



GIVE THE PERFECT GIFT

WINTER 2024

NORTHEAST IOWA
FOOD BANK



From the Director



The holiday season is upon us, and once again, the generosity of our community is shining through to help those who are food insecure. For many, the perfect gift is helping those who don't have enough to eat. Their perfect gift becomes our perfect gift.

The Northeast Iowa Food Bank was founded in 1981 because families needed help, and government resources were either unavailable or insufficient to alleviate food insecurity. The community came together to provide the perfect gift—food.

Since then, we have added programs, advocated for change, adapted to a shifting food supply, strengthened our partner network, upgraded our infrastructure, and invited donors and volunteers to contribute their time and money. All of this helps us fulfill our mission and vision.

This year is no exception. With food insecurity numbers higher than ever, we must continue coming together to make a difference—however big or small—and provide that perfect gift.

Here are some of the many stories we hear: a man whose family once relied on food assistance because his dad's job didn't pay enough now gives back as an adult. A child who depends on our Backpack Program because resources at home are scarce. A person applying for SNAP who struggles to complete the process because they don't have a phone to receive a callback from Health and Human Services.

Over the years, as we've been gifted time, food, and money, we've continually adapted to meet the needs that arise. Without these resources or advocacy for programs that help people, we wouldn't be able to give our perfect gift back to the community—food. Your perfect gift becomes ours, and we pass it on to someone who needs a hand up.

Right now, too many people in northeast Iowa are searching for their perfect gift of food. Please help us so that we can help those in need. In doing so, you'll know that, through us, you've given so many the perfect gift.

On behalf of those we serve, thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Prather". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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In Case You Missed It

Student Food Drive

Starting on October 7 and wrapping up on November 8, eight local schools raised 93,900 meals, completed 387 volunteer hours, and raised \$13,994.59. In the Small Division, Valley Lutheran took 1st place, followed by Dunkerton (2nd) and North Tama (3rd). In the Medium Division, Hudson placed 1st and Dike-New Hartford placed 2nd. In the Large Division, Waterloo East came in 1st, followed closely by Waterloo West finishing second while Cedar Falls competed independently.



HOLIDAY DISTRIBUTION

Our annual Holiday Distribution was a major success serving over 3,500 families Thanksgiving meals in northeast Iowa. With the help of over 450 incredible volunteers, they completed over 1,200 hours of volunteer work. A huge thank you goes out to our volunteers, sponsors, donors, and community members who made this such a success!

BIMBO/TYSON/WALMART DONATION

On November 12, we received a very generous donation of 4,000 loaves of bread and 15,000 pounds of protein from Bimbo Bakeries and Tyson Foods. This donation was won by Walmart Region 52 in the 2024 Fight Hunger Contest which was then donated to the Northeast Iowa Food Bank. After this amazing donation, Bimbo Bakeries, Tyson Foods, and Walmart donated their time by volunteering at NEIFB.



Coming Up!

Pack the Dome

Pack the Dome will be on January 20, 2025. This annual Day of Service is a partnership between UNI, the Office of Community Engagement, Panther Pantry, and AmeriCorps. All of these organizations and groups come together to partner with and support the work started by the Volunteer Center of Cedar Valley and the Northeast Iowa Food Bank. Volunteers come together to create BackPacks to support the NEIFB Backpack program.



Empty Bowls

Empty Bowls is our annual fundraiser and will be on April 4, 2025, at the Hilton Garden Inn in Cedar Falls. Throughout the event, attendees will join us in learning about the Food Bank, while also raising awareness and educating the community on the issue of hunger. Attendees will have the opportunity to purchase tickets and bid on both silent and live auction items.



April 4, 2025

STAY UP TO DATE ON ALL
THINGS NEIFB!



A VOICE FOR CHANGE

Nora Mitchell's Dedication to Fighting Food Insecurity

Through volunteering nearly 425 hours at the Northeast Iowa Food Bank and educating people by her FFA Nationals silver rating speech, Nora Mitchell has become a role model for others her age. Nora first started volunteering at the Northeast Iowa Food Bank after her freshman year of high school following a volunteer experience with a friend. FFA (Future Farmers of America) gave her an opportunity to earn a higher honor ranking, by getting her Iowa Degree, if she completed 380 hours of working or volunteering if it had relation to agriculture. Having previously volunteered at the Food Bank and with her passion for community involvement, she knew right away that she wanted to complete these hours at NEIFB, especially given the strong connection between food banks and agriculture.

“If I was having bad days or was stressed out, I could go and just work and I could serve other people.”

Recently, Nora had the opportunity to compete in the State FFA Prepared Public Speaking Contest, aiming for a chance to advance to nationals. Participants were required to deliver a six-to-eight-minute memorized speech on any agriculture-related topic, followed by a Q&A session. Nora chose to speak about food insecurity in northeast Iowa—a topic she found both powerful and personal, deeply rooted in the agriculture realm.

“I chose to do it about food insecurity because I had so much personal experience with volunteering at the Food Bank, so I thought that it could be very powerful.”

In this speech, Nora focuses on her time volunteering and how the Food Bank often collaborates with local farmers for free or reduced-price nutritious produce to distribute throughout NEIFB's 16-county service area. She also highlights that rural communities are at a higher risk for food insecurity encouraging people to be the change they want to see. In the end, Nora won the state competition and moved on to nationals in Indianapolis where she gave the same speech and got a silver rating.

We thank Nora for her hard work and dedication in our mission to fight food insecurity and inspiring young people to be the change.





