

Food Matters

A publication of the Aurora Area Interfaith Food Pantry **Fall 2016**



Hunger Action Month

“I never thought I would need to use a food pantry.”

This is something we hear often. Most of us probably never envision a future where we are unable to buy food for ourselves or our families. But hunger can affect anyone, no matter their background.

September marks Hunger Action Month, a nationwide initiative to make people aware of hunger issues in their communities, as well as what can be done to help end hunger. This year, we were pleased to have Denise Crosby, a columnist with *The Beacon-News*, challenge herself and her family to experience what it is like to be food insecure. Denise limited herself for a week to the budget of the annual food stamp recipient (less than \$5.00 per day) for any food she purchased and supplemented the rest with food she received at Aurora Food Pantry.

Denise was surprised with the number of fresh and healthy options available at the Pantry. “I was allowed to fill a large grocery bag with choices like oranges,

apples, bananas, peaches... asparagus, broccoli and fresh corn, some of it straight from local farmers’ fields.” At the end of her trip to the Pantry, she concluded, “I will eat food that is both delicious and nutritious. And isn’t that what every man, woman and child deserves?” (You can read more about Denise’s experience in *The Beacon-News* or at <http://trib.in/2cxEy1h>)

Want to get more involved? Head over to **aurorafoodpantry.org** and download our Hunger Action Month calendar. It’s full of ideas and facts about hunger. Also, during the month of September, you can wear orange to show your support. Together, we can end hunger in our community.

Hunger facts:

1 in 7 people in America struggles with hunger



1 in 5 kids in Illinois struggles with hunger



60,000 people in Kane County live in poverty



50% of households that use food pantries have an employed family member



Over 10,000 students in Aurora elementary schools are eligible for free/reduced price lunch

A Message from the Executive Director

Whenever you have an anniversary - be it with a spouse or at a job - it's fun to look back on how things have changed over the years. As we celebrate our 35th anniversary at Aurora Food Pantry, I am continually amazed at what your support has achieved over the years.



The photo to the right is from our holiday food distribution in 2010, when we were located at Hesda House. I sometimes can't believe how many people we were able to serve from such a small space! Today, as a "client

choice" pantry, everyone who comes through our doors chooses the food they want and need for their family. Not only does this empower our clients, but it reduces food waste, as well.

Food waste, as you'll read in the article on the opposite page, is a huge problem in our country - but it also presents an opportunity. Through our food rescue program, we can save this perfectly good food from the landfill and give it to people in need. The vast majority of our dairy, meat and (very colorful!) produce is donated through food rescue and we are able to provide these wholesome choices to our clients every day.

Thirty five years ago, having this daily variety of fresh, healthy food would have been unimaginable.



Your generosity has made this a reality and for that we are so very grateful. Together, we can continue to ensure the health and happiness of our community, for the next thirty five years and beyond.



Marilyn Weisner

Raising the Curtain on the **Red Carpet Gala**

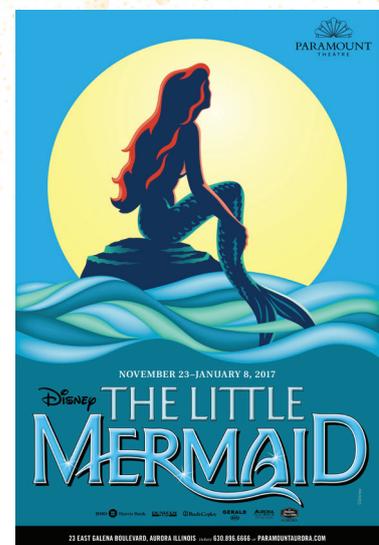
On November 12, we will be holding our sixth annual Gala and this year we're unveiling a fun new theme - a glitzy, glamorous evening in the style of a Broadway premiere. There will be a red carpet, open bar, delicious meal and musical selections from the cast of the Paramount Theater's *The Little Mermaid*. (This will be several weeks before the show debuts so Gala guests will be getting an unprecedented sneak peek!)

