

HUNGER TASK FORCE
FREE & LOCAL

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

## DONORS give LOCAL

We chose Hunger Task Force because of the organization's dedication to helping those in need, as well as our belief that charity begins at home.

# feeding the hungry begins at home

As Milwaukee's Free & Local food bank, Hunger Task Force relies on support from local families and organizations. Our supporters give in different ways and their stories are unique; each is integral to helping hungry families within the community.

Rich and Luna Cieslak's son, Nicolai, passed away suddenly in September 2016, three months shy of his twenty-first birthday. Nicolai learned early on in his short life about the inequities in our community and did what he could to help those less fortunate.

"We realized Nicolai's sense of compassion during his first year in grade school when he asked if he could take extra snacks to school for a friend who couldn't afford them," says Rich.

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Nicolai was a Tae Kwon Do instructor and had achieved a third degree black belt. In May 2017, Rich and Luna decided to honor their son by hosting a fundraising event at his Tae Kwon Do school to support Hunger Task Force.

"We chose Hunger Task Force because of the organization's dedication to helping those in need, as well as our belief that charity begins at home," says Luna. "We hope to keep our son's legacy alive by emulating his generous and giving spirit."

The Cieslaks are one example of the incredible generosity of Hunger Task Force's donors. From fundraising events to monthly donations, their bounty lies not in excessive giving, but their belief and support in the Hunger Task Force mission.







PANTRY MANAGERS >> ADVOCATES

# help LOCAL

Everyone I've ever interacted with [at Hunger Task Force] is dedicated to their job and genuinely focused on their purpose: to make sure people get fed. And you know that everyone is serious about the problem [of hunger in Milwaukee].

# together, we can accomplish incredible things in our community

More than 16,000 volunteers dedicate their time (46,850 hours' worth!) each year, driving Hunger Task Force's mission to end hunger. Barb Embry has been one of these loyal volunteers since 2000, and she continues to make an impact.

Barb got her start helping with the Stockbox program—a government program offering a free box of healthy food to seniors each month. Working as an intake volunteer at Arlington Court, a housing complex for seniors and disabled adults where she lived at the time, Barb helped monitor social services, making sure that everyone was being served properly.

It wasn't long before Barb became an active member of Voices Against Hunger—Hunger

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Task Force's community advocate group, speaking on behalf of other seniors at events, taking radio interviews and attending rallies.

As her health declined and she relied on a wheelchair for transportation, Barb began volunteering more in the office, helping with data entry, organizing files and preparing senior farmers market vouchers each July.

"The thing I like best is the staff," Barb offers of Hunger Task Force. "Everyone I've ever interacted with is dedicated to their job and genuinely focused on their purpose: to make sure people get fed. And you know that everyone is serious about the problem [of hunger in Milwaukee]."

But Hunger Task Force couldn't make nearly the impact without the individual dedication, passion and drive from volunteers like Barb. After nearly 20 years, her commitment to the mission has never wavered.

"I've helped with a lot of different things at Hunger Task Force," says Barb. "I've been around for quite a while and hope to be around for a great deal longer."



PANTRY MANAGERS >> 1

ADVOCATES

# grows LOCAL

Knowing that I'm helping a local family enjoy a fresh salad or a crisp apple picked the day before... that's why I keep coming back.

## focusing on healthy fresh for the hungry

Betsy Bolte is a wonder woman in plain clothes and a long-time volunteer at The Farm. Four years ago, Betsy joined the regular Wednesday morning crew, and she's been a steady member ever since.

There can be a lot of lifting, lugging, bending and sweating during a Farm volunteer shift. "Working on The Farm is not always easy, but I look forward to Wednesday mornings every week," says Betsy. "Knowing that I'm helping a local family enjoy a fresh salad or a crisp apple picked the day before...that's why I keep coming back."

The Hunger Task Force Farm grows fresh produce for local, low-income families. The staff on The Farm works with thousands of volunteers each season to create a community that helps the community,

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growing more than 25 varieties of fresh, nutritious fruits and vegetables, distributed daily to food pantries, soup kitchens and senior centers in Milwaukee.

"The Hunger Task Force Farm takes 'Free and Local' to another level," Betsy says.
"There exists a tangible passion and drive on The Farm to provide fresh and delicious produce to hungry families in Milwaukee who otherwise would not have access to it. Working with the other volunteers as long as I have, it's clear that we all believe that what we do is making a big difference."

Of the nearly 6,000 volunteers who help seed, weed and harvest at the Hunger Task Force Farm each year, each brings a unique passion, commitment and benevolence to the cause. These volunteers work hard to make a lasting impact on the health of local friends and neighbors who need it most. Volunteers like Betsy make growing the nearly 500,000 pounds of healthy produce from The Farm a reality for thousands of hungry families in Milwaukee.



