the Food Bank. The calculation uses an average of the most recent three years. For the last several years, that average has been three meals provided per dollar spent.

**This year, for the first time, that number is two meals provided per dollar spent.**

This decrease doesn't come as a great surprise and makes sense given the inflationary environment the world has been in. This decrease is a trend at other Feeding America food banks as well. Everything costs more these days – food, labor, transportation and supplies. Food banks are having to do more with less and are trying to make each dollar stretch farther and farther.



This same inflation affects the neighbors we serve, too. Because everything costs more, people are more likely to find themselves in situations where they must choose between food and medicine, or food and transportation to work. This all leads to increased demand for food bank services. For the last two fiscal years, 92 percent of funds at the Food Bank of Lincoln went directly to feeding, leaving only 8 percent spent on administrative costs. So, while a dollar doesn't provide as many meals as it previously did, the Food Bank of Lincoln continues to be an incredibly efficient operation.

Jenny Ekeler  
Chief Financial Officer

SAVE THE DATE

Feb  
29

## Steps Toward Equity: An Extra Day for Progress

Join us on this Leap Year Day to kick off the 17th annual Extra Mile Walk by learning about child hunger in our communities, uncovering obstacles that generate food disparities and promoting actions that increase equitable access to food.

April

## U-Stop Kicks It Back to the Community

Fuel up at any U-Stop location on Tuesdays in April and 2 cents of every gallon of gas sold will be donated to the Food Bank of Lincoln.

Apr  
20

## Extra Mile Walk

Take the first step toward alleviating child hunger in our community. Fundraising for this event is now open and supports Child Hunger programs.

May  
28

## Empty Bowls Luncheon

Enjoy soup from local chefs, select a handmade stoneware bowl from Down Under Pottery studio and help fight hunger in Southeast Nebraska. Tickets go on sale **March 11**.

May  
30

## Give to Lincoln Day

A community-wide day of giving to support local nonprofits.

For more information, visit [lincolnfoodbank.org](http://lincolnfoodbank.org).



This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## Address

1221 Kingbird Road  
Lincoln, NE 68521  
[www.lincolnfoodbank.org](http://www.lincolnfoodbank.org)  
402.466.8170

## Hours

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

## Connect On Social Media



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