Held at Pipers Banquets, the annual Gala is a wonderful kick-off to the holiday season. This year we're excited to have professional auctioneer Sherry Truhlar lead us through a fun and entertaining evening (with a few surprises in store!). Funds raised at the Gala will support Aurora Food Pantry's mission of ensuring everyone in our community has access to enough nourishing food.

The evening is sure to be a showstopper - don't miss it!

Purchase tickets, and see sponsorship, program book ad and auction donation opportunities to promote your company at aurorafoodpantry.org or contact Nicole at nlouis@aurorafoodpantry.org or 630.692.3060.

For tickets to *The Little Mermaid* (opening November 23) please visit <http://bit.ly/2byfPxp>



Food to the Rescue

Think of the food at your favorite grocery store. Are the produce tables piled high with colorful, perfect-looking fruits and vegetables? Are all the aisles fully stocked? This is exactly what grocery stores strive to look like, but all that perfection comes at a cost.

To meet shoppers' expectations, stores end up throwing away a lot of edible food, like produce that isn't the perfect color or shape. Additionally, automated ordering can lead to a surplus of food, with unsold items getting tossed.

Combine this with all the food that is thrown away in homes or from restaurants and the end result is shocking: Americans throw away 40% of the food produced in the United States.* **That means each year, 33 million tons of perfectly edible food ends up in landfills – that's the equivalent of 150 Sears Towers!**

*U.S. Department of Agriculture

These numbers are even more frustrating when we know that there are people in our community without enough to eat. To help correct this unsustainable situation, we have greatly expanded our food rescue operation over the last several years. Every week, Aurora Food Pantry makes 28 trips to retrieve this perfectly edible food donated by grocery stores and food wholesalers so that we can distribute it to those in need.

The items we get through food rescue are mostly fresh items that we don't receive through traditional food drives. These include meat, dairy, eggs, produce and bread. Today, food rescue makes up nearly half of the food we distribute. These foods are among the most nutrient-dense and costly to consumers. Therefore, we are not only providing healthy options for our clients, but helping them stretch their budgets to cover other necessities.

3 easy ways YOU can reduce food waste:

1. When grocery shopping, always use a list to avoid impulse buys.
2. Learn how to properly store food so it stays fresh - visit eatbydate.com for tips.
3. Had a big meal out? Get a to-go container and have it for lunch the next day.



The vast majority of our fresh produce (pictured here in our market), is donated through food rescue

What we've been up to...

Since our last newsletter, it's been busy as ever at Aurora Food Pantry. Here are just a few of the things that have been going on:

April

We took delivery of our new **14 ft. refrigerated truck**, funded by Northern Illinois Food Bank, William G. McGowan Charitable Fund, Juvenile Protective Association, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and refurbished by Coffman Truck Sales. This has been a huge help collecting produce, meat and dairy during the hot summer months!



May

Aurora Food Pantry attended the **Hunger Summit** in Springfield, discussing hunger issues and possible solutions with lawmakers and representatives from other anti-hunger organizations.



June

We held our first ever radiothon as part of our annual **Matching Pallet** program. It was a big success and a ton of fun! Pictured here are (l to r) 95.9 The River's Scott Mackay, Marilyn Weisner and Hasnaa Ussein (owner of Mother's Pancake House).



July

Our annual **2nd 2 None 5K Run/Walk** stepped off at our fab new location – Chicago Premium Outlets. Thanks to everyone who ran/walked through the mall to ensure all our school children have enough to eat during the summer. We'll see you next year!





Celebrating 35 Years!

Aurora Area Interfaith Food Pantry

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**TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL
PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY**

Save the Date!

Holiday Food Drive

November 1 – 23



Red Carpet Gala

November 12



Subaru Share the Love Event

November 21-January 2

Watch our website for details!



Giving Tuesday

November 29

#GIVINGTUESDAY



**To receive our bi-monthly e-news,
email Nicole at nlouis@aurorafoodpantry.org**

Each week, 1,000 families who struggle with low wages, illness, unemployment, and more visit our pantry. In the past year, families received more than 50,000 grocery baskets full of nutritious food.

Thank You to our Leadership Circle



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- Gerald Subaru of Naperville
- Hollywood Casino Aurora
- Karen Leonard
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