PANTRY MANAGERS >> ADVOCATES

# PANTRY MANAGERS share LOCAL

We are compassionate providers, making someone's typically challenging day a little brighter and little more hopeful.

## hope for the hungry

For 46 years, like a lighthouse on a bluff, South Milwaukee Human Concerns (SMHC) has acted as a beacon of hope to Milwaukee's South Shore community.

"We are compassionate providers, making someone's typically challenging day a little brighter and little more hopeful," said Deb DeBoer, SMHC Director. "Our ability to help is finite, but our ability to offer hope can have endless impact."

Deb runs a tight ship and is a strong, compassionate partner within the food pantry network, receiving the highest annual service rating from Hunger Task Force for 14 years running. Supported by a crew of more than 40 volunteers—many of which have been involved for at least 20 years—SMHC connects people to a much-needed food supply near Milwaukee's south side.

While all food pantries, soup kitchens and homeless shelters within the Hunger Task

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Force network offer helpful, necessary services to their patrons, SMHC provides all of Hunger Task Force's available programs to those in need of emergency food.

From infant formula for new moms to the Stockbox program for eligible seniors, the pantry is a hub for help in South Milwaukee. Also designated as both a MyPlate and 100% Client Choice site, SMHC makes it easy for visitors to "shop" for healthy, high-quality food options in a grocery store setting.

The importance and prevalence of strong, committed partners who operate emergency food locations throughout Milwaukee is critical to helping Hunger Task Force keep the local food safety net intact. SMHC is one of nearly 150 locations throughout the Greater Milwaukee Area helping to distribute food, provide resources and help hungry families within the Hunger Task Force network. As the need for charitable help grows locally, strong leaders like Deb are part of the integral web of help and hope right here in Milwaukee.



## SPEAKING UP voice LOCAL

I hope people will understand how deplorable it is to politicize hunger.

#### a voice of hungerturned advocate

Meghan grew up not knowing what food stamps were or ever wondering where her next meal was coming from. But on one cold day in 2009, Meghan's life took a tragic jackknife turn. Unable to control the circumstances that led to a debilitating disability, Meghan turned to Hunger Task Force for help to provide for her young newborn, Jonathan.

"I know a lot more now than I did when I was younger," recalls Meghan of a difficult time in her life. "But I never thought I would have to teach my child how to be poor."

After receiving much needed food and infant formula from local food pantries, and applying for FoodShare to make ends meet, Meghan began to turn things around for her small family. She enrolled Jonathan in a local early head start program and started thinking of ways to give back to the community.

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Eight years later, Meghan and Jonathan are forces in the Hunger Task Force community, serving as fierce advocates for those who are hungry and need help. Meghan is a strong spokeswoman for those without a voice, participating in testimonial opportunities, working with her state representative, and speaking up during community roundtables. She is heading to nursing school and she firmly believes that hunger is not a partisan issue.

"I hope people will understand how deplorable it is to politicize hunger," she urges. "It's not clothes, jewelry or technology. It's just food."

While experiencing hunger isn't a prerequisite for fighting it, advocates like Meghan and Jonathan continue to make a huge impact by sharing their stories with the world. Hunger Task Force works hard to ensure that hungry people in Milwaukee receive adequate food, but more importantly, they work with powerhouses like Meghan and Jonathan to incite real change through anti-hunger public policy work.



PANTRY MANAGERS >> ADVOCATES

# HUNCER TASK FORCE MYPLATE healthy & LOCAL

### pioneers in food banking

In 2017, Hunger Task Force became the first MyPlate food bank in the nation. The Hunger Task Force MyPlate sets the bar for collecting, sorting and distributing only healthy foods to local kids and families in need.

Adapted from the USDA's MyPlate nutrition guidelines, the Hunger Task Force MyPlate focuses on the five main food groups: Fruits, Vegetables, Grains, Protein and Dairy.





Through support from Kohl's Cares, Hunger Task Force purchased full truckloads of food to fill gaps in healthy, under-donated categories including shelf-stable, low-fat milk; and low-sodium vegetables and fruits in 100% juice. Food sorting was reinvented, and volunteers helped sort food into new categories to ensure nutritious breakfast, lunch and dinner foods. Hunger Task Force also undertook a wide-scale community nutrition education campaign and asked food drive donors to collect specific healthy food items during their annual drives.

