Feeding America Report Shows Persistent Food Insecurity

On April 14, Feeding America released “Map the Meal Gap 2015”, an annual report detailing food insecurity rates at the county level. The overall food insecurity rate for Hoosier Hills Food Bank’s service area remained the same at 16.5%, and the child food insecurity rate for our area increased slightly from 22.4% to 22.6%. Both rates exceed the state and national food insecurity rates.

In some ways, this is good news because the numbers are relatively steady. Unfortunately, the numbers do indicate that there are still nearly 42,000 people, including nearly 11,000 children at risk of hunger in the communities we serve.

With your help, Hoosier Hills Food Bank continues working to meet this need. In the first quarter of 2015, we distributed 902,941 pounds of food, up almost 12% over last year. This included more than 172,000 pounds of fresh produce, up 36% from 2014. Your continued support will help us as we ready for the busy and high demand summer months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Food Insecurity Rate</th>
<th>Food Insecure Individuals</th>
<th>Child Food Insecurity Rate</th>
<th>Food Insecure Children</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
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<td>24.4%</td>
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<td>Martin</td>
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<td>3,110</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
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<td>21.6%</td>
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</table>

For more information, visit
www.feedingamerica.org/mapthegap
Broken Records or a Broken Record?

On reading our last newsletter, a friend commented to me, “well, duh, Julio...you're always going to be saying you gave out more food and asking for more help.” It wasn't said maliciously, it was just a friendly commentary. But, I’d like to share a paraphrased (for context) version of the remarks I made at the media event releasing our 2014 Annual Report to help explain:

“Every time we report what we’re doing or ask for help, it reminds people of the need for the work we’re engaged in. Map the Meal Gap shows over 41,000 people, including nearly 11,000 children that are food insecure in our service area. We are determined that those people will not go hungry on our watch.

Hunger in America isn’t usually reflected by skinny children wasting away in the streets, for which I thank God, but which also makes it somewhat of a hidden problem. Those 11,000 food insecure children aren’t starving to death – but they are suffering from a lack of regular access to nutritious food. And if any skeptics want to dismiss that number, I’d say fine – what if it’s only 1% of that? Are 100 hungry children any more acceptable?

The answer is no. Emphatically no. Because if all we do means nothing more than that one child has a chance at a better life, it’s worth the investment. And because, that child, in that moment, understands and asks no more than what Nobel Prize winner Pablo Neruda stated so well – “for now, I ask no more than the justice of eating.”

It’s our job to make sure people don’t forget those 11,000 hungry kids. It’s our job to use every opportunity to remind people that not everyone always has enough to eat. It’s a problem that has been with us throughout the course of human history and that isn’t going to go away anytime soon. So, sometimes people get tired of hearing about it and we have to dress up in costumes to recapture their attention. And if that’s what it takes – that’s what we’ll do.”

So, yes, we’re going to go on trying to break records. And we’re going to go on telling you about it. Maybe one day, when those Map the Meal Gap numbers start going down, we can tell you that we need less help. But that’s not the case now.

Because community food drives dropped off last year and don’t happen in early winter, we’ve struggled to keep quality non-perishables available. The nearly three tons raised by IU Health Bloomington flew out the door as fast as we could sort it because we had no food drive for several weeks. In the past month, we’ve purchased two full trailers of pouches of vegetables and another trailer of fresh potatoes. Volunteers are re-labeling a whole trailer of donated Cheerios which we paid to transport here.

We could use your help headed into our busy summer season – financial support is really needed and so are food drives. If you can, please send in a donation, and please remember to put a food donation out on May 9th for your letter carrier. We’re counting on this year’s Stamp Out Hunger food drive to be big – help us promote it by taking a yard sign and reminding your neighbors, co-workers, friends and church members.

Thank you for making it possible for us to break those records – and for keeping faith with us and those we serve through a long period of recession and food insecurity.

Julio Alonso, Executive Director
HHFB Passes Compliance Audit

As a member of the national Feeding America network, Hoosier Hills Food Bank is required to undergo a biennial compliance audit. This comprehensive review is conducted by a Director of Compliance and Capability from the Feeding America national office who is assigned to work with our food bank, both during the audit and year round to help us remain in compliance and improve our capacity.

Feeding America is the nation's largest hunger relief charity and is essentially a federation of 200 independent non-profit food banks that serve every county nationwide. FA works at the national level to develop partnerships that result in food and financial donations; to lobby for federal investments in nutrition and anti-hunger programs; and to ensure that the network is accountable in areas such as food safety and legal compliance.

Our biennial audit was conducted during a two-day visit by Judy Alberg of Feeding America and included a compliance review and evaluation of 24 specific areas including Community Support, Financial Record Keeping and Management, Financial Stability, Insurance, Management and Governance: Staffing, Management and Governance: Board of Directors; Warehouse and Storage Capability & Food Safety and Handling, Agency Relations and Monitoring, Product Record Keeping and Inventory Control, and Donor Relations, among others.

