



WINTER NEWSLETTER

Making Waves out of Ripples

Dear Friends,

As we usher in a new year, I want to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude to you—our supporters, volunteers, and champions. Your generosity and dedication make everything we do possible. Whether through your donations, your time, or your advocacy, you are the foundation of our work. Because of you, we have been able to extend a helping hand to so many neighbors facing crisis, offering hope and support when it's needed most.

Over the past year, we have faced challenges, but together, we've also celebrated incredible milestones. Each of these moments represents lives touched and futures brightened because of you.

I am constantly inspired by the power of our collective community. Our volunteers have gone above and beyond, logging tens of thousands of hours to ensure no one is left behind. Donors like you have stepped up in times of urgency, showing the true meaning of compassion and solidarity. Together, we are proving that small acts of kindness can create waves of change.

At the heart of this work is our belief in the importance of local organizations supporting their local community.

Local nonprofits are often the first places people call when facing hardship—whether it's a need for immediate crisis counseling, access to basic necessities, or simply someone to listen. By standing with us, you are addressing the unique needs of our community.

As we look ahead, I hope you will continue to walk alongside us. Together, we can build a brighter, more equitable future—one where no one faces their challenges alone. Thank you for believing in the power of community and for being such an integral part of our mission.

With gratitude,
Sarah Nelson, CEO



Sarah Nelson, CEO

Learn more about our impact in Fiscal Year 2024 at builtbycommunity.org/about/annual-reports-newsletters/

Hoping to be On the Road Again

Imagine having an income so limited that you struggle to afford food. You're unable to work or travel due to age and disability, relying entirely on a mobile pantry that visits your care home each month to deliver essential groceries. Now, imagine the harsh reality of this lifeline failing because the pantry's truck broke down—again—leaving you without the food you desperately need this winter. This should never happen.

For many in our community, this scenario is all too real. Hunger is a daily challenge, and access to nutritious food is often out of reach for those who are most vulnerable. At CommUnity Food Bank, we're committed to ensuring that no one goes hungry—but we can't do it alone. We need your help to keep the wheels turning.



CommUnity's current Mobile Pantry vehicle which has needed countless repairs in the past year and is not equipped to run the Mobile Pantry efficiently.

CommUnity Food Bank's current Mobile Pantry vehicle is on its last leg, but the need for this service continues to grow. We need to purchase a new specialized Mobile Pantry truck—and fast—to expand the amount of food and number of individuals served, ensuring no one in our community goes hungry. This new truck will not only replace our aging vehicle but will also allow us to increase the frequency of our visits and serve even more neighbors in need.

For our neighbors in rural and underserved areas, it can be nearly impossible to access the food assistance

they need due to age, disability, or lack of reliable transportation. Regardless of their ability to travel to the food bank, every one of our neighbors deserves to eat. CommUnity's Mobile Pantry brings essential food resources directly to the people who need it most, providing a lifeline for those who would otherwise go without.



Thanks to a generous grant from the Community Foundation of Johnson County, every dollar donated on Giving Tuesday this past December was matched, bringing us to \$116,000 out of the \$175,000 needed to purchase the new truck. This funding has given us a strong start, but we still have a ways to go to reach our goal.

The new truck will be equipped with refrigeration to ensure perishable items remain fresh, increased storage capacity to transport more food, and enhanced accessibility features to better serve our clients. With these improvements, we can make a greater impact and bring hope to even more families facing food insecurity.

Without your help, our elderly, disabled, and low-income neighbors may not have reliable access to adequate food. Every gift matters, and every neighbor deserves to eat. Together, we can ensure that no one in our community goes hungry.

[Donate today at builtbycommunity.org/donate.](https://www.builtbycommunity.org/donate)

Project Holiday Provides Meals for Nearly 1,500 Local Families

Thank you for a successful Project Holiday meal distribution 2024!



Together, we provided the groceries necessary to prepare home-cooked holiday meals for 1,437 local households in just six days! That's approximately 70,000 pounds of food distributed right here in Johnson County, making the holiday season brighter for thousands of individuals and families.

This annual tradition, which has been running for over 35 years, would not be possible without the support of our volunteers and donors. Each year, Project Holiday brings together a community of compassionate individuals who give their time, resources, and energy to ensure that no one goes without a warm meal during the holidays. Your generosity makes all the difference.

Each meal distributed through Project Holiday feeds an entire family and includes a main course such as turkey, ham, or tofurkey, along with all the ingredients needed to prepare traditional holiday side dishes and desserts. These meals offer more than sustenance - they bring comfort, joy, and a sense of togetherness to families who may otherwise go without.

For families facing food insecurity, knowing where their next meal is coming from can provide a profound sense of relief. This impact is felt even more deeply during the holiday season. By participating in Project Holiday, you've helped to ensure that every family we serve could experience the warmth and connection of a holiday meal together.

"A lot of families don't have the means to put a big dinner on the table this Christmas," says Krystal Kabela, Food Bank Manager. "Groceries have gotten so expensive and



Project Holiday delivery volunteers Barbara and Kevin White prepare to bring holiday meals to neighbors facing hunger over the holiday season.

a warm meal together just doesn't always take priority over keeping the heat on and paying rent. It's a decision no one wants to make, but it's one that many of our clients face this time of year."

"It's a community effort," says Julia Winter, CommUnity's Director of Development. "A huge portion of our funding comes from individual donors. These are neighbors helping neighbors. Without the support of our donors and volunteers and community cheerleaders, many more of our neighbors would be going hungry."

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who made Project Holiday 2024 a success. From the volunteers who packed and distributed food to the donors whose contributions made it all possible, you embody the spirit of community. Thank you for being a part of this meaningful tradition. Together, we're building a stronger, more compassionate Johnson County.

Thank you to our generous sponsors!





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