In the initiative's first year, six tried-and-true food pantries stepped up to become the first MyPlate pantries within the Hunger Task Force network. Healthy food donations increased, and unhealthy donations decreased. More local pantry partners and community donors are now working toward the same goal with Hunger Task Force: to build a stronger, healthier Milwaukee.

## RELIEF FUND

OF WISCONSIN

Hunger Relief Fund of Wisconsin is a coalition of anti-hunger agencies working to provide nutritious food to those who need it most: children, the elderly, veterans and working-poor families.

Hunger Relief Fund raises money for member charities through the following public employee campaigns:

- Combined Federal Campaign
- Wisconsin State Employees Combined Campaign
- Milwaukee County Combined Giving Campaign
- City of Milwaukee Combined Giving Campaign
- Milwaukee Public School Combined Giving Campaign
- Suburban Combined Giving Campaign
- Milwaukee Area Technical College Combined Giving Campaign

The coalition acts as the unifying agent for agencies to maximize their opportunities for donations in order to achieve their missions.

Hunger Task Force is the volunteer administrator of the Hunger Relief Fund through both staff and services. Therefore, there is no cost of fundraising. The only title for staff associated with the fund is Volunteer Administrator. Hunger Task Force staff volunteer as administrators throughout the year, however, the primary Volunteer Administrators are Sherrie Tussler, Jonathan Hansen and Alyson Herdeman.

There are no membership fees or service charges required of member agencies. These programs run on lean budgets and their "staff" are volunteers. There should not be strings attached when it comes to feeding people. That means 100% of your donation feeds your community.









#### WE ARE HUNGER TASK FORCE

WE ARE A COMMUNITY WITHIN A
COMMUNITY. HELPING HUNGRY FAMILIES
IN MILWAUKEE TAKES DEDICATION AND
COLLABORATION BETWEEN DONORS,
VOLUNTEERS, PANTRY COORDINATORS
AND LOCAL ADVOCATES. WORKING
TOGETHER, THESE INDIVIDUALS CREATE
AN IMPASSIONED NETWORK OF HELP AND
CARE FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST.

# FREE&LOCAL



"Hunger Task Force makes Milwaukee a better place.
I'm so proud of the work it does and services it provides."

—Jane\_long-time\_donor



"I like Hunger Task Force because there's healthy food in here (Stockbox)!"

OC Washington,
 Stockbox recipient



"It means so much to me that I don't have to go any further then my front door to buy food at a great price. Hunger Task Force and the Mobile Market have made a big difference for me."

– Terri V., Mobile Market shopper



### financials

#### revenue

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CONTRIBUTIONS		
Individuals	\$2,167,092	12.84%
Foundations	1,658,767	9.81
Corporations	1,507,553	8.93
Hunger Relief Fund		
of Wisconsin	229,306	1.36
Organizations	126,007	0.75
Bequests	119,446	0.71
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS:	5,808,171	34.40%
EMERGENCY FOOD	8,239,409	48.80
GOVERNMENT GRANTS	2,279,182	13.50
OTHER REVENUE	556,759	3.30
TOTAL:	16,883,521	100.00%

#### expenses

#### **PROGRAMS**

Food Program \$14,860,762 88.25% Advocacy 1,217,626 7.23 TOTAL PROGRAMS: 16,078,388 95.48% Fund Development 761,832 4.52 TOTAL: 16,840,220 100.00%

End of Year Net Assets: \$10,358,319



Hunger Task Force incurred \$364,856 of administrative expenses in the 2016-17 fiscal year. \$321,969 is allocated to the food program expense total, \$26,381 is allocated to the advocacy expense total and \$16,506 is allocated to the fundraising expense total in the graphic above.



### everyone has a story

Stories are important because they tell us what we need to know about people—where they came from, how they got here, what they learned on the way. Hunger Task Force has shared just a few stories of those who help make Milwaukee a better place every day. Our intention is to both thank you and call you to action. Our common mission is hunger in Milwaukee. What are people doing about it? Who is harmed? What can people do to make a difference?

You've read the stories of volunteers, local donors and people from institutions that take the time to end hunger. Some feed people today, while others work on ending future hunger. A few brave souls agreed to tell you more about their very real experience of poverty and hunger. Now that you've learned about them, imagine the tens of thousands of others who rely on help from Hunger Task Force, each with a story of their own.

Staffed with caring people and led by a tenured board of directors, Hunger Task Force provides steadfast, annual support to area food pantries, soup kitchens and homeless shelters. Our safety net of service is upheld by people with great stories of the lessons they have learned in feeding the hungry.

If these stories compel you, please join your Free & Local food bank in service to Milwaukee! Your help is greatly appreciated and truly needed.

Thank you for your kindness!



Sherrie Tussler
Executive Director

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