We are pleased to report that HHFB was found to be fully compliant in all 24 areas evaluated.

Under a new contractual requirement, HHFB must also pass a third party food safety audit by 2016. This is common in the food industry and has now been extended to non-profit food banks in the network. We are working to meet that requirement this summer. As with any private sector business, remaining in regulatory compliance carries many costs for training, equipment, staffing levels, administration and maintenance. Unrestricted donor support helps us meet these requirements and standards.

Goodbye Leslie!

This month, we’re saying goodbye to Leslie Burns, our fantastic Nutrition Specialist. While working at the Food Bank, Leslie did a great job working with agencies, coming up with recipes to move product and delivering fresh produce to agencies around Bloomington through our GROW route. Leslie has been a wonderful addition to the Food Bank, adding her creative and artistic flare to our office! We wish Leslie the best in her future, as she pursues her dream of being a full-time farmer.

Our new Nutrition and Program Specialist, Laura Gambrel, joins us from IU’s School of Public and Environmental Affairs. Laura will bring her experience working with Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard, Middle Way House, and Schacht Farm. We are excited to welcome her to the Food Bank as she finishes her graduate coursework at IU this May.

GARDEN HOURS

April through October
Monday 9-11am
Wednesday 5:30-7:30pm
Thursday 9-11am

To check for weather cancelations or special volunteer events, including teen gardening visit the Garden & Gleaning calendar.
HuHot Mongolian Grill

Dine at HuHot Mongolian Grill to benefit Hoosier Hills Food Bank! Create your own stir fry and watch it being prepared for you on a 6-foot scorching hot grill.

HuHot will be donating 10% of its proceeds to HHFB on
Thursday, May 7th from 4pm - 8pm
2550 E 3rd St, Bloomington, IN 47401

IU Health Annual Food Drive

Special thanks to IU Health for their hard work on the fifth annual IU Health Food Drive!

This year, the food drive brought in 5,632 lbs of food. IU Health’s donation comes at a crucial time, as the bulk of our donations come in during the winter Holiday season.

Thanks for your contribution, IU Health!

Bloomington Community Book Fair

Be a Sponsor:

Become a Sponsor for the annual Bloomington Community Book Fair by donating to the Hoosier Hills Food Bank. Contact Jake Bruner for details at office@hhfoodbank.org or 812-334-8374.

Bring Us Your Books:

We are accepting books, CD’s, DVD’s, VHS tapes, albums, cassettes, games and puzzles at the Food Bank.

Host a Book Drive/Food Drive:

We need books! Help us collect materials by hosting a Book Drive. You can even collect food there as well! If you have too much to carry, contact us to arrange a pick-up.

hhfb@hhfoodbank.org or 812-334-8374

Book Fair Sale
October 8-13th
Pi(e) Run Bloomington

Thanks to all the runners and organizers of the 2015 Pi(e) Run!

Participants ran 3.14 miles on March 14th at 9:26:53 (or 3/14/15 at 9:26:53).

Pi(e) runners collected a total of 161 pounds of food and over $400 for the food bank! Thanks for your all your hard work!

Macy’s “Bag Hunger” Event

Thanks so much to Macy’s for again being a strong community partner.

Macy’s helped raise nearly $400 through employee giving that will be matched. The store employees also filled a barrel full of food for HHFB.

Each year Macy’s embraces this challenge and raises food and money for the food bank at a critical time.

March Against Hunger

Hoosier Hills Food Bank was again a participating agency in the March Against Hunger Campaign. Previously, our strongest partner had been Steven Douglas Law Firm winning “The General’s Cup” for sole proprietor 3 years in a row. This year Steven Douglas collected another $1,245 to support Hoosier Hills Food Bank, and we await his placement in comparison to the state.

We would like to thank the office of the Attorney General. The AG Office moved this campaign to the state bar association so that the program will continue to live on after the current AG moves on. Also, Steven Douglas who has not only won the General’s Cup 3 times but has also received an award at our Hunger Recognition Award Ceremony, he truly is a stalwart in this campaign, and has been a tremendous help to the Hoosier Hills Food Bank.
Hungry for Change

Letter Carriers Food Drive

On Saturday, May 9th, 2015, local letter carriers in Monroe County will once again be collecting food for Hoosier Hills Food Bank through the Stamp Out Hunger food drive.

Stamp Out Hunger is the food bank’s largest annual food drive and provides an important source of non-perishable donations to support the nearly 100 food pantries, kitchens, shelters and youth programs that obtain food from HHFB.

Last year, this critical source of food was down by 24%, leaving food bank shelves bare for most of the summer. Both HHFB and the food drive’s sponsor, National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 828, are hoping for a better response in 2015.