Community First: Cole Beirnes Brings Passion for Giving Back to Tommy's Express Car Wash

Cole Beirnes, site manager of Tommy's Express Car Wash in Waterloo, has brought his passion for giving back to the community to his professional life. Cole has previously volunteered at the Northeast Iowa Food Bank through his local church many times. His past of giving to NEIFB has therefore inspired him to continue to support the cause of fighting food insecurity through his current work life. Throughout the month of August, a portion of their WORKS Washes were donated to the Northeast Iowa Food Bank resulting in a generous donation. Recognizing the impact of this new partnership, Cole is committed to deepening his efforts by organizing ongoing volunteer opportunities and encouraging his Tommy's Car Wash team to participate. His dedication exemplifies business excellence and community support, one act of service at a time. We're grateful to you!

Checker's Stone Soul Picnic: 12 Years of Supporting NEIFB Children's Programs

For over a decade, Checker's Stone Soul Picnic has made a huge impact in the fight against childhood hunger in northeast Iowa. Held annually during Hunger Action Month in September, this event raises much-needed funds for the Northeast Iowa Food Bank's children's programs, ensuring that children in the community have access to nutritious food.

The first Checker's Stone Soul Picnic took place in 2011, with a brief hiatus in 2012. However, the event quickly became a staple of the Cedar Valley starting again in 2013, and it has continued to grow each year. The picnic is held at Overman Park in Cedar Falls, offering a day of live music, family-friendly activities, and delicious food—all with the goal of raising awareness and funds for childhood hunger.

Thanks to the generosity of the community and the dedication of event organizers, Checker's Stone Soul Picnic has raised an impressive \$223,000 for NEIFB's children's programs over the past 12 years. This year alone, the event raised \$23,000, with 100% of the funds going directly to supporting programs that help feed the children who are most at risk of food insecurity. In northeast Iowa, 1 in 6 children don't know where their next meal is coming from, and the funds raised through this event make a direct impact on their lives.

This year's event, held on Sunday, September 8, was a huge success. Attendees enjoyed live music, fun activities, and free-will donation Blue Barn BBQ, all while raising awareness about the ongoing issue of childhood hunger. The picnic honors the memory of Mike "Checker" Michalick, the founder of the event, who is remembered for his passion for helping others and his tireless dedication to the community.

In recognition of the event's lasting impact, Julie Michalick and Checker's Stone Soul Picnic were recently nominated in the Legacy Category at the National Philanthropy Day recognition brunch in Cedar Falls. This nomination highlights the ongoing influence of the event and its organizers, who continue to make a difference in the lives of children and families throughout the region.

As Checker's Stone Soul Picnic looks ahead to its future, it remains committed to its mission: raising awareness about childhood hunger and supporting programs that help ensure all children in northeast Iowa have access to the food they need to thrive. Through the generosity of donors, the support of the community, and of course the people who plan this event, it continues to make a meaningful difference in the fight against food insecurity.

Thank you to everyone who has supported Checker's Stone Soul Picnic over the years. Together, we are making a lasting impact on the lives of children in our community.



CHECKER'S STONE SOUL PICNIC

Memorials and Honorariums

Honorariums

John & Serena Monaghan
By Joseph Hammel
Janice Vaughn
By Roger M Vaughn
Sergeant Joseph Morgan
By William P Morgan
Marlys Miller
By Kenneth W. Cavanaugh
Kathleen F. Brandon
By Elizabeth M Gerleman
Ilene Magruder
By David A Feltman
Sande Clark
By Betty J Rickert
Dr. Judith M. Finkelstein
By Dr. Melville & Dr. Judith Finkelstein

Memorials

Mary Lichty
By Pat Petrides
Adam & Arlene Schares
By Joli Becker
James Hutchins
By Dorothy Ann Hutchins
Kent A. & Tim M. Elliot
By Sherry Mohr Elliott
Gene & Carmen Condon
By Walter C Broten
Nadine Yeager
By Marlene A Petersen
Lynda J. Carr
By Geraldine Mahnke
Sergeant Joseph Morgan
By William P Morgan
Dennis Gaede
By Marilyn Gaede
Anne G. Nass
By Lavonne E Nass
Dostal/Michael Families
By James Michael
Dr. John & Bernadette McCoy
By John McCoy

Gordon L. Elbert
By Linda Paar
Judy Chelle
By Jon Foote
Elizabeth Wuertz
By John A Wuertz
Glen & Mabe Hovden
By Marjette G. Fitzgerald
Judy Zeller
By Leonard Zeller
Luan
By Mary Averhoff
Kathy Landsverk
Nelson
By Debra D Knudson
Jeff Meyers
Rebecca A Uhlenhopp
Laurel, Roger, and Lola Whitcome
By Scott Whitcome
Ivan Averhoff
By Mary Averhoff
Delbert L. Pudil
By Nina I. Pudil
Janis Hennings
By Steven D Hennings
Darla Jo Ubben
By Eugene Ubben

Lois and Wilford Dohrn
By Pam Dohrn
Linda Paar
By Renee & Maggie Lupkes
George Stokker
By Kathleen M Stokker
Mary L. Lichty
By M.d. Scarbrough
Robert M. Humble
By Bonnie M Humble
Sylvester Van Hove
By Karen Yoshihara
Tony Hoffman
By Roger Kolbet
Charles Wilkes
By Eleanor K Wilkes
Peter Weller
By Dianne Peterson
Rudy Waterman
By Mary L Waterman
Forrest, Donna, Warren Timmerman
By Barry W Timmerman
Joan Osmundson
By Julie A Smith
Roger Meester
By Roger F Meester



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John Deere Foundation – Feeding Families
Black Hawk County Board of Supervisors
Hy-Vee Grocery Stores - 100 Million Meals
Casey's General Stores - Round Up

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