Donating is easy. All you need to do is place a non-perishable food donation by your mailbox on Saturday, May 9th. Your letter carrier will collect it for the food bank.

Volunteers are also needed to help prepare a mailing that reminds all Monroe County residents about the food drive and to help collect food in areas where carriers are on foot. To volunteer, contact Ryan at 812-334-8374 or volunteer@hhfoodbank.org.

Food insecurity (a lack of regular access to nutritious food) affects over 4,500 Monroe County children. Stamp Out Hunger provides an important supply of food to the agencies working to reduce that problem.

For more information visit www.stampouthungersci.org or www.hhfoodbank.org.

VOLUNTEER UPDATES!

The volunteer program is off to a quick start in 2015. We have had two of our biggest events already (MLK Day of Service and Soup Bowl), and started work on our Book Sale event scheduled for October. With the garden starting up again in April, that will bring even in more help to our programs.

By the numbers:

In the months of January, February, and March we have had 922 different volunteers assist us across all programs. Each month of 2015 has surpassed the amount of volunteer hours completed in the same month of 2014:

HHFB is up almost 9% on volunteer hours from this time last year! Book Sorting and warehouse volunteering were the two biggest contributing factors to this increase, logging 606 and 940 hours respectively.

And we are still looking to grow! Volunteers will be needed for the Garden and Gleaning programs in the summer months. If you have a green thumb, please contact Ryan Jochim at volunteer@hhfoodbank.org. We are also seeking an individual warehouse volunteer on Monday mornings to assist with Garden Route On Wheels preparation. It would be about a 2-hour commitment and you would work with our Nutrition Specialist to prep produce drop-offs for agencies in the area. Again contact Ryan Jochim if interested.
HHFB Releases 2014 Annual Report

As reported in the Bloomington Herald-Times, “the Hoosier Hills Food Bank distributed more than 4 million pounds of food last year – and its staff didn’t mind dressing up as giant peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to do it.”

On March 31st, HHFB released our 2014 Annual Report at a media event with community partners including Judy Alberg of the Feeding America national office, and representatives from United Way, the City of Bloomington, Walmart, Kroger, Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County, and Congressman Todd Young’s office as well as several agency partners including Community Kitchen and Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard.

The report is a comprehensive accounting of HHFB’s activities in 2014 including the successful “PBJ Campaign” which won us a $60,000 grant from Walmart to supply agencies with peanut butter, jelly and bread. It includes specific food receipt and distribution details, program information and highlights of the year which include the support of over 3,100 volunteers and records in the garden, gleaning, plant-a-row, mobile pantry and senior food box programs.

HHFB Executive Director Julio Alonso said that issuing the report is part of the food bank’s accountability efforts. “We exist because we have the support of the community, and we take our responsibility to our supporters, our donors, our volunteers, and our regulators very seriously. We ask for your help all year long and we think it’s important to tell you what we were able to do because of it.”

He also noted that despite record food distributions, HHFB’s agency partners still have high needs. In the food bank’s 2014 agency survey, 47% of agencies said they needed more food, and this number jumped to 58% among emergency food providers (pantries, kitchens and shelters).

Alonso gave special thanks to Director of Development and Administration Jake Bruner and SPEA Service Corps Development Fellow Angeline Bickner for their work in putting the report together. HHFB’s 2014 Annual Report is posted on our website, www.hhfoodbank.org. To request a hard copy, contact Jake at office@hhfoodbank.org.
Our Mission:
Hoosier Hills Food Bank collects, stores, and distributes nutritious food products to nonprofit organizations, which provide free feeding programs that serve both ill and needy families and individuals.

Taking the Hunger out of Poverty

On May 9th, the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) will be collecting food at mailboxes throughout Monroe County.

To help support NALC and Hoosier Hills Food Bank, please sign up to have a sign posted in your yard!

Please remember to donate and help us publicize this great event!

SIGN UP TODAY
Contact Ryan Jochim:
volunteer@hhfoodbank.org
812-334-8374

Board of Directors:
Chuck Cooksey, Maurice Garnier, Chris Gray, Nita Horrar, Nancy Kaster, George Huntington, Trina Mescher, Jeremy O’Leary, Adrian Reid, Margie Rice, Kevin Robling, Tom Ruemler, Scott Shackleford, Everett Southern

Staff:
Julio Alonso, Ashylnn Andrews, Brandon Bartley, Dan Baucco, Angeline Bickner, Bobbi Boos, Willis Bruce, Jake Bruner, Kelly Fraser, Laura Gambrel, Deke Hager, Erin Hollinden, Ryan Jochim, Ben Mescher, Donn Middleton, Hunter Roberts, Casey Steury, Dan Taylor, Brad Williams, Marina Young

If you receive two copies, please pass one on to a friend or notify the Hoosier Hills Food Bank. If you would like to be removed from our list, your request will be promptly honored.